

19 March 2001

Original: English

**Preparatory Committee for the Special Session
of the General Assembly on Children**
Third substantive session
11-15 June 2001

Revised draft outcome document

A world fit for children

**Revised draft text submitted by the Bureau of the Preparatory
Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly
on Children**

Summary

In its resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, the General Assembly decided to convene a special session to review the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children, and decided that the special session would undertake a renewed commitment and consider future action for children in the next decade. In its resolution 55/26 of 20 November 2000, the General Assembly decided to hold the special session on children from 19 to 21 September 2001.

The Preparatory Committee, at its second substantive session (New York, 29 January-2 February 2001), authorized its Bureau to prepare, with the support of the substantive secretariat, a revised version of the draft outcome document, taking into account the views expressed during its second substantive session, for consideration at its third substantive session (see A/S-27/2, para. 20).

The present revised draft outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children", has been prepared accordingly.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Declaration.....	1–6	3
Plan of Action	7–53	4
I. Creating a child-friendly world.....	7–25	4
II. Goals, strategies and actions.....	26–39	6
Promoting healthy lives.....	28–30	6
Providing quality education	31–33	8
Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence	34–36	9
Combating HIV/AIDS.....	37–39	10
III. Mobilizing resources	40–49	12
IV. Follow-up actions and monitoring	50–53	13

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 report of the Secretary-General entitled "We the Children".¹ 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,² we affirm our obligation to safeguard the rights of all children through national action and international cooperation.

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 that 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 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 are 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 will lead to three key outcomes that all caring parents seek for their children:

(a) 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;

(b) Completion of a basic education of good quality;

(c) 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 behavioural 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, from provision of basic social services to availability of microcredit, 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.

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 is also helping to widen inequalities.

14. Our challenge is to harness the forces of globalization to make them work for the benefit of all 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.

15. Discrimination promotes a self-perpetuating cycle of social and economic exclusion. Whether rooted in race, colour, 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 while promoting gender equality and equal access to services, including basic education, primary health care and nutrition.

18. Goals for children, 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.

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.

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, we must strengthen our partnerships and leadership for children at all levels of society and stand up against social disintegration, cynicism and fear.

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 help to break the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation. We will work to change the wasteful consumption patterns of the affluent in both developed and developing countries, and help to inspire all children to respect the natural environment.

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 instruments³ as soon as possible.

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;
- (c) To establish national mechanisms, such as independent ombudspersons for children, that will hold us accountable for our obligations to children.

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 fulfil 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 more than 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 people cannot obtain safe drinking water; and that more than two billion people 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, providing primary health care in all communities and 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 in the number of people without access to hygienic sanitation facilities and affordable and safe drinking water by at least one third;

(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 the reduction of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality is a health-sector priority, and 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;
- Protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding of infants for about six months, and continued breastfeeding with adequate complementary foods well into the second year;
- 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 extension of the benefits of new and improved vaccines and other preventive health interventions to children in all countries;
- Certify by 2005 the global eradication of poliomyelitis;
- Provide education and information to parents, caregivers and families to promote early childhood development programmes, 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, diarrhoea, 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 to provide integrated and effective health, nutrition, and childcare in families, communities, schools and primary health-care facilities;
- Promote healthy lifestyles among adolescents, especially to protect against the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse;
- Strengthen public-private partnerships to accelerate progress towards the sustainable elimination of iodine deficiency disorders by 2005, vitamin A deficiency disorders and anaemia, including iron deficiency, by 2010;
- 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 behavioural change through hygiene education.

Providing quality education

31. Access to education is a human right — a key to reducing child labour and promoting development and democracy. Yet more than 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 primary education of good quality is therefore a high priority. As a step towards achieving the goals set at the World Education Forum, held at Dakar from 26 to 28 April 2000, we resolve to achieve the following targets:

(a) Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005;

(b) Reduce the number of primary school-age children who are out of school by 50 per cent and increase net primary school enrolment to at least 90 per cent by 2010;

(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 are readily accessible to children and affordable for their families, and search more actively for children not enrolled in school and help them to enrol and succeed;
- Develop and implement special strategies for improving the quality of education so as to remove barriers to education for children excluded from school and meet the learning needs of all;
- Create with children a child-friendly learning environment, in which students feel safe, are 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 programmes that specifically aim to eliminate gender disparities in enrolment and gender inequality in education systems, whether they are the result of discriminatory cultural traditions, social attitudes and practices or legal and economic circumstances;
- Ensure that basic education programmes 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 the 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 programmes in ways that help to prevent violence and conflict;
- Harness the rapidly evolving information and communication technologies to support basic education at an affordable cost, while reducing inequity in access and quality.

Protecting against 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 and some 20 million were displaced or became refugees. More than 100 million children are trapped in the worst forms of child labour. Millions of children are trafficked and sexually exploited.

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 levels;
- (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;
- (d) Eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

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

- All countries to adopt legislation, policies and programmes to protect children from all forms of violence, whether at home, in school or in the community;
- End impunity for crimes against children by bringing perpetrators to justice and publicizing the penalties for such crimes;
- 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 ordnance 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 peacekeeping operations;
- Ensure safe and unhindered access to humanitarian programmes 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 labour through prevention, protection and rehabilitation, with particular emphasis on basic education for all as a key strategy;
- 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;
- Enlist the support of the private sector in a campaign against 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;
- 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 the community level, to eliminate discrimination against indigenous, refugee, internally displaced, stateless, orphaned, minority and migrant children and children with disabilities, and ensure their access to education, health and social services;
- Develop national systems to ensure the registration of every child at or shortly after birth.

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 counselling, 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 by 2010 with effective treatment and care to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV;

(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 the strategies and actions endorsed by the General Assembly at its 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 with life skills and learning opportunities to reduce their vulnerability;
- Take special actions to reduce the vulnerability of children and adolescents 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 antenatal 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;
- 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.

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 are clearly affordable for 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 fulfilment 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, both nationally and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, 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 Consensuses 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;

(d) Adopt a policy of duty- and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the least developed countries.

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

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 favours 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 fulfilment of child rights.

48. We call on the private sector and the business community to assume greater corporate social responsibility for making the benefits of research and development in science, medical technology, food fortification, education and mass communication available 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 programmes, poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches and other relevant development plans.

51. We will improve the 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 improved collection, analysis and disaggregation of data, including by sex, age and relevant disparities, and improved monitoring of the situation of children at the 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, 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, 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.

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.

Notes

¹ A/S-27/___.

² General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

³ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex) and its optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (General Assembly resolution 54/263, annexes I and II); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex); International Labour Organization Conventions Nos. 138

and 182 on child labour; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (A/CONF.183/9); the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (see CD/1478), and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I).
