

THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR CHILDREN

A Discussion Paper

Background

The six founding partners¹ launched the Global Movement for Children [the GMfC] in January this year. The main activities of the GMfC since that date have been:

- **At international level** - the 'Say Yes For Children' campaign (which has collected some 20 million pledges from around the world), the development of the Action Matrix and the Leadership Initiative.
- **At national level** - a range of activities, many linked to promotion of the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign, but also including other campaigning, advocacy and public education initiatives. In some countries coalitions of CSOs have emerged as the local expression of the GMfC.

The majority of activity to date has been focused around the preparations for the Special Session on Children. However, it was always the intention to see the GMfC as a longer-term initiative aimed at building up broad support for children and encouraging greater accountability by governments and others for their actions towards children.

Where Has This Paper Come From?

A workshop, 'Making the GMfC a Reality', was convened at the Third PrepCom, in June 2001, to share information, experiences and ideas on the development of the GMfC. Over 100 representatives of NGOs, INGOs, youth and children's organisations attended this meeting. While acknowledging the early successes of the GMfC, the meeting also suggested that many people were still unclear about the purpose and future of the GMfC. Questions were raised about its dependence on the internet, how the 'Say Yes' pledges will be used after the Special Session, the importance of outreach to children and more marginalised groups, and the need for greater clarity about the GMfC's relationship with the outcomes of the Special Session and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [the CRC].

On the basis of the discussions at that meeting a workshop was convened in London between July 30th and 31st to consider how best to take forward the GMfC after the Special Session on Children. 52 participants from UNICEF, INGOs and national and regional NGOs attended the workshop². The main issues addressed by the meeting were firstly, consideration of common future action for the GMfC after the Special Session and secondly, discussion of possible models for the future structure and governance of the GMfC. Based on these discussions, this paper presents proposals for the future of the GMfC for debate and discussion.

¹ UNICEF, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, NetAid Foundation, Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision.

² A full report of the workshop is available.

What Is The Global Movement for Children?

A Vision of the GMfC

The Global Movement for Children exists to help create a broad and diverse **movement** of all those who are committed to making a 'world fit for children' through full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Plan of Action from the Special Session on Children. It brings together the global community of all those who share this common vision and aims to provide a focus for their actions and work. It is a catalyst and support for new partnerships, new commitments and renewed efforts to achieve this vision.

Intended Outcomes from the GMfC

- Greater respect for children and the contributions they make to their societies.
- Increasing participation by children in decision-making that affects them.
- More determined political will to achieve a better world for children.
- Increased commitment to, and practical action³ towards, fulfilling the CRC and the Plan of Action from the Special Session.
- Greater awareness of the violations of children's rights and a determination to stop them.
- Greater accountability of governments, international agencies, the private sector and CSOs for their actions towards children.

The GMfC's Key Values and Principles

Values:

- A commitment to children's rights and full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [the CRC]
- A commitment to the 10 imperatives of the Rallying Call for Children (which can be found at <http://www.gmfc.org/en/index.html> and are also a part of the Declaration in the outcome document from the Special Session on Children))

Working Principles:

- Action-oriented - a focus on mobilising action and practical change for children.
- Inclusive – connecting up and bringing together all those who wish to work for a better world for children within a framework of commitment to the CRC and the Rallying Call
- Participative - encouraging the active involvement of all, especially children and young people themselves.
- Transparent and democratic – guided by the priorities and needs of all those involved and encouraging their involvement in decision-making.
- Led from the grassroots – the GMfC should build on grassroots and community activism for children and encourage a bottom-up agenda.
- Facilitative and empowering - enabling those involved in the movement to achieve more than they could on their own.

³ Such as changes in budgetary priorities; legal reform; awareness raising; higher quality schooling and better protection in conflict situations

- Partnership - a belief in the value of collaboration between all sectors/actors⁴ in the interests of children.
- Diversity – encouraging a wide and varied range of activities which respond to local circumstances and needs
- Flexible - able to adapt its activities and structure over time as the GMfC develops

The GMfC's Activities and Functions

The role of the GMfC is to facilitate the continued growth of this organic movement, energise the work already going on, and empower partners - giving them the feeling of belonging to a larger movement whose partners all support one another. Its 'value added' is in enabling this to happen, building capacity at local level and encouraging the sharing of experiences and good practice. It should stimulate and support the involvement of new partners in working for the fulfilment of children's rights. The GMfC should not duplicate or replace existing activities, organisations or networks but support their efforts and encourage new initiatives where none exist.

The GMfC will work through:

- *Awareness raising*

Creating greater awareness of children's rights and the situation of children, as well as of key activities and documents such as States Parties reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and parallel actions by civil society. Greater use of existing media and commercial networks such as radio.

