

# The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the mechanisms for its implementation

*The 54 articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) created in 1989 spell out basic human rights for children: the rights to survive, to develop to their fullest potential, to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. In addition, the CRC spells out how these rights are to be enforced by setting standards for implementation, reporting mechanisms for States Parties that are signatories to the treaty, and by articulating the principles upon which National Policies, legal frameworks, and Plans of Action shall be based.*



The full text of the CRC is on UNICEF's website (see above) and can be read on the Early Childhood Counts CDROM (document name gn1crxi.pdf)

created by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care (CG) and Development, in collaboration with The World Bank Institute and produced in partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Christian Children's Fund, UNICEF and UNESCO. The CDROM can be obtained from The Secretariat, The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development: [infor@ecdgroup.com](mailto:infor@ecdgroup.com); or through the CG website: [www.ecdgroup.com](http://www.ecdgroup.com)

## Committee on the Rights of the Child

Myers (1995)<sup>1</sup> notes that one mechanism created within the Convention to reinforce promises made by signatories is the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Article 43). As part of their commitment upon signing the document, countries agree to report to this United Nations Committee on their activities related to the Convention within two years after signing the Convention and again every five years thereafter (Article 44).

He reminds us that the Committee has established a format and a process for national reporting. According to the Convention, reports 'shall indicate factors and difficulties, if any, affecting the degree of fulfilment of the

obligations under the present Convention'. The resulting national reports, which are supposed to be in the public domain in each country (Article 44, Section 6), are presented to the Committee which then comments on the reports, raising questions and making suggestions for further improvements. Every two years, the Committee reports to the UN General Assembly. This process has in some cases stimulated additional action and/or led to useful public debate in the respective countries about the rights and welfare of children.

Summary records are prepared for all public and some private meetings of the Committee. The Initial and Periodic Reports of States Parties, Concluding Observations of the Committee and

other records and reports on the Committee's sessions are available through: Secretariat to the Committee on the Rights of the Child Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Room D.205, Palais des Nations, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; [www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch)

## World Summit for Children and National Plans of Action

In September 1990, the first World Summit for Children was hosted by



UNICEF and attended by 71 heads of state and government and 88 senior officials. The purpose of this Summit was to create greater shared understanding of the CRC. At the conclusion of the World Summit for Children, a worldwide Plan of Action was adopted, obligating those who attended to create national plans for the decade of the 1990s. The World Summit Plan of Action sets out 25 specific goals, based on provisions of the Convention. National Plans or Programmes of Action (NPAs) are, in many cases, linked to this worldwide Plan of Action, rather than directly to the broader wording of the CRC itself. Most of the participating nations in the Summit and the signatories to the Convention have now formulated NPAs for children, and, in some cases, the NPAs have been decentralised and Local Programmes of Action (LPAs) have been formulated.

A ten year follow on Summit for Children (The Special Session on Children), is being convened in UN Headquarters in New York, in September 2001, to update the worldwide Plan of Action and examine global progress in implementing the CRC.

### NGO Activities

Myers<sup>2</sup> also reminds us that another development fostered by the Convention has been the appearance of activities explicitly intended to further adherence to the provisions of the Convention, that are being carried out by new national, regional and international groupings of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Some of these activities are educational, promotional, or service actions by NGOs intended to reinforce particular rights and to directly improve living conditions affecting the welfare of children. Other activities are focused on sharing information and on monitoring the process of complying with the Convention.

These mechanisms include international networks such as the Children's Rights Information Network, regional networks such as the Latin American Regional Collective to Help Follow Up the Convention, and national groups (such as the 13 national groups of NGOs participating in the Latin American Regional Collective or the Philippine NGO Coalition for

Monitoring the UN CRC). In some cases, these NGO groups also provide information to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Some of the national NGO groups have produced parallel reports (to those of the government) on the status of children in their countries and others have cooperated with the government in producing a joint report. The Committee uses this information when interpreting governmental reports and in formulating questions and suggestions to governments.

In addition, The Global Movement for Children, instituted in 1999, is an international bringing together of UN Agencies, NGOs, donor organisations and youth to promote a more general awareness of the CRC and children's rights (see page 26). ○

### notes

1. Myers R (1995) 'The Convention on the Rights of the Child: moving promises to action' *Coordinator's Notebook No. 17; The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development*
2. Myers R; *op cit*



Every child has the right to a home and a family that love and take care of them. from: *A child friendly world*; UNICEF/Philippine Children's Television Foundation