



CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

In recent years, Canada has taken many steps toward improving the future for children. In 1990, for example, Canada, along with Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden, co-chaired the World Summit for Children where the governments of the 71 participating countries set a 10-year agenda for improving the well-being of children. Through its Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the accompanying Plan of Action, the Summit outlined goals to be achieved by the year 2000. They included ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, lower child and maternal death rates, better nutrition, universal basic education and literacy, safe water and sanitation, better family planning, and improvement and protection of the lives of children in especially difficult circumstances.

These goals represent a strong commitment on Canada's part: a commitment that was reinforced in December 1991, when Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights of children. Canada's World Summit commitments and obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child continue to provide the foundation for all government action, domestic and international, related to children and families.

Domestic Initiatives

In 1992, Canada introduced its national action plan for children – Brighter Futures – a long-term plan to guide the federal government's actions on behalf of children and families in Canada and around the world. In the plan, the government stated its intention to work more closely with non-governmental organizations and explore new ways of helping children. One of the main components of the action plan is the Child Development Initiative, which consists of 33 programs that target children at risk of poverty, poor health and nutrition, mental health problems, developmental problems, disability or injury, or abuse and neglect. The initiative involves five federal departments and focuses on prevention and early intervention. Other recent domestic initiatives deal with improved economic security for children through changes to Canadian income tax legislation and programs designed to help Aboriginal communities give their children a head start in school by supporting early education and development.

Official Development Assistance

"Canada in the World," the government's statement on foreign policy, states that, "the purpose of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure,

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