

**CHAPTER 5:
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES FOR ADVOCACY AND ACTION**

WOMEN, GENDER AND THE GIRL CHILD

Introduction

As part of the 10-point commitment made at the World Summit for Children, leaders vowed to strengthen the role and status of women, recognizing that this would be both a valuable contribution to national social and economic development and a boost to the well-being of children. They further recognized that efforts for the enhancement of women's status and their role in development must begin with the girl child who must be given equal treatment and opportunity from the beginning. Twelve of the goals of the World Summit relate explicitly to the special needs of girls and women. They include halving the maternal mortality rate, focusing on female literacy, achieving equal educational opportunities for girls and boys, and recognizing the special health and nutrition needs of females during early childhood, adolescence, pregnancy and lactation. Gender equality and equal rights for women and girls have been major themes in the global commitments emerging from other world conferences of the 1990s, particularly the International Conference on Population and Development and its follow-up and Fourth World Conference on Women and its follow-up. Gender has also arisen as a central concern in international mobilization against HIV/AIDS. The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets forth universal standards for the creation of a positive environment for all children, with non-discrimination an underlying principle. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) further safeguards the rights of both women and children.

UNICEF approaches

Over the decade, UNICEF has played a key role with its partners in advocating and supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In this, it is guided by its policies on the advancement of women and girls; its 1996 Mission Statement which pledges to “*promote the equal rights of women and girls and support their full participation in the political, social and economic development of their communities*”; and the adoption of a human rights based approach to programming. UNICEF's policies and programmes are anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and underpinned by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women which together provide the complementary framework for UNICEF's mission and mandate. The essential human rights principles of non-discrimination and universality strengthen programming for gender equality, while the ‘life-cycle’ approach adopted as a framework for analysis and action has strengthened the focus on the girl child. Together with the organizational impetus provided by follow-up to commitments of the World Summit for Children and the gender-sensitive goals that the Summit espoused, these have helped focus UNICEF efforts to combat the intergenerational patterns of gender discrimination that impede full realization of the rights of women and girls. Basic strategies over the decade have encompassed a ‘three-pronged’ approach including ‘mainstreaming’ gender concerns in advocacy and action; promoting gender-specific programme activities targeting girls and women; and giving special attention to the girl child.¹

Evolution of policy

UNICEF has had a long history of caring for women and girls, with an evolutionary dialectic in its approaches to women as both mothers and as women in their multiple roles. Since 1985, when UNICEF was among the first UN agencies to adopt a specific policy for the advancement of women and girls,² UNICEF has aimed to strengthen activities to improve women's education and health and promote women's social and economic empowerment, both in their own right and as the key to the success of child survival and development. The recognition of the strong relationship between the social and economic position of women and the well-being of children resulted in increased programmatic attention to women's literacy, access to credit, economic activities, labour saving devices to reduce drudgery, and mobilization and organization of women for their participation in decision-making in their communities³.

In 1990, the UNICEF Executive Board (in *decision 1990/17*) called upon all UNICEF offices to incorporate effectively women's concerns and needs in all components of the country programmes, particularly in the light of the joint goals and strategies for the decade. It also endorsed the priority focus given to the girl child in UNICEF's 1990 progress

¹ *Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls: a policy review* (E/ICEF/1994/L.5).

² *UNICEF response to women's concerns* (E/ICEF/1985/L.1)

³ UNICEF internet Programme/GPP

report on achievements in the implementation of its policy on women in development⁴ and recommended that all UNICEF programmes and strategies in the 1990s explicitly address the status of the girl child and her needs, particularly in nutrition, health and education, with a view to eliminating gender disparities.

In line with the evolution of thinking on women and gender issues, UNICEF's 1994 policy on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls called for a shift from the 'women in development approach' to the gender approach, whereby changing women's status involves the analysis of structural causes that determine the role and status of both men and women, with actions designed to overcome those that perpetuate the inequalities that women and girls face throughout their lives. The policy also recommended a mainstreaming of the gender perspective in UNICEF country programmes of cooperation, with gender to be promoted as a cross-cutting concern in national development plans and in the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children. It called particularly for the establishment of data systems disaggregated by age and sex and identified priority areas for action for girls and women within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.⁵ UNICEF's dual focus on the rights of women and girls was reinforced in the 1996 Mission Statement which pledges to UNICEF to "*promote the equal rights of women and girls and support their full participation in the political, social and economic development of their communities.*"

