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For information

## **Follow-up to the United Nations Special Session On Children**

### **Introduction**

1. At the Special Session on Children, on 10 May 2002, the General Assembly adopted an ambitious agenda for children for the current decade, entitled *A World Fit for Children*<sup>1</sup>. The document's Declaration and Plan of Action call on Member States to complete the unfinished business of the 1990 World Summit for Children, and to address other goals, strategies and actions for children in the context of the Millennium Declaration.
2. *A World Fit for Children* acknowledges the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols as a comprehensive set of international legal standards for the protection and well-being of children. It stresses a global commitment to sustainable human development, taking into account the best interests of the child, and the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, including the right to development. It calls on all members of society to join in a global movement to help build a world fit for children through a commitment to a set of 10 key principles and objectives.
3. The Plan of Action requests UNICEF, as the world's lead agency for children, to support the implementation of *A World Fit for Children* and follow-up to the Special Session in all countries. As part of this effort, this document summarizes the suggestions of UNICEF for implementing both *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Declaration.
4. *A World Fit for Children* outlines a time-bound set of goals for promoting and protecting the rights of children. These goals are clustered in the Plan of Action in the four priority areas of promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS. Many of these goals correspond very closely to or directly support the longer-term Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration. *A World Fit for Children* provides a stepping-stone both for reaching those goals and for achieving the ideals and standards set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.

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<sup>1</sup> A/S-27/19/Rev.1

## **Global commitment – global movement**

5. The General Assembly adopted *A World Fit for Children* by consensus, i.e., without any dissenting votes. This base of unanimity augurs well for strengthening a global movement for children to build political support in favour of the commitments made in *A World Fit for Children*. Such a global movement is essential to reinforce existing commitments because, as the children who participated in the Special Session and the associated Children's Forum reminded us, words are not enough.

6. It is first and foremost the responsibility of the Governments of all Member States to implement the agenda of the Special Session. But a broad-based movement for children's rights is essential for a number of reasons. Alliances and partnerships between Governments and other actors who have positive contributions to make are key to achieving the agenda of *A World Fit for Children*. Such alliances and partnerships expand the base of resources and capabilities that can be mobilized for children.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, a broad-based movement can help open the way to addressing issues that would otherwise seem impossible to address.

7. Possible partners include municipalities; parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations; civil, religious and traditional leaders; families, communities and community groups; local interest groups; professional associations; the mass media; United Nations agencies; the private sector; and children and young people themselves. Such partnerships can also be useful for social mobilization and the mobilization and allocation of resources.

8. The commitments of *A World Fit for Children* provide a central focus for partnerships for children, including for poverty reduction. The systematic involvement of adolescents, women, ethnic minorities and people who are poor can help them to develop their capacities and expertise. It can also help to build and strengthen democratic and accountable governance from the local level onwards, and will be an essential element in ensuring responsiveness by the providers of basic services to the needs of their beneficiaries.

## **Complementarity between *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals**

9. *A World Fit for Children* recognizes that the goals emanating from the Special Session on Children are consistent with those of the Millennium Declaration.<sup>3</sup> Both *A World Fit For Children* and the Millennium Declaration are inspired by the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for human rights, dignity of the human person, equal rights of men and women, and establishment of conditions under which social progress and better standards of life are realized.

10. The four major goals of *A World Fit for Children* correspond closely to the Millennium Development Goals, as seen in the annex to this report. The goals of *A World Fit for Children* related to child protection do not have corresponding elements in the Millennium Development Goals, but are directly reflected in the Millennium Declaration (especially part 6). They also refer to

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<sup>2</sup> A/S-27/19/Rev.1, Para. 32.

<sup>3</sup> A/S-27/19/Rev.1, Para. 3.

important provisions in many international agreements, notably the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Yokohama Global Commitment 2001<sup>4</sup> and International Labour Organization Convention 182.

### **Policy options for Governments and their partners in implementing *A World Fit for Children***

11. Paragraphs 31 and 59-62 of *A World Fit for Children* outline the specific commitments of and policy options for Governments when implementing the Plan of Action. These commitments are:

(a) Incorporation of the agenda of *A World Fit for Children* into their social, economic, legislative and fiscal decision-making;

(b) Widespread involvement of civil society, including families and children, in the development of national programmes, policies and plans for children;

(c) Strengthening of national planning, coordination and implementation of programmes and policies for children;

(d) Establishment or strengthening of national bodies for the promotion and protection of child rights;

(e) Regular monitoring of the situation of children at national level and, where appropriate, at regional and subnational levels;

(f) Periodic progress reviews.

