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« A world fit for *and by* children » Our point of view as African Working Children

Contribution of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) to the Global Movement in favour of children, and to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS)

Ouagadougou, March 2001

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A world fit for *and by* children

Our point of view as African working children

The African Movement of Working Children and Youth, is organised from hundreds of “grass roots group” of domestic girls, self employed street workers, and apprentices.

These groups unite into Town associations (WCYA) in 33 African towns and are organising in 11 more ,within 16 countries of Western, Central, Indian Ocean and Eastern Africa.

The Movement itself is the main African voice of those children and youth in “difficult circumstances” who haven’t had the privilege of basic social services, such as education, health, and others. Two delegates of the AMWCY have participated to the 2° prepcom of UNGASS in New York. But they have felt isolated by the system, the language of this conference, therefore after listening to their reports ,the elected delegates to the Regional Commission of the AMWCY, have decided to propose a large participation to the UNGASS process, in order that the voices of African Children Deprived of their rights, those mainly concerned by UNGASS (art 44) be listened to properly during the next steps of the UNGASS process.

The Movement is supported by a large coalition of African NGO’s, Churches, and Civil Servants. Enda TM (Senegal), in cooperation with Save the Children Sweden, leads the regional program of support to this Movement.

The regional commission of our Movement met from the 12th to 23rd March, 2001 in Ouagadougou. We studied the message of the Global Movement for children. Adults who live out of Africa have written this message, we spent two days and a half discussing these ten points and the UNGASS document, comparing them to our twelve rights and to actions, we are engaged in. Here are our decisions, commentaries and propositions.

A- Debate and propositions on the involvement of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth to the United Nations Special Session on Children (UNGASS, September 2001)

Presentations, debate and decisions

Claude François Ouedraogo and Serge Luca Ndouba presented the report of their participation to the 2° Prepcom in New York late January 2001.

They explained all the problems delegates encountered in order to participate in the meeting: Francisca Dagan of Benin Republic didn't have her visa, Wandé Samoura of Mali and Sophie Faye of Senegal were not sponsored, Serge Luca was not present at the children preparatory meeting... They also talked about the meeting itself where they were « put aside » because they couldn't speak English and because emphasis was more on voting than on discussing real problems. All the same, Serge had the opportunity to speak for 3 minutes before the Assembly about adolescents participation, but he had to do it in the name of Enda because the AMWCY was not invited to the conference. He therefore asked, during his intervention, that for all upcoming conferences, the AMWCY be invited as a Movement on its own.

After the report the following questions were discussed:

- Is it necessary to participate in the next stages, The Cairo meeting, the 3° Prepcom, then UNGASS?
- If yes, massively or just a small delegation?

It is necessary to participate massively in order to be recognized (following a vote 8 against 2 who thought that emphasis should be on activities at the grassroots instead of wasting time with this conference). If we don't go massively, we will be isolated and excluded as it happened before.

But to participate we must prepare ourselves here, then in our countries and organize our participation with the UNICEF and the NGOs favourable to our participation.

It is necessary that seniors of the AMWCY be present to give ideas and experience to the juniors.

Decisions

We propose that 4 girls and 4 boys of West Africa (see list and country of origin hereunder) be present in Cairo, as well as AWCY delegates from 4 other countries: Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and Kenya. In all: 12 delegates from 12 African countries.

- Concerning the 8 delegates from West Africa, we ask that Aimé Bada and Claude François Ouedraogo, who are above 18 years of age but have the experience of these international meetings, escort us. We also ask that an animator from Bissau be present for translation purposes.
- For the 4 other country delegates, accompanying adults should be with the little ones. They will also help with translation.

We are the first concerned by the UNGASS because we belong to the poorest countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (article 44), we are the poor children who work and organize ourselves to defend our rights in 44 cities of 16 African countries. For several years now, we have been participating in actions, programs and decision-making processes concerning us (art. 20). We want to be present in the UNGASS process and to fully express ourselves at the occasion, and to be listened to attentively no matter our languages and our condition, which must not be excuses to discriminate us (art. 15).

UNICEF, governments and African NGOs must make all efforts to support our participation to the Cairo meeting, to the 3^o Prepcom in New York and the General Assembly itself in September, by inviting the AMWCY to these meetings. All expenses incurred by our delegates should be taken care of, visas should be delivered to us and our accompanying adults should also be present at our sides. It is wished that some delegates be part of official delegations, as it was the case for the AWCY delegate of Cote d'Ivoire. This is possible for Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Guinea Conakry, and maybe for Burkina Faso and Niger Republic.

The experience of the 2^o Prepcom taught us that good translation is necessary, and that time must be given to each one to express and to react. It is therefore necessary to assign much more time to children meetings.

In the aim of developing better acquaintance, we ask that solutions of lodging together be found. This will encourage the knowledge of each other as well as communication. Our meetings must take place in a quiet place.

Cairo Meeting.

We propose that an African children meeting be organized in Cairo some days preceding the OAU conference that is billed to be held there. This will enable us children to have time to discuss together. This meeting must last at least 3 days (from 24th to 26th May), and good

simultaneous interpretation or consecutive translation should be arranged as well. Translators must really endeavor to understand what children say, because we know our African languages very well, but we must make big efforts to speak French, English or Portuguese.

Children participating in this meeting must be delegated by their states, or by Movements. Points of view that they will express there should be collective points of view based on experiences and actions led, and a reflection on the UNGASS propositions rather than individual points of view of « privileged children ».

The meeting must be facilitated by representatives of child Movements with the advice of adult organizations who have proved themselves in participative approach on the fields in Africa (such as BICE Abidjan, ENDA TM, UNDUGU Kenya, CIES Luanda, etc..).