Beijing and Beijing+5

The mid-decade review of progress towards the Summit goals and annual reports to the Executive Board on follow-up to the Summit have emphasized, *inter alia*, the need to adopt gender-sensitive approaches to girls' education, maternal mortality reduction and the elimination of gender disparities in the monitoring of national achievements.⁶ Mobilization around issues related to women and gender intensified around mid-decade in connection with preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, September 1995 and its follow-up processes and review. The Beijing Conference renewed global commitment to uphold the rights of women, focusing on cross-cutting concerns for equality, development and peace. Twelve critical areas of concern formed the basis for the Beijing Platform of Action which identified specific targets aimed at enhancing the social, economic and political empowerment of women, improving their health and access to quality education, and promoting reproductive rights. While the year 2000 Beijing+5 review of achievements since the Fourth World Conference on Women confirmed progress in a number of critical areas of concern for women and girls, it also revealed such progress has been uneven, and persistent patterns of discrimination continue to mark all dimensions of women's lives.

UNICEF played an active role in both preparations and follow-up to the Beijing Conference on women. It lobbied successfully for inclusion of the girl child on the broader agenda of Beijing, and articulated three priority areas endorsed by the Executive Board for its own programmatic follow-up in implementation of the Platform of Action. These included girls' education; the health of girls, adolescent girls, and women; and children's and women's rights. As a cross-cutting theme, UNICEF identified the need to strengthen partnerships for advocacy and action on the girl child and women's empowerment.⁷

For the Beijing+5 review, UNICEF prepared a special publication reflecting on lessons learned⁸ and organized a number of special events and panels designed to mobilize thinking and partnerships around next steps and strategies to advance the goals of the Platform of Action. Key themes included girls' education; gender and HIV/AIDS; ending gender violence and the sale and trafficking of girls and women; and strengthening convergence between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). UNICEF participated with UN partners in panels and discussions on women leaders, female genital mutilation, women and emergencies, and mainstreaming gender in programmes and budgets. A number of these were organized by the Task Force of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, of which UNICEF is a member. Partnerships with NGOs also resulted in a number of special events organized with adolescent girls as participants and aiming to strengthen coalitions and alliances for and with girls.

Capacity building for gender and empowerment

A multi-donor evaluation in 1992 had concluded that strengthening gender awareness among UNICEF staff was an essential element to help UNICEF move from gender advocacy to action in its country programmes. Since 1993,

⁴ *Progress report on achievements made in the implementation of UNICEF policy on women in development (E/ICEF/1990/L.1).*

⁵ *Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls: a policy review (E/ICEF/1994/L.5).*

⁶ As reported in *Progress report on mainstreaming gender in UNICEF (E/ICEF/1999/13).*

⁷ *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/ICEF/1996/3)*

⁸ *Equality, Development and Peace/ Beijing+5, Women 2000*

capacity-building for staff and counterparts has been identified as a major strategy for mainstreaming gender. The strategy has included development of a gender training package and programme guidance materials for gender mainstreaming, as well as the development of a network of staff members in regional and country offices to serve as gender focal points. The UNICEF gender training package focuses on gender analysis and the application of the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework (WEEF) in the country programme. The package is available in English, French and Spanish and has been used to train staff in all regions. In addition, a regional training package on gender has been developed in English and Arabic by the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa. Globally, by the year 2000, more than 1,250 staff and 9,500 national partners had been trained in gender mainstreaming processes and techniques, with gender focal points operating at regional and country level to act as catalysts, advocate and change agents. As recently noted, however, many of these gender focal points have other responsibilities, which can affect their level of support to gender mainstreaming. Moreover, enhanced institutional mechanisms are needed to monitor gains achieved to date and improve sustainability.⁹

Support for a variety of measures

Through the application of the rights framework and WEEF, UNICEF country programmes are increasingly mainstreaming gender activities in country programmes and developing specific actions to improve the status of women and girls. A variety of measures are now being supported including the following:

