



CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1997-03330

Expanded Number **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1997-03330**

External ID **E/ICEF/1986/NGO/0002**

Title

Statement by the International Association of Schools of Social Work on "Children in especially difficult circumstances", for the UNICEF Executive Board meeting, 14-25 April 1986

Date Created / From Date

Date Registered

Date Closed / To Date

Primary Contact

Home Location **Off of Secy, ExecBoard, UNICEF NYHQ = 3024**

4/11/1986

1/1/1997

F13: Record Copy? **No**

Owner Location **Off of Secy, ExecBoard, UNICEF NYHQ = 3024**

Current Location/Assignee **Record & Archive Manage Related Functions=80669443 since 3/19/2001 at 1:56 PM**

F12: Status Certain? **No**

01: In, Out, Internal Rec or Rec Copy

Contained Records
Container

Date Published

Fd3: Doc Type - Format

Da1:Date First Published

Priority

Record Type **A04 DOC ITEM: E/ICEF 1946 TO 199**

Document Details **Record has no document attached.**

Notes

Document Format Series/Year/SubSeries/Number/Rev: **E/ICEF/1986/NGO/0002; Doc**

Series/SubSeries/Year/Number/Rev: **E/ICEF/NGO/1986/2**

Doc Series: **E/ICEF/NGO; Series Valid date on import: 01-Jan-1953; Doc Year: 1986; Doc Number: 0002; Doc**

Numb Short: **2; Doc Revision #:**

English, L.Avail: **E.; L.Orig: E-?**

Document Alternate Media Store [AMS]: **006; Type AMS: MF**

Note PDF or TIF: **Chk_PDF: No; Chk_PDF_Prob: No; Comment: ; Chk_TIF: No; Chk_TIF_prob: No; TIF ID# Start**

= ; TIF ID# end =

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL
E/ICEF/1986/WCO/2
11 April 1986
ENGLISH ONLY

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
1986 session

FOR INFORMATION

Statement by the International Association of Schools of Social Work
on "Children in especially difficult circumstances," for the
UNICEF Executive Board Meeting, 14 to 25 April 1986

1. UNICEF leadership in defending and meeting the needs of "Children in especially difficult circumstances" (E/ICEF/1986/L.3) is heartily welcomed by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). Protecting and helping such children has always been a central activity of the social work profession. Preparing qualified personnel to carry out the service function is a major concern of the schools of social work that make up the membership of IASSW, the only official world-wide organization representing social work education.
2. Of particular interest to IASSW are the recommendations pertaining to capacity building and organization. Typically included as subjects of study in social work education are: policy and programme analysis, programme implementation and evaluation in all areas of child welfare. The nearly 500 schools located in universities, institutes and non-profit organizations in 70 countries in every geographical region represent a vast array of dedicated teachers, students and practitioners. For UNICEF they constitute a valuable reservoir of scholarly resources, research capacities, practitioner networks, plus years of "hands-on" experience working with abandoned, endangered, exploited and abused children in a range of capacities from grass-roots social development to social policy and planning. Training and education at every academic level are available within the membership of the Association.
3. IASSW applauds the recommendation that UNICEF strengthen not only its own capacity and that of Governments, but also the capacities of universities, institutes and non-governmental organizations in planning and programme development, personnel training, and pilot programmes. The many affiliates of IASSW stand ready to collaborate with UNICEF through contracting, collaboration or provision of specialized personnel and data needed for effective service to children in especially difficult circumstances. Much of the information indicated in the recommendation already exists and is available from these affiliates. Through collaboration with IASSW, the UNICEF initiative could save significant time and resources in establishing advocacy networks, many of which are already in place and well tended.
4. IASSW is eager to join with UNICEF at the international and country levels in building bridges and lighting "the beacon for tomorrow". The details of co-operative work will be explored immediately upon approval by the Executive Board of the policy directions so persuasively and effectively outlined in the report on "Children in especially difficult circumstances".