12. National Governments have several options available to them as they implement *A World Fit for Children*. The main options, which are not mutually exclusive, are:

(a) Development of a fully-fledged national plan of action (NPA) for children;

(b) Development of subnational (e.g., municipal or provincial) action plans for children;

(c) Integration of the agenda of *A World Fit for Children* into existing or future national policy frameworks (e.g., national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, comprehensive development frameworks, public expenditure reviews);

(d) Integration of the agenda into existing or future sectoral or multisectoral policy and legislative frameworks (e.g., sector-wide approaches, national health policies, national HIV/AIDS policies, national child protection policies and legislation, etc.)

13. Some countries are already pursuing one or more of these policy options. A number of countries in the Americas and Asia, for example, have completed or are developing new or revised NPAs for children. Other countries have chosen to mainstream children's rights and the goals and

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<sup>4</sup> Adopted by the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (17-20 December 2001) in Yokohama, Japan.

targets of *A World Fit for Children* into national development plans or poverty reduction strategies. Still others are working on “child-friendly” sectoral or intersectoral policies.

14. In many countries, however, specific measures for implementing *A World Fit for Children* have not yet been decided. In countries where there are as yet no specific follow-up measures, it is recommended that children's issues be included in the policy agenda in a systematic and sustained fashion. Many programmes for children are likely to be more effective if children themselves are involved in the planning process from the outset.

15. As a first step, Governments are strongly encouraged to start a broad-based national dialogue on children's rights and on implementing *A World Fit for Children*, involving civil society, the private sector, donors and representatives of children and young people. Such a dialogue should review the situation of children and the goals and targets of *A World Fit for Children* in the light of that situation. It should also take into account, as appropriate, observations on the country's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This process should result in a statement of joint commitment to a set of goals, targets and priority actions for children to be taken by different organizations, including policy and legislative measures.

16. The Government and its partners will then be able to decide whether they wish to prepare an NPA, or pursue their goals for children through any of the other policy instruments outlined above, or both. In countries where the agreed goals and priority actions for children are to be integrated in policy frameworks other than an NPA, it is important that this be done clearly, explicitly and comprehensively, in order to provide a basis for future monitoring and reporting on progress towards all relevant goals and targets of *A World Fit for Children*.

17. It is also essential to link national and subnational targets for children with resource allocations. The support of national and local political decision makers often has been decisive in ensuring sustained fiscal allocations. In some countries, exercises are or soon will be under way to introduce results-based budgeting into the central government budget, with results defined in terms of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Because six of the eight goals concern children directly, these or similar exercises offer significant opportunities for creating a more “child-friendly” set of public policies.

18. Supporters of children's rights should also use *A World Fit for Children* to build momentum for the Millennium Declaration, including part 6 on the protection of vulnerable groups. Unless the rights of vulnerable groups are explicitly promoted and protected by public policy, major development goals cannot be met. There is, for example, a clear link between gender-based violence and low school enrolment rates among girls.

19. Medium-term economic strategies should provide another valuable instrument in carrying forward national efforts for human development, and this may require ongoing dialogue with financial planners. While reaffirming the importance of a stable macroeconomic environment, it may be necessary for these discussions to emphasize adequate spending on children as an effective investment in the country's future growth. Similarly, advocacy, policy analysis and impact assessments may be needed to ensure that poverty reduction strategies and sector-wide approaches remain systematically oriented to children.

20. Developing and industrialized countries alike are expected to review and modify where necessary their policies, programmes and laws relating to children. This government-led process of self-examination should involve civil society and other key partners. In industrialized countries, the

review should focus not only on relevant national issues, goals and targets in such areas as protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence, combating HIV/AIDS and promoting healthy lives and quality education, but also how these countries allocate their official development assistance in support of *A World Fit for Children*.

21. Promoting *A World Fit for Children* in countries facing complex emergencies will likely require a different approach. In many of these countries, Governments are no longer able or willing to provide adequate protection and assistance to children. The usual policy mechanisms in these countries often have little meaning or efficacy, and social mobilization around *A World Fit for Children* may be very difficult. In such situations, the main contributions of international development partners should be to provide appropriate, adequate and timely humanitarian assistance and to promote the accountability of Governments, non-state actors, civil society and others for respecting their international obligations to children and women under international humanitarian and human rights laws.

22. The Convention on the Rights of the Child contains principles and shared values on which such policy initiatives can be based. Governments and their partners should implement the agendas of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals in a manner consistent with human rights principles.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

23. *A World Fit for Children* calls on the United Nations Secretary-General to report regularly to the General Assembly on progress made in implementing the Plan of Action. This will involve a detailed report, similar in scope and depth to *We the Children*, the Secretary-General's end-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children<sup>5</sup>, which will be prepared every five years, in 2006, 2011 and 2016. As the world's lead agency for children, UNICEF will play a key role in this process.