Action for women and girls

- ◆ Strengthened collection, analysis and use of gender- and age-disaggregated data in national development plans and social policy formulation and incorporation of a life-cycle perspective into situation analyses, with support for national capacity-building in gender analysis;
- ◆ Legal reform, including support for laws consistent with the CRC and CEDAW; training for better implementation of laws; heightened attention to issues of family law and inheritance; and legal safeguards against violence and harmful traditional practices;
- ◆ Research, advocacy and awareness raising to 'break the silence' and stimulate action on issues of particular concern, for example, violence against women and girls; sexual exploitation; trafficking in women and children; early marriage; and other key obstacles to the realization of the rights of women and girls;
- ◆ Integrated, multisectoral interventions for women's strengthened participation in local governance, efforts to eliminate gender-based discrimination, and support for adolescent girls;
- ◆ Support for national follow-up to Beijing and Beijing+5 processes, strengthened partnerships at all levels, and capacity-building for implementation of a variety of actions;
- ◆ Creation of new opportunities for community dialogue about power; gender roles in families (including gender socialization of children and the role of men in children's lives); the links between children's well-being and the care and well-being of women; and the complementarity between CRC and CEDAW;
- ◆ Promotion of gender-sensitive goals and strategies in programmes in health, nutrition, early child care and development, education, and water and environmental sanitation, taking into account the participation of women and girls;
- ◆ Special initiatives for girls' education, including the challenging of stereotypes in the learning environment and innovative approaches to expanding access and enrolment (*see examples in education chapter*);
- ◆ Establishment of 'mother-friendly' health services and communities, in partnership with local governments and communities, with families and neighbours supporting women in decision-making through protection of their survival and good health;
- ◆ Integration of gender concerns into programmes to combat HIV-AIDS, with a special focus on adolescent girls and women;
- ◆ Promotion of school sanitation for girls and measures to address the different roles and responsibilities of women and men in the collection and use of water at household levels;
- ◆ Support for micro-credit programmes, incentives for income generating activities for women, and cooperatives, often in association with improved access to basic social services and life skills training.
- ◆ Strengthening responses to gender concerns in complex emergencies, through, for example, a study and recommendations on the gender dimensions of internal displacement; development of gender-sensitive training materials for peace-keeping forces and humanitarian personnel; and continued work through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, of which UNICEF is co-chair.

A focus on the girl child

A focus on the girl child and on the patterns of neglect and gender discrimination that impede her normal growth and development at the different stages in the life-cycle has led UNICEF to adopt a 'life-cycle' framework for analysis and action. Support for gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis has been a key focus in a number of regions and research on the girl-child has received focused attention. UNICEF regional and country offices have supported the preparation of situation analyses of women and girls from the life-cycle perspective. Such studies in a number of countries have provided the basis for follow-up actions in line with the Beijing Platform for Action. Throughout the

⁹ UNICEF. *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/2000/4 (Part I), 16 November 1999).

decade, a number of initiatives have been launched which aim at addressing key obstacles to equality at different phases along the continuum of growth from girl to woman.¹⁰

UNICEF has helped develop strategies and tools for gender mainstreaming and addressing gender-based discrimination, for example, neglect in child care, educational disparities, female genital mutilation, and violence against women and girls. Its advocacy has generated a large-scale awareness of the need to reduce disparities in childhood through the mobilization of media, academic institutions, NGOs and civil society organizations for attitudinal change and pro-active interventions at all levels. As part of its follow up to Beijing, UNICEF has worked closely together with a number of national and international partners active in issues related to girls, including the Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee of UNICEF. The evolution of an international network for girls' rights, with a membership of 600 organizations (1999) has helped expand such partnerships.¹¹ Communications initiatives have been particularly successful in heightening awareness of key issues affecting girls. (*see box*)

Successful Communication Initiatives for Girls

In South Asia, in support of the SAARC decade of the Girl Child (1990-2000), and after extensive country-level research the **Meena Communication Initiative** was developed by UNICEF in collaboration with the international animation company Hanna Barbera as a mass communication project aimed at changing perceptions and behaviour that hamper the survival, protection and development of girls in the region. The cartoon character Meena is the heroine of a 13-episode animated film series which addresses such problems as son preference, unfair treatment of girls in the family, discrimination in health and education services, harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and dowry, and sexual harassment. Meena's resourcefulness in dealing with these issues has made her a positive role model for girls, a catalyst for reflection and discussion on gender discrimination, and a powerful advocate for the rights of all children. As reported in the SG's review at end-decade, evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive. From Bangladesh to Nepal, people have embraced Meena, not only for the novelty of the electronic medium but also for the educational value of the series. In one study done by Save the Children in Kathmandu, Meena was the favorite role model for street children. In another survey conducted in Dhaka, more than 50% of those interviewed knew who Meena was and what she stood for.

In a spin-off from Meena and building on its success, the **Sara Adolescent Girl Communication Initiative** was developed in 1995 with UNICEF support in a number of countries in eastern and southern Africa. Educating adolescent girls and their parents about the importance of staying in school is one of the main messages of this lively radio series, first broadcast in June by the British Broadcasting Corporation. Issues such as sexual harassment, AIDS, early marriage, genital mutilation and girls' domestic workload are skillfully woven into the entertaining plots about Sara and her friends. In addition to the radio series, the initiative has developed animated films, comic books, story book audio cassettes, posters and guides. This media effort was the result of collaboration among 150 writers, artists and researchers, who also relied on creative input from 5,000 people consulted in villages and cities.

