

Child Rights Caucus Update

May 23, 2002

In this update:

- Final outcome document
- Explanation of the US position
- Final negotiations

Coming soon:

- A more detailed analysis of the outcome document;
- A preliminary guide to NGO involvement in the drafting of national plans of action
- Proposed next steps for the Caucus.

Dear friends,

Final outcome document: Attached, please find a copy of the final, unedited outcome document adopted at the UN Special Session on Children. It can also be found on the UNICEF website (www.unicef.org/specialsession) and the CRIN website: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=1756&flag=report>

Although the outcome of the final negotiations on the outcome document was disappointing to many of us in the Child Rights Caucus, we need to put these disappointments into context, and recognize the substantial ways that the Caucus positively influenced the document during the preparatory process.

Probably most significant is the Caucus' success in broadening the scope of the document to encompass the full range of children's rights. During the early stages of the preparatory process, the Caucus insisted that the outcome document should reflect not only the health and education concerns that were the focus of the 1990 Summit, but also issues of abuse, violence and exploitation, including child labor, trafficking, sexual exploitation, juvenile justice, the impact of armed conflict, etc.

In this respect, the final outcome document is profoundly improved over the first draft document produced in December of 2000. While the first draft featured 21 key goals for children, only two dealt with protection issues – one related to the worst forms of child labor, and another dealing with violence against children. In contrast, the final outcome document featured protection from abuse, exploitation and violence as one of four priority areas, establishing 5 key goals in this area and more than 47 actions and strategies. This is a major accomplishment of which we should be proud. We have done a preliminary comparison of the final outcome document to earlier drafts and found at least 20 paragraphs where proposals from the Caucus' alternative text were included in the final text. A more thorough analysis of the document, including the Caucus' influence, will be sent out in the next two weeks.

US Explanataion of Position: At the end of the Special Session, the United States presented a formal "explanation of position" that it requested be placed into the formal record of the Session. This statement is attached, and may be of interest to Caucus members.

Final Negotiations: We continue to get views from various sources about the final phase of negotiations on the outcome document. Some members of the European Union have disputed earlier reports that the US and the EU negotiated a "deal" on the final document and say they were presented with a final text by the chair without being aware that not all negotiating groups were consulted. Different actors have different views on how the final agreement came about, and we may never know exactly how it happened. For those that are interested, in its May 20 issue, On The

Record published a detailed analysis of the final hours of the negotiations based on various “inside sources.” It can be accessed at www.ngosatunicef.org.

Coming Soon: Within the next two weeks, we hope to send you:

- A more detailed analysis of the outcome document;
- A preliminary guide to NGO involvement in the drafting of national plans of action
- Proposed next steps for the Caucus.

Best wishes,

Jo Becker

On behalf of the coordinating group