- *Campaigning*

Building on the success of the 'Say Yes' campaign at national and international level to develop local and global campaigns in support of children's rights. With an emphasis on bottom-up campaigning on local and national issues, these would aim to mobilise public action and support behind challenges to violations of children's rights and to generate greater accountability.

- *Building Bridges*

Encouraging new links to be made between different sectors and levels of society and the development of new partnerships at grassroots level in support of children's rights.

- *Information sharing*

Improving access to the exchange of good practice, lessons learnt and information about what is happening at all levels (grassroots, national, regional and international) to enable more effective and creative working through better, more timely and more relevant information flows.

- *Supporting Capacity building*

Identifying what is needed to develop and take forward campaigning, advocacy, public education, networking and partnership working among partners in the GMfC.

- *Monitoring and encouraging accountability*

Encouraging and supporting monitoring of the implementation of both the CRC and the National Plans of Action [NPA] from the Special Session on Children.

⁴ Such as children and youth, UN agencies, NGOs, faith groups, other CSOs, the private sector, government, parliamentarians, community leaders, academics, the media and professionals who work with children

Structure and Governance

Structure

The GMfC should not replace or duplicate what already exists at many levels of civil society. It should make best use of existing networks such as CRIN, the NGO Group for the CRC, the NGO Committee on UNICEF and regional groupings of national child rights coalitions. It should facilitate rather than lead, should be responsive to the needs and wishes of all those involved in the GMfC and encourage the emergence of a bottom-up agenda.

However, there is a need for some form of structure for the GMfC which can take responsibility for such functions as:

- Overall co-ordination of the GMfC, including developing a transparent process for setting overall goals and priorities (such as rapidly increasing the participation of children).
- Drawing in new resources and encouraging organisations to take responsibility for GMfC activities.
- Dialogue with grassroots and national level organisations in order to assess needs, identify support requirements, share experiences, poll views and monitor progress
- Identifying NGO and other CSOs who could facilitate the development of the GMfC in a country
- Liaising with INGOs and international agencies over the production of global GMfC 'products' (such as toolkits and campaign materials) and access to human, financial and organisational resources.
- Protecting the GMfC's branding, logo and integrity

At present the six founding members provide overall co-ordination of the GMfC but they are anxious to widen the involvement of others to give much greater representation to regional, national and grassroots organisations. Options discussed include:

- 1) Regional 'focal points', working with the six founding members, to co-ordinate the GMfC through linking the grassroots and national level to the international level. *This was the recommendation of the London GMfC meeting* because of its ability to enable greater participation by grassroots and national bodies and to encourage a more representative leadership. These focal points could be the 9 regional contact persons who are currently facilitating the process of decentralisation of the NGO Committee on UNICEF or could emerge through another process..
- 2) A small international secretariat to administer and co-ordinate the GMfC. The London meeting felt that this option was less sympathetic to the principles of a more 'bottom-up' and representative structure.
- 3) A continuation of the current arrangements with each of the 6 organisations having a designated focal point to take responsibility for core elements of the GMfC (such as global campaigns, the Action Matrix, grassroots mobilisation).

- 4) National GMfC groupings (coalitions, networks, etc), working in partnership with in-country INGOs to access support and resources, and connected to each other through email and internet.
- 5) A combination of 2 or more of the above.

Affiliation

There is a strong view that the GMfC should not have a formal membership but be open to all those who support its aims and share its vision. However it may be appropriate to have a procedure by which organisations 'affiliate' to the GMfC. Affiliation would be based on a declaration of adherence and support for the GMfC, the CRC and the 10 points of the Rallying Call. This mechanism would avoid the need to 'vet' or approve 'members' of the GMfC while providing a means of responding to the inappropriate and/or unprincipled use of the GMfC logo or name by any organisations. In such cases, organisations could be challenged about their support for the key principles and aims of the GMfC and any contradictions between those principles and their behaviour.

Next Steps

It is suggested that key priorities for the immediate future after the Special Session on Children might include:

- Creating greater awareness and understanding of the GMfC and broadening membership to make it more inclusive
- Feedback to those involved in the work already done by the GMfC (e.g. the Say Yes campaign) on the outcomes and future plans
- Developing a specific strategy for rapidly increasing the involvement of children at all levels to give them ownership of the GMfC
- Enabling NGOs and others to actively participate in the development of National Plans of Action and other follow-up to the Special Session.
- Considering the most effective ways to carry out innovative information sharing
- Assessment of the risks of abuse of the GMfC's branding, logo and open membership
- Developing annual campaigning either based on a global 'template' (such as 'Say No to Empty Promises to Children') and/or on regional or national priorities (as indicated, for example, through national voting patterns for the 'Say Yes' campaign).