UNICEF views early marriage as part of the gender discrimination that undermines the rights of women and children and has undertaken a number of actions through country programmes and advocacy to address this issue. At the global level, UNICEF worked closely with the Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls to organize a workshop on 'Early Marriage: Whose Right to Choose' held during the UN Special Session on Women (Beijing+5) in June 2000. Focussing on strategies that have been successful in preventing early marriages of girls from a human rights perspective, the workshop helped strengthen networking around this issue among resources persons, activists and development professionals. Publication by the UNICEF Innocenti Centre in Florence of a special 2001 issue of the Innocenti Digest on *Early Marriage: Child Spouses* helped further raise awareness of the issue as a means of stimulating action. A UNICEF-supported study in 2000 on early marriage and early pregnancy in six countries in West Africa helped identify strategies to address the problem, with recommendations for the development of holistic plans and policies focusing not only on reproductive health, but on improving the social status of women, increasing girls' education, and addressing poverty.¹²

UNICEF's global girls' education programme has operated in more than 50 countries to ensure that girls have equal opportunities for education, a key contribution to postponing In Bangladesh, for example, UNICEF supports NGOs working with both school-going and out-of-school adolescents to integrate adolescent rights in their course content, as well as information on reproductive health, early marriage and dowry (*see education chapter*).

¹⁰ Information for this section based on the GPP website and various policy documents (see references)

¹¹ As noted in *Progress report on mainstreaming gender in UNICEF* (E/ICEF/1999/13)

¹² reported on the UNICEF GPP website

Spotlight on violence against women and girls: an emerging area of concern

UNICEF at the country level supports a broad range of programmatic activities to address the different forms of violence against women and girls which occur at different stages of the life cycle. UNICEF assists with studies and assessments, grassroots mobilization for legal reform, development of information, education and communication (IEC) materials, training of law enforcement officers and others, and network-building to address domestic violence. UNICEF also supports a number of initiatives aimed at eliminating harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), with research for policy, advocacy and action coordinated with partners at national and international levels and integrated into UNICEF's country programmes of cooperation

"Today a compelling chorus calls the world to begin making girls' and women's freedom from violence a global priority. Only then will girls and women everywhere be able to fully enjoy all their human rights"
(Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director. Quoted on GPP website).

At the global level, UNICEF's call to end violence against women and girls was the centrepiece of its 1997 *Progress of Nations* report and in 1998, UNICEF co-sponsored an expert consultation on "Preventing Violence in Families" which was attended by participants from around the world, representing the CRC and CEDAW committees, children's and women's human rights groups, UN agencies, activities, legal experts and the media. UNICEF has supported international mobilization and networking against commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in women and girls which has gained momentum over the decade through the two world congresses called to address these issues (Stockholm 1996 and Yokohama 2001). UNICEF has participated actively in regional campaigns on violence against women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and has organized, co-sponsored or supported a number of meetings and events on violence against women and girls, with recent efforts to draw in more men as partners.¹³ It has also sponsored a number of studies and reports aimed at breaking the silence surrounding these issues and identifying solutions. Recent examples include a report by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence on "Domestic violence against women and girls"¹⁴ and a review of experiences and lessons on ending violence against women and girls in South Asia entitled *Breaking the Earthenware Jar*¹⁵ (see also chapter on Special Protection).

POVERTY REDUCTION BEGINS WITH CHILDREN

Introduction

A commitment to work for the alleviation of poverty and the revitalization of economic growth was a key element of the World Summit for Children's broad '10-point programme' to protect the rights of children and improve their lives. "We will work for a global attack on poverty, which would have immediate benefits for children's welfare... That calls for transfers of appropriate additional resources to developing countries as well as improved terms of trade, further trade liberalization and measures of debt relief. It also implies structural adjustments that promote world economic growth, particularly in developing countries, while ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable sectors of the populations, in particular the children" In committing themselves to actions to support implementation of the WSC Plan of Action, the leaders of the world agreed to be guided by the principle of a 'first call for children' such that "the essential needs of children should be given high priority in the allocation of resources, in bad times as well as in good times, at national and international as well as at family levels." As part of the follow-up actions and monitoring required at national and international level, "each country is urged to re-examine in the context of its particular national situation, its current national budget, and in the case of donor countries, their development assistance budgets, to ensure that programmes aimed at the achievement of goals for the survival, protection and development of children will have a priority when resources are allocated. Every effort should be made to ensure that such programmes are protected in times of economic austerity and structural adjustments."¹⁶

Over the course of the decade, UNICEF has promoted both the principle and the practice of 'first call for children' as part of a broader international development strategy that would combine the revitalization of economic growth, poverty reduction, human resources development and environmental protection within an evolving framework of overall respect

¹³ See, for example, the UNICEF workshop report on "Ending Gender Violence and reaching other goals: what do men and violence have to do with it?" 23-24 March 2000, NY.