24. *A World Fit for Children* stresses the need for regular monitoring and assessment of progress towards the goals and targets of the Plan of Action, at the national level and, where appropriate, at regional and subnational levels.<sup>6</sup> This process is to inform periodic national and subnational reviews of progress in order to address obstacles more effectively and accelerate actions. It is up to countries to decide on the exact ways in which they will undertake this monitoring, assessment and review.

25. **All** Governments should plan to conduct national and subnational progress reviews in time to coincide with this schedule, much as was done during 2000-2001 for the end-decade review of progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children. To build and maintain consensus in support of children's rights and national goals for children, it is important to ensure the participation of civil society, children and young people in these reviews. Involving civil society will enhance the transparency and credibility of the reviews, thus improving their usefulness for policy reform.

26. A major tool for collecting information on the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action and for feeding it into the subnational, national and regional reviews will be the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS), a household survey tool designed to fill data gaps in key areas. The MICS was widely used for the mid-decade and end-decade reviews of

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<sup>5</sup> A/S-27/3.

<sup>6</sup> A/S-27/19/Rev.1, Para. 60.

progress after the World Summit for Children. Some countries will use demographic and health surveys (DHS) or other, more complex surveys, censuses or routine national statistical collection systems, rather than the MICS. It is foreseen that further rounds of MICS, DHS and related surveys will take place just prior to the national and regional reviews of progress scheduled to take place in 2005, 2010 and 2015, so that the data may be used in those reviews and in the ensuing policy dialogues. It is expected that the MICS or similar surveys will also take place, as before, in countries facing complex emergencies.

27. The collection, analysis and reporting of disaggregated data, combined with the participation of civil society in the national reviews, will help to maintain momentum in favour of the Declaration and Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children*. National monitoring of its goals and targets, as reflected in NPAs and other instruments should, however, be ongoing and form the basis of regular participatory reviews.

28. Monitoring the implementation of *A World Fit for Children* will also contribute to monitoring the Millennium Development Goals, since there is so much overlap in both sets of goals. Strengthening overall national statistical capacities will be important in helping to track the implementation of both agendas.

29. In accordance with paragraph 60 of the Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children*, countries should support and develop participatory and locally-based monitoring systems and processes, in addition to the periodic monitoring based around major household surveys and national statistical systems. These monitoring systems could include such areas as growth monitoring of infants by parents and health workers, and monitoring of school performance by parent-teacher associations. In many cases, NGOs may be better placed to take the lead in developing indicators and monitoring targets relating to child protection, to complement efforts by Governments as they develop national and local capacities to do so. The use of participatory mechanisms for consultation, representation and feedback should be encouraged to infuse national monitoring and reporting with local and children's perspectives, priorities and concerns. Student representation, youth organizations and, where established, polling of young people are among the possibilities.

30. *A World Fit for Children* encourages States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to consider including information on actions taken and results achieved in implementing the Plan of Action in their reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. However, reporting on the Convention and *A World Fit for Children* cannot be merged entirely, as both the form and the frequency of reporting are different. Although the process of reporting on the Convention is in place in almost all countries, more specific instruments for routine planning, implementation, monitoring and accountability to support the implementation of *A World Fit for Children* will often need to be better defined or brought together. National reports on the Convention can serve to highlight particular efforts and areas that are not covered by national reporting on the Millennium Development Goals and *A World Fit for Children*, and vice versa.

31. However, countries may wish to develop creative ways of linking reporting on the Convention and the implementation of *A World Fit for Children*. They could, for example, produce annual or biannual reports on the targets set by the Special Session and other aspects of children's rights. Even if these reports are not submitted formally to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, they can be used for the next formal five-year report. Integrating reporting on *A World Fit for Children* into the process of reporting on the Convention can also raise awareness that achieving the

goals of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Declaration is a way of realizing the rights of children.

32. Regional consultations played an important role in the preparation of the Special Session on Children. Regional groupings of Member States have proven valuable in building international consensus, identifying and addressing regional and transborder issues (e.g., child trafficking or polio eradication), sharing best practices (e.g., the New Partnership for Africa's Development), and creating forums for peer review and encouragement. Regional groups are expected to play similar roles in the follow-up to the Special Session, including through periodic reports and analysis of the situation of children in the region.

33. *A World Fit for Children* calls upon the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to support countries in its implementation in accordance with their respective mandates. Each of these entities is expected to develop its strategies and plan of action for implementation. The specific role of UNICEF is discussed below.