This side-meeting could continue during the Cairo official meeting, during certain hours of the day, or in the evenings, so that we can contribute effectively to decisions that will be taken there, and to agree on our propositions to the 3° Prepcom in New York.

3° Prepcom and New York conference

We don't want to go to New York just to show our faces, no one must dictate to us the language or the speed with which we must speak because we are the first concerned by the UNGASS.

We must be offered the very same conditions we described for the Cairo meeting so that we can express ourselves and communicate between us as well as with the other children present, and be able to present our point of view to the set of lecturers.

The Cairo meeting will make it possible for African children to define the best conditions of participation in New York. It will be necessary that the organizers of the conference and the children participation to the UNGASS listen attentively to what we will propose for the 3° Prepcom of New York and the UNGASS conference of September. It is imperative that some of our seniors as well as members of our supportive structures be part of those who will organize children participation in New York.

A place and a time must be set-aside during the 3° Prepcom of the UNGASS so that the AMWCY can present and express itself in the « side events ». We are preparing a 12 minutes video movie for this occasion. We will need sufficient time to foresee necessary translations for this presentation.

If all these propositions are listened to, the AMWCY is ready to engage in the UNGASS process and our delegates are ready to work hard discussing propositions to be made in Cairo and New York within their associations. This means mobilizing working children for this event with the result that less time will be spent on other activities.

We spent two days and a half of our regional meeting to prepare our propositions and commentaries on the UNGASS and the Global Movement for children documents. We hope that you will respect our effort.

Delegations

West Africa

Girls, Teresa Coiate (contact AMIC Bissau), Mariam Diallo (contact Djigui Conakry), Francisca Dagan (contact Initiative Vioutou Benin Republic), Sophie Faye (contact Enda Senegal).

Boys, Wandé Samoura (contact Enda Mali), Moussa Harouna (contact Caritas Niger), Serge Luca N'douba (contact BICE Cote d'Ivoire), Gilbert Ouedraogo (contact UNICEF Burkina Faso)

Accompanying adults, Claude François Ouedraogo (contact UNICEF Ouagadougou), Aimé Bada (contact Enda Dakar), an animator from AMIC Guinea Bissau.

Central Africa, East, Southern and Indian Ocean

Friends from the Democratic Republic of Congo (contact GRAMID), from Angola (contact CIES), from Madagascar (contact Medecins Sans Frontières) and from Kenya (contact Undugu Society) will shortly designate their delegates. They should be accompanied by adults from the above-mentioned structures.

A world fit for *and by* children

Our point of view as African working children

B- Commentaries from the African Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) on the 10 Points of the Global Movement for Children.

The regional commission of our Movement met from the 12th to 23rd March, 2001 in Ouagadougou. We studied the message of the Global Movement for children. This document was written by adults living out of Africa. We spent two days and a half discussing these ten points and the UNGASS document, comparing them to our twelve rights and to actions, we are engaged in. Here are our commentaries.

A reminder of the twelve rights that we developed in Bouake and which constitute the foundation of our Movement: *Right to be respected, Right to self-expression and to form organizations, Right to learn to read and write, Right to be taught a trade, Right to remain in the village (no exodus), Right to be listened to, Right to access to equitable legal aid (in case of trouble), Right to rest when sick, Right to health care, Right to light and limited work, Right to work in a safe environment, Right to play.*

1- Leave no Child Out

Our Movement, the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWY), was borne out of our refusal of the discrimination against working children. Because they are poor children, they very often do not go to school and are not respected within their societies.

Among the 12 rights of the AMWCY, the “Right to be respected” (and the duty to respect), the “Right to access to equitable legal aid (in case of trouble)”, as well as actions led to implement them, directly concern discrimination. These rights have progressed for the organized WCY who now notice less discrimination.

Examples of discrimination

As far as schooling is concerned, many children are excluded from schools because they are poor and cannot afford it. In Guinea Bissau, some children do not have carnivals, they therefore have to walk long distances in order to see one. And we know that it is sometimes dangerous for children to walk such long distances.

There is discrimination against some children in the villages based on their ethnic group. Housemaids are discriminated because they are not allowed to go and visit their parents during holidays. Some are even threatened to be fired if they do not work on holidays. Working children do not have a health center for them as school children do, and we know that they need it as much as the others do.

Examples of actions led

Canchungo WCYA is organizing a two day's festival in order to prevent children from going to Bissau. Many WCY regional commission delegates are girls who are also representatives of boys in their cities. During our African Movement's meetings, we demanded that each delegation be composed of boys and girls.

2- Put Children First.

Since we are fighting for the rights of the child, we therefore do agree that priority should be the given to child's rights. In particular, it has to be the children living in difficult circumstances.

That assistance has to be brought also to their parents for children's situation is a direct consequence of the parents'. Our AMWCY has given priority to children for its regional commission is mainly composed of children.

3- Care For Every Child

AMWCY agrees that children from poor families need to have access to good conditions so as to develop properly. Working children defend their right to health care through promotion of access to health structures at low costs and through organization of health mutual within the grassroots groups. In some countries, the WCY take part in the community health actions in favor of the little ones such as immunization campaigns.

4- Fight HIV/AIDS

Children should be told what AIDS is and how to avoid it. In many countries, our AWCY have conducted or taken part in campaigns against AIDS. Other health promotion activities led concerned malaria and polio. These diseases have to be fought in the coming years as much as AIDS. We suggest that fight against malaria be included in the UNGASS document.