¹⁴ *Innocenti Digest* no. 6, June 2000, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy

¹⁵ *Breaking the Earthenware Jar: Lessons from South Asia to end violence against women and girls*. Ruth Finney Hayward, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2000.

¹⁶ *World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action*

for human rights, peace and security. Expanding on its influential work in promoting ‘adjustment with a human face’ in the 1980s, UNICEF aimed to use its institutional voice and country programmes to promote and support ‘development with a human face’ in the 1990s,¹⁷ building upon the global consensus emerging through the 4th development decade on the importance of poverty alleviation and human development as these have been increasingly integrated into a human rights focus and framework. In the current period, with 1997-2006 established by the General Assembly as the decade for the eradication of poverty, such a vision has been most clearly articulated in the Secretary General’s Millennium Development Goals which set the United Nations agenda for development cooperation for the coming years.

In arguing for a specifically child-centered development, UNICEF has worked with partners at all levels to support the realization of children’s right to be protected from the worst manifestations of poverty and to survive and grow up in an environment most conducive to human development. Specific measures have included support for efforts to achieve universal access to basic services, with particular strategies aimed at reaching the poorest and most vulnerable and ensuring that social safety nets are effective; priority programme attention to the least developed countries and particularly sub-Saharan Africa; advocacy for the restructuring of national budgets and increased development assistance to favor basic social services; advocacy and action to address the crippling external debt burden of many developing countries; and support for processes of decentralization, community-empowerment and capacity-building for sustainable development. Such measures have been accompanied and informed by initiatives aimed at strengthening the information base for advocacy on poverty and policy-related issues.

UNICEF, children and development in the 1990s

The World Summit goals for children in the 1990s were very clearly set within the overall framework of social development and conceptualized as a key contribution to the strategies of the 4th international development decade. UNICEF was an active participant in the articulation of such strategies and in the formulation of the human development focus of the 1990s. UNICEF was, for example, an early partner in the human development country initiative launched jointly with UNDP and the UN office in Vienna in 1990 and has contributed to the UNDP human development reports.¹⁸ UNICEF capacity to deal with the impact of macro-economic issues on children and contribute to social sector and programme costing was strengthened in the early half of the decade, with the Office of Social Policy and Economic Analysis designated as the focal point for ‘development with a human face’ initiatives.¹⁹ The ‘Innocenti Centre’ in Florence has also contributed significantly to the intellectual underpinnings for UNICEF policy advocacy through its applied research and influential publications on the impact of economic and social policies on children and families.²⁰ Backed by such research and analysis, creative dialogue on macro-economic issues and policies has been pursued over the decade with a number of other international agencies and institutions including the World Bank, the IMF, regional development banks, and other partner agencies of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).²¹

Since the initiation of UN reform in 1997, UNICEF has been an active member of the UN Development Group (UNDG), participating in processes related to the Common Country Assessment/UN Development Assistance framework (CCA/UNDAF). It participates as well in sector investment programmes (SIPS); sector-wide approaches (SWAPS); and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) – working through all such instruments to promote inclusion of a child-centered focus in overall poverty alleviation and development strategies. With its emphasis on the social dimensions of development, UNICEF has contributed to the redefinition of poverty over the decade, including a greater recognition of its multi-dimensional nature and effects. It has also been active in efforts to strengthen monitoring of the social dimensions of poverty through its own support for national data collection and analysis activities (*see chapter 6*) as well as through joint work with other UN agencies, the World Bank and OECD/DAC. Through such efforts, UNICEF has developed a range of child-relevant indicators for the CCA/UNDAF as well as for the OECD/DAC international development goals.²² Current challenges include the refinement of indicators and monitoring processes for the Millennium Development Goals, with UNICEF contributing in those areas most clearly related to social development.