### **The role of UNICEF**

34. UNICEF will play both an operational and a catalytic role in supporting *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium agenda through its programme activities and also through its partnerships, alliances, advocacy, monitoring, research and policy analysis. The UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) for 2002-2005 "provides an outline of the role in and contribution of UNICEF to the promotion of the...World Fit for Children... for the first four years of that agenda, and for the long-term development agenda of the Millennium Declaration".<sup>7</sup> The five organizational priorities of the MTSP - girls' education, integrated early childhood development, immunization "plus", fighting HIV/AIDS, and child protection - are the areas where UNICEF believes it can make the most positive impact on the lives of children and women, in support of implementing *A World Fit for Children* and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

35. UNICEF-supported programme activities, information, advocacy, partnerships and internal management operations will be mobilized in support of this effort in developing countries. The Innocenti Research Centre will continue to contribute data and analysis on children's rights and well-being for use in policy discussions and advocacy, including in industrialized countries and countries in transition. National Committees for UNICEF will advocate and mobilize support for *A World Fit for Children* in industrialized countries.

36. Although strategies for follow-up to the Special Session on Children and the implementation of the Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children* will differ among countries and regions, UNICEF country offices and National Committees will promote certain common elements. Together with other partners, UNICEF will support national authorities in ensuring that the process of establishing or adjusting national and subnational child-related goals and targets is broad-based and participatory. UNICEF will work to ensure that *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium agenda are at the core of public policy, as a stepping stone to the full realization of the ideals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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<sup>7</sup> E/ICEF/2001/13, para. 1.

37. *A World Fit for Children* calls upon UNICEF to help prepare and disseminate information on the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action. Where requested by Governments, UNICEF will support new rounds of MICS, DHS or similar surveys during 2004-2005, 2009-2010 and 2014-2015, in time for the progress reviews outlined above. UNICEF will also support the use of data mapping techniques and analysis of performance gaps as part of these reviews.

38. As follow-up to the Special Session on Children reaches the review stage, UNICEF will assist national agencies and regional intergovernmental bodies as necessary in reviewing the status of children and the actions agreed in the context of NPAs or other policy and planning frameworks. UNICEF will encourage national and regional partners to consider the involvement of such key stakeholders as parliamentarians, civil society organizations, local government officials and adolescents in the review process. UNICEF country offices in developing countries will promote and assist national mid-term reviews led by Governments, including related surveys and studies. In industrialized countries, UNICEF and its National Committees will promote monitoring and review efforts by Governments.

39. UNICEF will work in partnership with national Governments, other United Nations agencies and NGOs, among others, to monitor and analyze achievements with respect to both the Millennium Development Goals and *A World Fit for Children*. In this effort, UNICEF has a particular responsibility to promote monitoring and data analysis on the situation of children and women, especially the disaggregated analysis of data to understand gender-based and other disparities. It will not be possible to monitor all the goals and targets of *A World Fit for Children* with equal frequency and attention. Some of the goals and strategies are not easily measurable, and a survey instrument which tried to measure all of them would become overloaded, thus impairing both response rates and the quality of data. UNICEF will work with relevant partners, especially NGOs, in promoting qualitative monitoring of such goals and strategies.

40. UNICEF will promote and, where necessary, provide technical support to strengthen the linkage between national progress reviews for *A World Fit for Children* and the national reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

41. At the global level, UNICEF will work with sister United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, international NGOs, professional service and religious associations, networks of parliamentarians and regional groups to promote the agendas of both *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Declaration and to monitor and report on global progress. Finally, UNICEF will serve as the secretariat for the preparation of the Secretary-General's quinquennial reports to the General Assembly on progress in 2006, 2011 and 2016.

## Annex

### Linkages between the priority areas of *A World Fit for Children*, the Millennium agenda, the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan for 2002-2005 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Goals of the World Fit for Children (Declaration of the Special Session of the GA on Children, May 2002)	The Millennium Agenda: Millennium Summit Declaration and Millennium Development Goals	Organizational Priorities in UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2002-2005	Directly Relevant CRC Articles
Promoting healthy lives	Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Goal 4: Reduce child mortality; Goal 5: Improve maternal health; Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	Integrated early childhood development; Immunization Plus	Art. 2, 6, 24, 27, 31
Promoting quality education	Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education; Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empowerment of women	Girls' education	Art. 2, 28, 29
Combating HIV/AIDS	Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empowerment of women	Fighting HIV/AIDS; Girls' education	Art. 2, 6, 8, 21, 24, 28, 29
Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence	Millennium Summit Declaration Section 6 – "Protecting the Vulnerable"	Child protection; Fighting HIV/AIDS	Art. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40,

\* See detailed targets for each priority area in the document \_\_\_\_\_