5- Stop Harming and Exploiting Children

Our AMWCY support any dignified and honest form of child work in good working conditions, but we are against the exploitation of children and the violence did to them. Our claiming of the "Right to work in a safe environment" and "Right to light and limited work", of the "Right to rest when sick", "Right to remain in the village", are all meant to fight against exploitation.

Examples of exploitation and violence against children

Most of the time children work for people who do not pay them what they agreed upon. They are demanded to finish their work before going home, the bosses do not respect their time table. People go into the villages and take 14-15 year old children away to other countries. Policemen brutalize children who work in the streets or arrest them. They also often confiscate their merchandises or their polish. Children are often obliged to pay in order to get their articles back. Clients sometimes refuse to pay the polishers after their shoes are polished and sometimes people steal their money.

Example of actions led

Where housemaids are organized, they intervene before the bosses who brutalize the girls or at the police station when they are falsely accused. Working children also send delegates to the Town authorities or the Chief Police Officer for them to cease violence done by the police forces to children selling newspapers. Our AWCY have membership cards that keep the members safe from police hassle. When children are arrested this way, the AWCY goes to the Police Station to have the children freed.

Our AMWCY has first aid boxes in the workshops for the apprentices, and we often talk to the bosses into bettering the working conditions of the apprentices.

Many actions have been led against child trafficking in the villages where discussions were held with parents and traditional chiefs, as well as in the passage posts for the trafficked children such as Sikasso.

6- Listen to Children

The "Right to be listened to", the "Right to self-expression and to form organizations", the "Right to be respected".

We have to talk about our problems and offer propositions, but we also have to listen to and respect adults who speak with and give us advice. Together, we will be able to produce new ideas and improve our situation.

Our first participation are the actions we lead to implement our 12 rights. We organize different activities as a way of listening and be listened to. We also participate to the formulation and execution of national programs.

Examples of actions led

Our AWCY has taken part in the Labor Day activities and the Children's day, June 16th, and we invited the authorities to come and listen to us. We organized animations in the markets, soccer matches, as a way of raising the awareness of people. We also took part in the carnival.

We tour the districts to discuss with the bosses and children. We also had training sessions in listening so as to be better understood, and we invited younger children. We met the authorities at all levels: heads of families, traditional chiefs, mayors, administrative authorities, ministers and presidents, in particular, the president in office of ECOWAS, A. O Konare who sponsors our Movement.

7- Educate every Child

The “Right to learn to read and write”, the “Right to learn a trade”.

We should not only go to school, but school should also come to us, in order to learn more and add it up to our economic activities. School must be flexible. It must help us improve our lives.

Actions led

Hundreds of alternative education classes are organized by our AWCY and supportive structures. Requests from the little ones and their participation are unanimous, but they are confronted with the opposition of their bosses. Vocational training sessions have also been organized in the centers or in the workshops where children are placed in the best conditions possible, with complementary classes going on as well. Many centers have been opened for the housemaids where they receive a training in the evenings after work. Our AWCY and supportive structures negotiate with their bosses so that they be "freed" in the afternoons to attend these training sessions.

8- Protect Children from War

The “Right to work in a safe environment”.

Some countries where AWCY exist are known to be on war or going through violent times. Where there is on-going war, children from rich families had the chance to be sent abroad, but children from poor families had to seek refuge in villages or even stay in town during wartime. Some 15 y old boys became soldiers, and some girls became prostitutes in the military camps for their personal security, and for their food.

When children take refuge in neighboring countries, they are obliged to take into prostitution or robbery to survive.

Example of actions led

In Bissau, AWCY have launched a campaign of information with posters to signal the presence of landmines and prevent children from being killed or crippled by the landmines buried by the ECOMOG and the military troops. They also organized “training circles” to allow children to continue to study even in war time.

9- Protect the Earth for Children

The African testament has it that "*Thou shalt show the piece of land thou leave to thy children before thou die*".

If we burn our land and field, there won't be any water to live on. Children will be compelled to leave their villages because nothing could be planted on it.

Example of actions led

In some countries, our AWCY have taken part in reforestation activities such as planting trees. In addition, we have undertook to clean the hospitals, the mosques, the stations, the prefectures, the town halls, the streets of the towns, the surroundings of workshops, etc., in particular, to keep the mosquitoes away from children.

10- Fight Poverty: Invest in Children

The 12 rights of our AMWCY can be seen as a form of fight against poverty. We are fighting against the poverty of the working children and for the improvement of their living conditions. We also develop new income generation activities for our associations and our members. We encourage savings and credit.

"One should be served in order to serve others well". In Africa we can fight against poverty, but the funds cannot come from the poor who are toiling and moiling to meet their needs. Everyone tries to take advantage and keep for himself or herself, the poor are often forgotten. However, we have to tell the truth. The poor are called in only to bring in money. When the money comes, the poor are forgotten. The money that is brought should serve the interest of those it was meant for. This money should be used to develop actions.

Rich countries must give francs 7.00 for every Franc 1,000.00 to the poor countries to assist their development. If they do not wish to do so, then they will not be able to help the poor children and their families to develop economic activities. Indebtedness has to be stopped.

Our governments and organizations must make good use of the countries' wealth and assistance received from the rich countries. It must be used for what it was meant for originally. We all have to fight against poverty and corruption.

A world fit for *and by* children

Our point of view as African working children

C- Amended version by the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) of the Revised draft outcome document of the 3^o Prepcom for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children.

NB : parts in italic and bold are the propositions made by the AMWCY, then under each article you find commentaries on the propositions.

Declaration

Plan of Action

I- Creating a child-friendly world

II- Goals, strategies and actions.