Within the series of UN-led international conferences over the decade, particularly close links were perceived between the aims, intentions and implementation processes of the World Summit for Children and the World Summit for Social

¹⁷ UNICEF 1991 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1991/2), Part II

¹⁸ UNICEF 1993 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1993/2) Part II; (See also UNICEF 1993. *Support for social policy and costs and economic analysis* (CF/EXD/1993-002)

¹⁹ UNICEF 1994 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1994/2), Part II

²⁰ See *International Child Development Centre: Progress report and proposed activities for 2000-2002* (E/ICEF/1999/16)

²¹ UNICEF 1992 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1992/2), Part II

²² UNICEF 2000 *Poverty reduction begins with children*

Development (WSSD), whose reaffirmation of the WSC goals and strong emphasis on health, education, nutrition and water and sanitation made it possible to view Social Summit follow-up “as part of a continuum with the implementation process for the WSC.”²³ At country level, such a continuum provided opportunities to strengthen and accelerate field-level action in the implementation of the WSC. In addition, the broad agenda of the WSSD follow-up helped mobilize a wide range of actions on poverty reduction, within which progress for children could be placed. The WSSD was seen as providing a unique opportunity for UNICEF to link the previously approved goals for basic social services more closely to efforts addressing the income side of poverty, and thereby creating a more comprehensive, mutually-reinforcing anti-poverty package for action at the national, regional, and international levels. The WSSD commitment to create a legal framework to provide full respect for all human rights and to reaffirm rights set out in relevant international instruments and declarations, as well as a commitment to provide basic social services to children consistent with the WSC also helped make the rights-based link to UNICEF programmes.²⁴

Priority for basic social services and disparity reduction

UNICEF has consistently promoted universal provision of basic social services as one of the most effective and cost-effective methods to address the worst manifestations of poverty, and as a means of stimulating positive synergies to foster sustainable and equitable social and economic development. It maintains that the argument in favour of basic social services is not only ethical, but economic, pointing to history and its own policy studies to show that no country has ever sustained development with high levels of illiteracy, mortality and morbidity. It has further buttressed its advocacy for children’s claims on society with the human rights dimension, pointing to Article 4 of the CRC on state obligations to implement the Convention “to the maximum extent of their available resources,” and noting as well the Convention’s call for international cooperation.²⁵ Thus, for UNICEF, access to basic social services not only forms the core of development, it is an essential human right. By enabling the world’s poorest to lead healthier and more productive lives, and by focusing attention on children, such services are key to reducing the worst manifestations of poverty and to breaking its vicious inter-generational cycle.²⁶

Poverty causes lifelong damage to children’s minds and bodies, turning them into adults who perpetuate the cycle of poverty by transmitting it to their children. That is why poverty reduction must begin with the protection and realization of the human rights of children. Investments in children are the best guarantee for achieving equitable and sustainable human development.

UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy
in Foreword to *Poverty Reduction begins with Children*, UNICEF 2000

Through its key strategies of service delivery, capacity development and empowerment, UNICEF’s country programmes of cooperation as a whole have aimed at expanding access to basic services in health, education, nutrition, and water and sanitation and

strengthening the effectiveness of such services. At the core of much of UNICEF programming over the decade has been capacity building and strategic support to national partners to design and implement affordable social services for the most vulnerable groups at low cost and using simple technology.²⁷ Empowerment, participation and social mobilization are also hallmarks of UNICEF’s efforts to address poverty.²⁸

UNICEF has traditionally focused on the poor and the ‘hard-to-reach’, with disparity reduction a key strategy in many country programmes of cooperation and NPAs. Related strategies have included support for social safety nets to protect the poorest during the application of adjustment programmes; support for decentralization of services and community-based approaches; and targeted interventions through area-based programmes in the most deprived regions. In Brazil, for example, the UNICEF country programme for 1990-95 was almost entirely focused on actions aimed at reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged populations in the impoverished north-east. Area-based programmes in the Philippines targeted the ten poorest provinces, with special attention to mother and child health care, while in China, 300 countries designated as poverty-stricken received the bulk of UNICEF assistance in primary health care and basic education.²⁹ In Zambia early in the decade UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance for data collection and analysis for a social recovery fund project financed by the World Bank. UNICEF has also offered continuous support for the ProAndes sub-regional programme of basic services against poverty, encompassing poor areas in five Andean countries,

²³ UNICEF 1997 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1997/10), Part II.

²⁴ UNICEF 1997 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1997/10), Part I; See also *UNICEF and the World Summit for Social Development* (E/ICEF/1994/L.8, 6 April 1994) which articulates 6 key objectives to help ensure a focus on children and to help build lasting solutions to the Summit’s three themes of poverty alleviation, social integration and employment.

