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Les enfants et la pauvreté :

L'impact des choix économiques, sociaux et politiques

Children and Poverty:

The Impact of Economic, Social and Political Choices

23, 24 et 25 mai 2002 / May 23, 24 & 25, 2002

Concept Outline

OPCR Summit on Children, Poverty and Violence

Prepared by the Summit Steering Committee - Montreal, Canada, November 2003

The Challenge

More than fifty years since the formation of the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and thirteen years since the ratification by 191 countries of the most comprehensive document on the rights of the child (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children of May 2002 concluded that "*Much remains to be done to secure survival, health, education and protection from exploitation for the nearly two billion children of the world*".

Children continue to suffer and die needlessly everywhere in the world. In the developing countries, a large number of children suffer from poverty, hunger and the destruction of the environment. Exploitation through child labour remains prevalent. In the developed countries, children are victims of family breakdown, psychological and physical violence, suicide, negligence and social disintegration. Sexual exploitation and war claim many more innocent children.

Statistical data from the UNICEF indicates that nearly 650 million children worldwide live in extreme poverty – victims of social abuse, child labour, the sex trade and health disorders. Every year about eleven million children die of preventable causes, often for want of simple and easily provided improvements in nutrition, sanitation and maternal health and education. Everyday, more than 30,000 children around the world die of preventable diseases. Globally, more than 130 million children between the ages of six and eleven are not in school, 60% of whom are girls.

We live in a violent world. More money and resources have been spent on war activities during the last 50 years than in the entire millennium. We must recognize that, since 1990, almost 80% of the victims of war and conflict have been civilians, mostly women and children. Almost two million children were killed, six million children injured or disabled and twelve million became homeless in the last decade. The proliferation of small arms, in particular, has caused children to become killers as well as victims of these deadly weapons of destruction. Only a handful of countries have as yet adopted laws to give children the same protection that adults enjoy from physical assault.

Thus, poverty and violence are crucial issues for children in our modern industrialized world. The human, economic, social and health costs of not addressing these issues are already enormous and pose a serious threat to our future as a society.

It is in this context that the Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights (OPCR) is organizing a Summit on Children, Poverty and Violence. The OPCR, committed to creating a better future for children everywhere, believes that while the United Nations and other international institutions have already held such events and will probably hold more in the future it is the accumulated efforts of many that will succeed in furthering the cause of children.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Summit on Children, Poverty and Violence are to:

- Provide a global forum to discuss children's issues unconstrained by economic and political considerations;
- Raise international awareness of all forms of poverty and violence against children and on the urgency of addressing these problems on a global scale;
- Generate support and momentum for the promotion and respect of children's rights;
- Open a creative dialogue and form a global partnership between professionals and leading thinkers from academia, NGOs, civil society organizations and voluntary bodies from all five continents for effective implementation and compliance of international treaties on children;
- Assess current strategies, analyse the reasons/factors for their failure and/or limited success and identify the programs and policies which produce the best outcomes;
- Stimulate the formation of innovative multidisciplinary solutions to topical problems faced by children;
- Establish a sustainable child-rights based action plan that includes effective mechanisms for implementation and monitoring over a five-year period.

Topics

- Health
- Education and literacy
- Legal and social protection of children
- Food and nutrition
- Violence

Participation

The Summit will be open to lateral and inclusive thinkers who have an interdisciplinary approach/perspective; that is, recognized specialists in one or more of the Summit's five main topics, field workers, researchers and other professionals from academia, NGOs, civil society organizations and other independent voluntary bodies. The number of participants will be limited to 35 and equal representation from all five continents will be favoured.

Format

The Summit will be held over two days. Following an overview of the current situation of children globally, participants will be divided into five subgroups to analyse the data, identify the main issues and constraints, assess strategies and make recommendations pertaining to each of the Summit's five main topics. Each subgroup will report on their findings and then join efforts with other participants to draft the Summit's concluding statement and recommendations, which will be forwarded to the Secretary General of the United Nations, U.N. agencies and the U.N.'s 191 Member States, to international, national and local governments, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and registered charities, to professional associations, to universities and research centres, as well as to individuals concerned about the well-being and rights of children worldwide.

Summit Programme

DAY 1 – Friday, October 22nd, 2004

0900 hrs: Opening Session

- Word of welcome
- Formal inauguration and address of the Summit by renowned guest speaker

1015 hrs: Coffee Break

1030 hrs: State of the World’s Children

Condensed briefing on the situation of children with respect to all five Summit topics, outlining core issues and problem areas.

1200 hrs: Lunch

1300 hrs: Working Sessions (one subgroup per topic)

- (i) Health
- (ii) Education and Literacy
- (iii) Legal and Social Protection of Children
- (iv) Food and Nutrition
- (v) Violence

Each subgroup will be presented with detailed information and data on their respective topic and will focus on answering the following questions:

- (i) Why are things getting worse?
- (ii) What are the issues and barriers to improving the situation of children?
- (iii) What are the competing interests that are blocking the process?
- (iv) Why are many of the strategies currently employed failing?
- (v) What do we need to change in our way of doing things to achieve quicker, concrete and better results?
- (vi) How can we overcome the barriers and factors that have been identified to ensure that solutions and recommendations are supported and implemented?
- (vii) What assessment/evaluation measures are required to monitor progress in the years following the Summit?

1500 hrs: Coffee Break

1515 hrs: Working Sessions (continued)

1700 hrs: Close for the day

DAY 2 – Saturday, October 23rd, 2004

0900 hrs: Workings Sessions (continued)

1015 hrs: Coffee Break

1030 hrs: Working Sessions (continued)

1200 hrs: Lunch

1300 hrs: Reporting Session

- Report of the Health Subgroup
- Report of the Education and Literacy Subgroup
- Report of the Legal and Social Protection of Children Subgroup
- Report of the Food and Nutrition Subgroup
- Report of the Violence Subgroup

1500 hrs: Coffee Break

1515 hrs: Closing Session: Conclusions and Statement

Elaboration of the final document on the Summit’s findings with recommendations and progress monitoring measures - to be distributed and circulated worldwide.

Expected Outcomes

- Completion of a condensed report card on poverty and violence against children - to be submitted to all member states of the United Nations, the UN Secretary General, the UNICEF and other relevant bodies of the UN, the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Switzerland, the media, governments, peace and justice movements, human rights and children's rights advocacy groups and organizations, etc. -, which includes a 5-year plan of action, concrete and achievable recommendations to address the main problem areas, and effective monitoring measures.
- Increased knowledge about the effectiveness of poverty eradication and child protection measures by regional, national and international stakeholders;
- Improved knowledge and use of effective programs, policies and practices;
- Raised visibility and awareness of all forms of poverty and violence against children at national and international levels;
- Strengthened collaboration among NGO's, civil society organizations, academia and other voluntary bodies working to reduce poverty and violence against children and/or to protect and promote children's rights;
- Establishment of a global partnership that will provide the necessary synergy to develop new strategies and sensitize various additional stakeholders to the plight of children.

Date and Location

The Summit will be held on October 22nd and 23rd, 2004 at the Holiday Inn Aéroport Montréal in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

FOR THE LOVE OF OUR CHILDREN!