- **Promoting healthy lives**
- **Providing quality education**
- **Protecting from abuse, exploitation and violence**
- **Combating HIV/AIDS**

III- Mobilizing resources

IV- Follow-up actions and monitoring

1. Declaration

1. Eleven years ago, at the World Summit for Children, world leaders made a joint commitment and issued an urgent, universal appeal to give every child a better future.
2. Since then, much progress has been made, as documented in the Secretary-General's report, "We the Children". Millions of young lives have been saved, more children than ever are in school, and important treaties have been concluded to protect children from exploitation. Yet a brighter future for all has proved elusive, and overall gains have fallen short of national obligations and international commitments.
3. As States parties and signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we affirm our obligation to safeguard the rights of all children through national action and international co-operation.
4. Every one of us has the power to change the world for and with children. We have a historic opportunity to reaffirm our obligations by mobilizing a global movement for children which is guided by this most universally embraced human rights instrument in history.

5. We hereby call on all members of society to join us in upholding the following principles:

- **Put Children First.** In all our undertakings, the best interests of the child shall always be our primary consideration.
- **Leave No Child Behind.** Because every girl and boy is born free and equal in dignity and rights, all forms of discrimination affecting children must end.
- **Care for Every Child.** The survival and development of children is the essential foundation of human development. No effort should be spared to ensure that children get the best possible start in life.
- **Educate Every Child.** All girls and boys must receive a compulsory, free basic education of good quality.
- **Stop Harming and Exploiting Children.** Any acts of violence, exploitation and abuse against children are intolerable and must come to an end.
- **Protect Children from War.** Children must be protected from the horrors of armed conflict.
- **Combat HIV/AIDS.** Children and their families must be protected from the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS.
- **Fight Poverty: Invest in Children.** We reaffirm our vow to break the cycle of poverty within a single generation, united in the conviction that poverty reduction must begin with children and the realization of their rights.
- **Listen to Children.** We regard children as resourceful citizens capable of helping to build a better future for all. We must respect their rights to express themselves and to participate in decisions that affect them.
- **Protect the Earth for Children.** We must preserve our planet in order to nurture our children; equally, we must nurture our children if we are to preserve our planet.

6. We have decided to apply these principles by adopting the following Plan of Action, confident that together we will build a world in which all children can enjoy a childhood: a world of play and learning, in which they are loved and cherished, their safety and well-being are paramount, their gender is not a liability, and where they can grow to adulthood in health, peace and dignity.

Plan of Action

I. Creating a child-friendly world

7. In a child-friendly world, actions should be guided by what is best for children at critical stages of their lives when they are particularly vulnerable to risks, or exceptionally capable of rapid physical, intellectual and emotional development.

8. We recognize that choices made and actions taken on behalf of children affect not only how children develop but also how countries progress, which is why children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development must become national and global priorities.

9. The specific goals and actions in this Plan of Action should therefore be pursued in a manner that would lead to three key outcomes that all caring parents seek for their children:
- i. A good start in life, in a nurturing and safe environment that enables children to survive and be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn;
 - ii. Completion of a basic education of good quality;
 - iii. For adolescents, the opportunity to develop their individual capacities to the fullest, in safe and enabling environments that empower them to participate in, and contribute to, their societies.

10. The family is the fundamental unit of society and holds the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children. All institutions of society should respect and provide protection and assistance to parents and families so that children can grow and develop in a safe, stable and supportive environment.

11. We are determined to ensure access by families, caregivers and children themselves to a full range of information and services to promote child survival, development, protection and participation, and to reach them through communication and mobilization activities promoting behavioral development and change towards greater tolerance, equality and non-violence.

12. Poverty is the greatest obstacle to meeting the needs and fulfilling the rights of children. It must be tackled on many fronts, ***by a better management of countries resources***, from provision of basic social services to availability of micro credit, and from investment in infrastructure to management of debt and trade. Elimination of child poverty must be a key objective of all development efforts, following goals and strategies agreed upon at the Millennium Summit. ***Professional training and fight against corruption.***

Commentaries Art. 12. We added better management and struggle against corruption because we want money to get to children and poor families for their development. Professional training is important to improve the Income Generating Activities of children and youths, and of their families.

13. Driven by technological progress and market-oriented reforms, globalization is creating both opportunities and challenges for children. It promises renewed economic growth and rapid poverty reduction, but it is also helping to widen inequalities. ***Globalization should not weaken already poor states that still have to educate and provide healthcare for children.***

14. Our challenge is to harness the forces of globalization to make them work for the benefit of ***all poor states and their*** children. Massive investment in education and training to enable all children to partake in the breakthroughs in information and communication technologies would help close the “digital divide”, ensuring that globalization becomes more inclusive and its benefits are shared more equitably.

Commentaries Art. 13 and 14. We seriously discussed the situation of our States, that have a lot of problems and often function badly, but we think that they still have the responsibility to educate, provide health care and other social services. If private structures are in charge of these,

education and healthcare will not be accessible to poor children and their families because money will become the only decisive factor.

15. Discrimination promotes a self-perpetuating cycle of social and economic exclusion. Whether rooted in race, color, sex, religion, or other factors, it undermines children's ability to develop to the fullest.

16. In most societies the girl child needs special attention and protection, for she is an object of discrimination from the earliest stages of life and on into adulthood. In extreme situations, fewer girls than boys survive because of harmful attitudes and practices rooted in gender discrimination.

17. We will make every effort to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child, ***without discriminating the boy child***, while promoting gender equality and equal access to services, including basic education, primary health care and nutrition.

Commentaries Art. 17. We insist on boys because we see that everyone wants to help girls and we agree, but boys in our countries encounter new problems. In certain countries, girls don't pay school fees anymore, but boys must pay and expensively too, so they tend not to attend schools.