²⁵ Corporate annual reports 1999/2000; other

²⁶ *Implementing the 20/20 initiative*, 1998

²⁷ UNICEF 1995 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1995/14), Part II

²⁸ UNICEF 2000. *Poverty reduction begins with children*

²⁹ UNICEF 1994 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1994/2), Part II; other elements drawn from other annual reports)

particularly targeting regions inhabited by indigenous populations whose income levels and social indicators are considerably lower than those of the rest of the population. Elsewhere, as well, integrated area-based programmes have been undertaken as a means of serving the most socially and economically disadvantaged segments of the population. The urban poor, for example, have been targeted in a number of countries (over 60 in 1993) through programme approaches seeking to support decentralized, participatory planning and implementation of urban basic services (UBS).³⁰

It is clearly recognized that “*The most important contribution of UNICEF to poverty alleviation is not what UNICEF does with its own limited resources, but rather how UNICEF, through advocacy, mobilization, demonstration of strategies and technical support, helps to reorient national objectives, efforts and resources to serving the needs of the poor.*”³¹ Thus, over the course of the decade, a number of policy studies, research and analyses were undertaken with the intention of influencing public debate and informing social policies in favour of human development and poverty reduction (see box). The results have been widely publicized and disseminated, including through UNICEF’s flagship publication, *The State of the World’s Children*, and *The Progress of Nations* report which was initiated in 1993 as a means of chronicling progress, constraints, and key issues related to social development goals over the decade. UNICEF has further contributed to promoting a conducive policy environment for poverty reduction through its technical support and advocacy for the restructuring of public expenditures and aid budgets in favour of social services, and within the social sector, for basic social services in health, education, water and sanitation, and nutrition.

**Contributing to the debate on poverty, social policy and children’s rights:
Some UNICEF examples***

- ◆ ***Africa’s recovery in the 1990s: from stagnation and adjustment to human development – a UNICEF study (1992)*** identifies a viable long-term human development strategy focusing, among other things on the redistribution of assets and enlarged access to basic services and inputs (eds. Van der Hoeven; Cornia; and Mkandawire, St. Martin’s Press).
- ◆ ***The 20/20 Initiative: Achieving Universal Access to basic Social Services for Sustainable Human Development (1994)*** A note prepared jointly by UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO which describes the aims, scope and rationale of this resource mobilization initiative.
- ◆ ***Profiles in Success: People’s Progress in Africa, Asia and Latin America (1995)*** presents 11 striking examples of how governmental policies and commitment can reduce poverty and give hope and opportunity to all people, especially children.
- ◆ ***Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource Mobilization in Low-Income Countries (1995)*** considers the obligations of States Parties to meet their commitments “to the maximum extent of available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation”, giving examples of how such resources – broadly defined – can be effectively mobilized for children, including in the areas of education, health, nutrition and child labour (James R. Himes, ed, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence)
- ◆ ***Reaching the Poorest: ATD Fourth World (1996)*** describes experiences in reaching marginalized communities in situations of chronic poverty, as part of ATD Fourth World and the permanent Forum on Extreme Poverty in the World.
- ◆ ***Development with a Human Face: Experiences in Social Achievement and Economic Growth (1997)*** examines the successful health and education advances of 10 developing countries whose social achievements outpaced the majority of other developing countries, with many of their social indicators on a level comparable with those of industrialized nations. The book provides valuable guidance to policy makers in developing countries seeking to duplicate these successful social policies (Santosh Mehrotra & Richard Jolly, editors)
- ◆ ***Implementing the 20/20 Initiative: Achieving Universal Access to Basic Social Services (1998)***. A joint publication of UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank reviewing progress and constraints in meeting the social development goals of the 1990s and renewing calls for heightened resource mobilization , including through application of the 20/20 initiative as both moral and economic imperative.
- ◆ ***Generation in Jeopardy: Children in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (1999)*** examines the impact of political, social and economic dislocation, ethnic conflict and civil war on the most vulnerable population – children – in the transition societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. (Alexandre Zouev, author)
- ◆ ***Cities for Children: Children’s Rights, Poverty and Urban Management (1999)*** is written by experts in the field who examine the responsibilities urban authorities and organizations face in responding to the rights and requirements of children and adolescents, and discuss practical measures for meeting these obligations despite limited resources and multiple demands. (Sheridan Bartlett et al., authors, published by Earthscan, in association with UNICEF)
- ◆ ***Children in Jeopardy (1999)*** argues that crippling debt has been one of the main reasons why progress has not kept pace with the promises made at the 1990 World Summit for Children. and presents the joint UNICEF-Oxfam proposal to set the

³⁰ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1994/2)*, Part II; see also the revised UNICEF urban policy approved by the Executive Board in 1993 (*E/ICEF/1993/14, decision 1993/8*) which emphasizes a participatory, community-based approach to achieving the decade goals for urban children.

³¹ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1993/2)*, Part II, para. 43.

eradication of poverty at the heart of debt relief reform. As such, it serves as a contribution to the continuing dialogue on how best to reconcile the interdependent objectives of human rights, economic growth and social development.

