

GHANA NGO COALITION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

30 May 2001

A Position Paper from the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child on the Revised draft outcome document of the Special Session entitled: “A world fit for children”

Executive Summary

The Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the child having studied the Revised draft outcome document of the Special Session entitled, “A world fit for children” strongly feels that all the key issues affecting children that should be reflected in the Goals, strategies and actions for implementation in the next decade has not been fully addressed. The coalition is of the view that for the UN to have an action plan focused on a few thematic areas of health, education, abuse, exploitation, violence and HIV/AIDS does not address the full gamut of issues affecting children of the world. The Coalition is of the view that the document must adopt a holistic approach to ensuring a world fit for children in the coming decade. This approach must be guided by and based on the almost universally ratified UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child also believes that the structure of the Plan of action is not ‘SMART’ enough and would make monitoring and evaluation difficult. Since the action plan is for a decade, it has to be broken down to short term, medium term and long term goals with clearly defined time lines.

I. Introduction

The Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child is made up of over 120 local non-governmental organizations spread all over Ghana. The members of the Coalition came together five years ago to network and strengthen their resolve to protect and promote the fundamental human rights of children as expounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

This paper is a review of the Revised draft outcome document of the United Nations Special Session on Children entitled: “A world fit for Children” by the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child. This paper is also a reflection of the position of the Coalition regarding the content of the “A world fit for Children” draft document. While the Ghana NGO Coalition is satisfied and affirm the 10 principles enunciated under chapter 5 of Declaration, the position of the Ghana NGO Coalition is that the structure of the document especially the Goals, strategies and actions should be looked at again.

II. Gaps in the Draft

- The Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child is of the view that the Plan of Action should be based on the full range of the Rights of the Child as set out in the UN Convention of the Child rather than on few thematic areas of health, education, abuse, exploitation, violence and HIV/AIDS.

The Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child has observed the following gaps in the Draft Outcome Document of the UN Special Session.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, poverty and the heavy burden of debts and debt servicing of state parties has been identified as the fundamental obstacle to meeting the needs of vulnerable sections of society especially children. It is therefore imperative that the issue of poverty and debt relief is highlighted and addressed as a matter of urgency. The Ghana NGO Coalition is of the strong conviction that addressing issues of social services such as education, health, combating HIV/AIDS and protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence without addressing the fundamental issue of poverty introduces too wide a gap in the report.
- The issue of children with disability and special needs has not been fully addressed since this issue goes beyond thematic areas of health and education. The need to adopt a holistic approach to this issue cannot be overemphasized since in developing countries very little is being done to include the needs of children with disabilities in socio-economic planning.
- With regards to the part 1 of the Plan of Action entitled: Creating a child-friendly world, the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the child is of the view that it is not enough for the outcome document of the Special Session on Children to identify and state the issues as have been done. More important is the need to set indicators and time lines to ensure that the issues identified would be implemented and would have the chance of being monitored and evaluated.