18. Goals for children, and particularly for girls, cannot be fully achieved unless women enjoy equality within families and societies, and are protected against violence and abuse.

19. It is vital that national goals for children include targets for reducing disparities, many of which arise from discrimination and form a core violation of the rights of the child. This will help to highlight gaps in performance and focus efforts on reducing disparities between girls and boys, between rural and urban families, and between wealthy and poor children, ***between working and school-going children.***

Commentaries Art. 19. We added discriminations between working children and school-going children, because we witness this in our daily lives. If you work you are treated badly as if you were not intelligent enough to go to school. Health wise, you don't get the same care as school children who even pay less.

20. In a child-friendly world, children are not only seen, but are also heard. In line with their evolving capacity, children and adolescents must receive encouragement and support to participate in processes and decisions that affect them. Their energy and creativity must be nurtured and developed as we help them acquire knowledge, and skills to cope with the demands of adult life, such as conflict resolution, decision-making and communication. ***Organizations of children and Youth who fight for their rights must be encouraged.***

Commentaries Art. 20. It is necessary to listen to and encourage all children, but also those that organize themselves to improve their rights and their situations. These children listen to themselves between themselves, and listen to advices from adults, they don't only think for themselves but also for those who are not organized. They make a lot of efforts to improve rights so it is necessary to support them.

21. One of the major lessons of the past decade has been that challenges confronting children must be addressed through

strategies that engage a broad range of actors. At a time of innumerable threats to children's security, from conflicts to drug abuse to abductions **to the all powerful reign of money**, we must strengthen our partnerships and leadership for children at all levels of society, and stand up against social disintegration, cynicism and fear.

Commentaries Art. 21. We think that the reign of money is a curse, because people and countries don't respect themselves anymore, they only respect money.

22. A number of global environmental trends need to be addressed to ensure the future well-being of children, including the challenges of inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene, unsafe drinking water, air pollution, hazardous wastes and crowded housing, all of which harm the physical and mental development of hundreds of millions of children.

23. We will therefore take measures to manage our natural resources prudently and to help break the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation. We will work to change the wasteful consumption **and polluting** patterns of the affluent in both developed and developing countries, and help inspire all children to respect the natural environment.

Commentaries Art. 23. We think that pollution is also a sort of waste. If one wastes less, the earth will be less polluted.

24. Many international treaties and United Nations conventions are essential foundations for building a world fit for children. We encourage all countries to sign, ratify and implement these instruments¹ as soon as possible. **They should see to it that none of these conventions turns a child into an "outlaw"**.

Commentaries Art. 24. A lot of laws are made for children, but children must not become outlaws. If a child must engage in petty trading to help his family or to eat, there should not be a law against him. It is necessary to define laws so that no-one steals from him, or treats him violently, even better, define laws that helps him and his family. But if one sets out a law against him, his merchandise will be taken from him, he will be asked to pay a fine to recover it, then his life will be even more difficult.

25. The principles proclaimed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, and survival and development, provide the best normative framework for all our actions. We therefore commit ourselves to implementing this Plan of Action through the following measures:

- a) To conduct impact assessments of legislation, policies, and resource allocations to ensure that they are child-friendly;
- b) To enhance widespread understanding of child rights; and

¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the International Labour Organisation Conventions No. 138 and 182; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; and the United Nations Convention against transnational organised crime

- c) To establish national mechanisms, such as independent ombudspersons for children, that will hold us accountable for our obligations to children. ***These ombudspersons could be adults or children and youth organizations.***

Commentaries Art. 25. When there are problems, children and youths are often arbitrators. For example they often intervene when there is a problem between a domestic working girl and her boss, sometimes it is to tell the boss to take it easy with the girl, sometimes it is to tell the girl to respect her boss. Our organizations are also arbitrators. Mothers also as well as traditional authorities (chiefs) arbitrate often.

II Goals, strategies and actions

26. The world now has the normative framework, the communications capacity, the technical know-how and the financial resources to meet the most pressing needs of children and to fulfill their rights.

27. Accordingly, we resolve to accord high priority to the following main areas of action over the next decade. In so doing, we can complete the unfinished agenda of the World Summit for Children, as well as address emerging issues vital to the achievement of the longer-term goals and objectives endorsed by major United Nations Summits and Conferences, in particular the Millennium Summit.

Promoting healthy lives

28. It is unconscionable that over 10 million children under five years of age die every year of preventable diseases and malnutrition; that complications in pregnancy and childbirth kill more than half a million women a year; that more than one billion persons cannot obtain safe drinking water, and that over two billion lack access to adequate sanitation.

29. We are determined to overcome this unacceptable situation by providing a safe and healthy start in life for all children, by providing primary health care in all communities, and by promoting a healthy lifestyle among adolescents and adults. Accordingly, we resolve to achieve between 2000 and 2010:

- a) Reduction in the infant and under-five mortality rate by at least one third;
- b) Reduction in the maternal mortality rate by at least one third;
- c) Reduction in the percentage of children with stunted growth under two years of age by at least one third;
- d) Reduction by at least one third in the number of people without access to hygienic sanitation facilities and affordable and safe drinking water; and
- e) Development and implementation of national early childhood development policies and programmes to ensure the enhancement of children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development.

30. To achieve these targets, we will carry out the following strategies and actions:

- Ensure that all women and adolescent girls have access to affordable quality reproductive health services, including birth spacing, pre-natal care, and essential obstetric and newborn care;

- Promote exclusive breastfeeding of infants for about six months, and continued breastfeeding with adequate complementary foods well into the second year; ***We do not understand these actions, will they be compulsory for all mothers?***

Commentaries Art 30: We discussed these measures with Mrs. Ouedraogo because we didn't understand if all mothers are obliged to breastfeed for 2 years. For some it will be difficult.

- Ensure routine childhood immunization of at least 80 per cent of children under one year of age in every district; immunization of women of childbearing age against tetanus; ***and a good immunization scheme against malaria***

Commentaries Art 30 Malaria is also dangerous but it is not mentioned in this text. We want to add it because everybody suffers from it and it kills a lot of children and mothers.

- Certify by 2005 the global eradication of poliomyelitis;
- Provide education and information to parents, caregivers and families to promote early childhood development programs, using nationally defined goals and indicators to monitor children's physical, psychosocial and intellectual development;
- Intensify proven cost-effective actions against diseases and malnutrition that are the major causes of child mortality and morbidity, including acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, malaria, measles, low birth weight, intestinal parasites, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS;
- Improve maternal and child nutrition through household food security, access to basic health services and adequate caring practices;
- Strengthen health and education systems, ***traditional and modern ones***, to provide integrated and effective health, nutrition, and child care in families, communities, schools, and primary health care facilities. ***Good healthcare should be accessible to those who cannot afford clinics and expensive drugs;***

Commentaries Art 30 Health and education systems are not the only modern systems. Very often, poor children and their families use the less expensive traditional systems that are part of our culture. We want them to be reinforced and organized in a better way so that everybody can benefit from the best in traditional systems.

In addition, we know that you are not treated properly if you don't have money for the drugs. Illness comes from God, the poor also must be taken care of.

- Promote healthy lifestyles among adolescents, especially to protect against the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse;
- Strengthen public-private partnership to accelerate progress towards the sustainable elimination of iodine deficiency disorders by 2005, vitamin A deficiency disorders and anemia, including iron deficiency, by 2010; and
- In efforts to ensure universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation, pay greater attention to building family and community capacity for managing existing systems and promoting behavioral change through hygiene education.

Providing quality education

31. Access to education is a human right—a key to reducing child labor, and promoting development and democracy. Yet over 110 million children of primary school age, the majority of them girls, are not enrolled in school. Millions more are taught by untrained and underpaid teachers in overcrowded, unhealthy and poorly equipped classrooms. And one third of all children fail to complete five years of schooling, the minimum required for basic literacy.

32. Ensuring free, compulsory (*for the States*) primary education, *flexible and* of good quality is therefore a high priority. As a step towards achieving the goals set at the World Education Forum, we resolve to achieve the following targets:

- a) Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- b) Reduce by 50 per cent the number of primary school-age children who are out of school and increase net primary school enrolment to at least 90 per cent by 2010; and
- c) Improve the quality of basic education to enhance children's levels of learning in numeracy, literacy, and life skills.

33. To achieve these targets, we will implement the following strategies and actions:

- Develop and implement special strategies to ensure that schools *and learning materials* are readily accessible to children and affordable to their families; and search more actively for children not in school and help them enroll and succeed. *School must be flexible and adaptable to situations and cultural backgrounds of all children;*
- Develop and implement special strategies to improve the quality of education to remove barriers to education for children excluded from school to meet the learning needs of all. *Particularly, strategies guaranteeing our future and initiating us to work;*
- Create with children a child-friendly learning environment in which students feel safe, protected from abuse and discrimination, and are encouraged to learn. An essential part of this process is education for peace, tolerance and human rights;
- Develop and implement programs specifically aimed at eliminating gender disparities in enrolment and gender inequality in education systems, whether it grows out of discriminatory cultural traditions, social attitudes and practices, or legal and economic factors;
- Ensure that basic education programs are responsive to the special learning needs of children with various forms of disabilities;
- Provide education and training opportunities to adolescents to acquire sustainable livelihoods;
- Enhance the status, morale, and professionalism of teachers, ensuring appropriate remuneration for their work;
- Develop responsive, participatory, and accountable systems of educational governance and management at school, community and national levels;
- Meet the learning needs of children affected by crisis – including armed conflict, natural disasters, and social instability – and conduct

education programs in ways that help prevent violence and conflict;
and

- Harness the rapidly evolving information and communication technologies to support basic education at an affordable cost, while reducing inequity in access and quality.

Commentaries Art. 32 and 33. *States must be obliged to educate, not children who should go to schools that don't exist.*

- *So that all children can benefit from an education, it is necessary that schools come to them, that it be flexible and adjust to their situations, be programmed during hours when they can study, and in places where they can learn. Those that must work because they cannot live otherwise must also have schools in conditions that respect them.*
- *Very often, school books and supplies as well as the uniforms are expensive, and that prevents children from going to school.*
- *You can see children who study, then continue up to university level and end up having no jobs. As they did not learn to work like those that couldn't go to school, they find themselves useless and don't know what to do. School must help to find work in an office but work can also be done elsewhere like we do. Otherwise, a lot of people and children or teenagers will say that that it is better to trade or to learn a profession, than to waste time at school.*

Protecting from abuse, exploitation and violence

34. Social and economic pressures are undermining the crucial role of parents and families in ensuring that children grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing environment. During the 1990s, more than 2 million children died as a result of armed conflict; more than three times that number were permanently disabled or seriously injured. Some 20 million children were displaced or became refugees. Over 100 million –*we would like to have details of this figure*– children are trapped in the worst forms of child labor. Millions of children are trafficked and sexually exploited.

Commentaries Art. 34. *We understood « worst forms » are forcing children into prostitution, slavery, forced labor, theft, drugs, and we have already said that all these are offenses. Do criminals force so many children to do such things?*

35. Children have the right to be protected against such abuse, exploitation and violence. Societies must ensure that no form of violence against children is ever considered acceptable. Accordingly, we resolve to:
- a) Protect all children from all forms of violence and abuse at the domestic, community and state level;
 - b) Protect children from the impact of armed conflict and forced displacement and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law;
 - c) Eliminate sexual exploitation and all forms of trafficking of children; **Remark: For us in Africa, sexual exploitation and child trafficking are two totally different things, why put them side by side?**

Commentaries Art. 35 c).

- c) We know of and fight against trans-border child trafficking, like those children who are maltreated in plantations, because no one should sell*

children and ill-treat them. But is this sexual exploitation ? It is better to separate sexual exploitation from child trafficking. Otherwise, people will think that in Africa child trafficking is solely done for sexual purposes. Children who are not trafficked for sexual purposes will feel that they are not respected because they are associated to sexual exploitation. They will feel ashamed and will want to hide.

d) Eliminate the worst forms of child labor, **and improve the conditions of the majority of working children who are in the other forms.**

Commentaries Art. 35 d). *If one only talks of the worst forms for the next 10 years, who is going to help us improve our living and working conditions? You should help us otherwise we will be discouraged for ever. We participate in actions and decisions for all children, but you should think about we who work in your UNGASS decisions! Should a child go into the worst forms to hope for an aid ?*

36. To achieve the above goals, we will implement the following strategies and actions:

- All countries to adopt legislation, policies and programs to protect children from all forms of violence, whether at home, in school or in the community, **particularly vis-à-vis children working in the streets;**
- End impunity for crimes against children by bringing perpetrators to justice and publicizing the penalties;
- Through political and religious leadership, advocacy and community education, make known the illegality and harmful consequences of failing to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation;
- Eliminate the use of child soldiers, curb the illicit flow of small arms, and eliminate threats posed by landmines, unexploded ordinance and other war materials that victimize children;
- Strengthen the monitoring of children affected by armed conflict, and ensure that their right to protection is systematically incorporated into the agenda of all peace processes, including peacemaking and peace-keeping operations;
- Ensure safe and unhindered access to humanitarian programs for children affected by armed conflict;
- Whenever sanctions are imposed, their impact on children should be assessed and monitored, with humanitarian exemptions that are child-focused and formulated with clear guidelines for their application;
- Develop time-bound and effective schemes to eliminate the worst forms of child labor through prevention, protection, and rehabilitation, with particular emphasis on basic education for all as a key strategy;
- **Develop programs to improve living and working conditions of children who do not work in the worst forms and support their organizations;**

- Raise awareness of the illegality and harmful consequences of the sexual exploitation of children. Identify and address the underlying causes of sexual exploitation. Protect the safety of victims of trafficking and exploitation;
- ***Protect victims of trafficking and exploitation (separate the articles);***
- Enlist the support of the private sector in a campaign against (***remove trafficking***) and sexual exploitation of children, especially through tourism and the Internet;
- Monitor and share information regionally and internationally on the cross-border trafficking of children. Educate border and justice officials to respect the dignity of women and children who have been trafficked. ***Implicate children organizations in this monitoring;***
- Promote law enforcement and separate juvenile justice systems that fully safeguard child rights with specially trained staff and seek children's reintegration in society;
- Protect children from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including corporal punishment;
- End traditional practices, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation, that undermine the rights of children and women;
- Establish mechanisms to provide special protection and assistance to children without primary caregivers;
- Adopt special measures, including campaigns at community level, to eliminate discrimination against indigenous, refugee, internally displaced, stateless, orphaned, minority, and migrant children, and children with disabilities, ***and working children***, and ensure their access to education, health and social services; and
- Develop national systems to ensure the registration of every child at or shortly after birth.

Commentaries Art. 36. Many children who work in the streets are victims of violence and that is why we want to add them here.

- *We added programs for working children and support to working children who organize themselves in order to improve their lives.*
- *We separated trafficked children from the sexually exploited ones, and we said that they should be returned home. Those that are economically exploited must be helped so that exploitation decreases or is put to an end if possible.*
- *We let sexual exploitation by itself in this article, the same could be done for trafficking.*
- *We should be associated to the struggle against trafficking because we are present in many cities, and we know things that others don't know. We already listen and help trafficked children. When we speak with them, we understand ourselves very well.*
- *In view of the special measures of education, healthcare, social services, protection, etc., working children should be added in this article in order for them to benefit from these.*

Combating HIV/AIDS

37. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is having a devastating effect on children and those who provide care for them. This includes the 13 million children orphaned by AIDS, the nearly 600,000 infants infected every year through mother-to-child transmission, and the millions of HIV-positive young people living with the stigma of HIV but without access to adequate counseling, care and support.
38. To combat the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on children, we resolve to take urgent and aggressive action to:
 - a) Reduce HIV infection rates in young persons aged 15 to 24 years by at least 25 per cent in the most affected countries by 2005, and by 25 per cent globally by 2010;
 - b) Provide at least 75 per cent of HIV-infected women throughout the world with effective treatment and care to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2010; and
 - c) By 2003, all countries should have in place explicit plans to provide orphans and children in families affected by HIV/AIDS, access to education, health and social services on an equal basis with other children, and to regularly monitor the care, health and well-being of all orphaned children.
39. To achieve the above goals, we will implement strategies and actions endorsed by the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, and in particular:
 - Prevent new infections through bolder action to ensure that all children, adolescents and caregivers are fully informed about HIV/AIDS, and provided life skills and learning opportunities to reduce their vulnerability;
 - Take special actions to reduce the vulnerability of children and adolescents (*boys and girls*) at particularly high risk of HIV infection – adolescent girls, street children, injecting drug users, sexually exploited children, and children and adolescents affected by violence and conflict;
 - Expand and strengthen efforts to work effectively with young people as partners in planning and implementing interventions for prevention, care and support of children and adolescents affected by HIV/AIDS; and promote adolescents' access to information, life skills, services, care and support that can help protect them from HIV/AIDS and that address the particular vulnerability of adolescent girls;
 - Minimize mother-to-child transmission of HIV by preventing HIV infection in pregnancy while expanding access to voluntary, confidential care and testing to enable pregnant women to know their status and be supported in decisions related to their own and their child's health. This will entail improving ante-natal care and ensuring safe delivery through the use of anti-retroviral drugs; promotion of appropriate infant feeding, and care for the health and well-being of mothers living with HIV;
 - Strengthen health and education services, and family and community networks to provide care and support for children, adolescents and parents living with HIV/AIDS. Sensitize

parents, caregivers, health workers and teachers and equip them to respond to the special care needs of HIV/AIDS-affected children;

- Provide special assistance to support children orphaned by HIV/AIDS; and
- Pursue all options to expand access to essential drugs, including anti-retrovirals. Use global trade policies more effectively to increase the availability of low-cost generic drugs; and pursue opportunities for compulsory licensing and expansion of national manufacturing capacities, where appropriate, to ensure the availability of affordable drugs to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Commentaries Art. 39. If teenagers are to be protected against AIDS, it has to be the girls and the boys, because teenage boys date teenage girls.

III. Mobilizing resources

40. Promoting healthy lives, providing quality education, protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence and combating HIV/AIDS are achievable goals and clearly affordable to the global community.
41. Investments in children are extraordinarily productive if they are sustained over the medium to long term. Investing in children is not about charity, but about laying the foundation for a strong economy, a just society, and a world free of poverty.
42. In fulfillment of our obligations as States Parties and signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we will use to the maximum extent all available resources nationally and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation to implement the goals and objectives of this Plan of Action.
43. Accordingly, we resolve to pursue the following global targets for mobilizing resources for children:
 - a) Restructure national budgets and aid flows to achieve universal access to basic social services of good quality, in line with the Oslo and Hanoi Consensus on the 20/20 Initiative;
 - b) Increase official development assistance to reach the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product of developed countries;
 - c) Accelerate debt relief for poverty reduction in the heavily indebted poor countries; and
 - d) Adopt a policy of duty- and quota-free access for essentially all exports from least developed countries.

We demand that articles 43 and 44 remain unchanged until the end of the UNGASS.

44. We will give priority attention to the needs of children in least developed countries and in sub-Saharan Africa.

Commentaries Art. 43 and 44. We demand that articles 43 and 44 remain unchanged until the end of the UNGASS. Because article 43 is going to insure that money is available to help children. If there is no money, there won't be any improvement. Article 44 refers to poor countries of sub-Saharan Africa, our countries, that have not made a

lot of progress as per child's rights. We ask all lecturers not to remove these articles.

45. We will respond positively to the special needs of the landlocked countries, small island developing countries and countries in transition in their efforts to improve the well-being of children and the protection of their rights.
46. We commit ourselves to mobilizing resources for children in a way that favors the social sectors over military expenditures.
47. The well-being of children is a global common good that warrants a closer examination of the merits of new partnerships and innovative arrangements for mobilizing additional resources, both private and public. We must therefore explore new proposals to finance global public goods for the fulfillment of child rights.
48. We call on the private sector and business community to assume greater corporate social responsibility to bring the benefits of research and development in science, medical technology, food fortification, education and mass communication to children in greatest need.
49. We ask for the full collaboration of all relevant United Nations bodies, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions and multilateral agencies, in giving high priority, in their work and in their allocation of resources, to the achievement of agreed international development targets to accelerate progress for children.

IV. Follow-up actions and monitoring

50. We will develop national and regional action plans by the end of 2002, with a set of specific, time-bound and measurable goals and targets based on this Plan of Action, with appropriate adaptation to specific country situations. We will make these goals for children an integral part of national and subnational development programs, poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches and other relevant development plans.
51. We will improve monitoring of progress towards the goals and targets endorsed in this Plan of Action as well as the broader set of child rights. This will require better data collection, analysis and disaggregation, including by sex, age, and relevant disparities, and strengthening of monitoring of the situation of children at international, regional and national levels while building community capacity for self-monitoring and planning.
52. We will conduct periodic reviews of progress in order to more effectively address obstacles and accelerate actions. Therefore:
 - a) We request the Committee on the Rights of the Child to include in its review of national reports efforts made by States Parties to achieve the goals and targets for children as agreed in this Plan of Action.
 - b) We request the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as the world's lead agency for children, to periodically prepare, in collaboration with relevant United Nations organs and agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and other multilateral bodies, as well as civil society, *and the children*, a consolidated analysis of actions taken by individual countries and the international community in support of the objectives of this Plan of Action.

- c) We request the Secretary-General to report regularly to the General Assembly on the progress made in the implementation of this Plan of Action.

Commentaries Art. 52. b) Children should never be forgotten when the issue is Controlling progress made in their favor. Because they must say if things are better or not.

53. As States Parties and signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we hereby commit ourselves to creating a world fit for every child, building on the achievements of the past decade and guided by the principle that the needs and rights of children must always come first. In solidarity with a broad range of partners, we will lead a global movement for children, that expresses our collective determination to create an unstoppable momentum for action. We make this solemn pledge secure in the knowledge that in serving the best interests of children, we serve the best interests of all humanity.