- ◆ **Absorbing social shocks, protecting children and reducing poverty: the role of basic social services (2000)** argues the case for social policy and public action to complement market outcomes as a means of narrowing disparities and reducing poverty, with a priority focus on creating basic human capabilities through investments to ensure universal access to basic social services of good quality. (Jan Vandemoortele, UNICEF, NY).
- ◆ **Poverty Reduction begins with Children (2000)** describes how children bear the brunt of poverty and explains why they are central to poverty reduction, arguing that investments in children are the best guarantee for achieving equitable and sustainable human development, and illustrating how UNICEF efforts contribute to poverty reduction and the fulfillment of human rights. This publication was launched at the 5-year review of implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen +5) in Geneva in June 2000.
- ◆ **Basic Services for All? (2000)** draws on case studies from 30 developing countries to highlight the human cost of the \$80 billion per year shortfall in what is needed to ensure universal access to basic social services such as primary health care, basic education and clean water – concluding with a Ten Point Agenda for Action on urgently needed measures to close the resource gap (Santosh Mehrotra, Jan Vandemoortele & Enrique Delamonica, Innocenti Publication).
- ◆ **Poverty and Children: Lessons of the 90s for Least Developed Countries (2001)** demonstrates why investing in children is the key to reducing poverty – and how even comparatively small amounts could turn the tide in favour of children in the 48 poorest countries who remain among the most vulnerable in the world. Substantive external debt relief for these highly indebted countries and sustained support for international donors are critical to achieving this progress. The publication was produced as a UNICEF contribution to the Third UN Conference on the Least Development Countries held in Brussels in May 2001.

*Source: UNICEF web listing of publications and Innocenti publications catalogue. Numerous other policy studies, research reports, and advocacy publications are produced through UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre in Florence as well as by UNICEF country offices and regional offices

Key lessons emerging from research into how ten relatively low-income countries achieved high levels of social development over the last few decades include the following:

Lessons from high achievers

- ◆ None of the high-achievers relied solely on market forces of the trickle-down income to improve the well-being of children – the public sector plays a key role in securing access for the poorest to basic social services
- ◆ In spite of low incomes, governments in these countries established a strong educational foundation and made key health interventions to achieve major health outcomes
- ◆ Investment in education preceded, or occurred simultaneously with, breakthroughs in the reduction of IMR
- ◆ Girls' education is unquestionably the key to achieving this synergy, giving young women the sense of personal empowerment, self-confidence and capacity to make decisions affecting her life – marrying later, spacing pregnancies, seeking better health care, and providing better care at home
- ◆ All of these countries registered a higher level of achievement with respect to mid-decade goals than other countries³².

Mobilizing resources: the 20/20 initiative

The 20/20 initiative has been promoted by UNICEF as a flexible framework for mobilizing the additional resources necessary to reach the social goals agreed to at the world summits of the 1990s. Conceived of as a compact between developing and industrialized countries, the initiative calls for the allocation – on average – of an indicative 20% of the national budget in developing countries and 20% of official development assistance (ODA) to basic social services. It also aims to ensure that these resources are used with greater efficiency and equity. The initiative represents a concrete expression of shared responsibility for social development at the global and national levels, complementing the commitment of industrialized countries to allocate 0.7% of GNP to development cooperation, reinforcing other measures to reduce poverty and stimulate growth, and supporting policies aimed at increasing participation and decentralization, all of which UNICEF has continued to advocate over the decade.³³

Drawing on ideas in the 1991 and 1992 *Human Development Reports* of UNDP, UNICEF set out the basic principles of 20/20 in the 1992 *State of the World's Children* report; the initiative was endorsed by the OAU International Conference on Assistance to African Children in 1992 and approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in 1993.³⁴ Thereafter, the 20/20 Initiative was put forward jointly by UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO as part of the preparatory processes for the World Summit for Social Development³⁵ and was recognized in the 1995 WSSD Programme of Action which affirmed universal access to basic social services as an integral part of the strategy for the

³² Cited in 1998 *SG WSC follow-up report* (A/53/186) from studies analyzed in *Development with a Human Face* (1997)

³³ UNICEF Sources: *Poverty reduction begins with children; 20/20 initiative; Implementing the 20/20 initiative; website policy briefs*

³⁴ UNICEF 1994 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1994/2), Part I.

³⁵ *The 20/20 initiative: achieving universal access to basic social services for sustainable human development*. A note prepared jointly by UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO. UNICEF NY, DOC, December 1994.

eradication of poverty and proposed the 20/20 initiative to interested development partners. After further discussions among donors and developing countries, the Oslo Consensus was adopted in 1996, and UNICEF became the lead agency within the UN for follow-up of the initiative.³⁶ Thereafter, the World Bank joined the initial partners in promoting the initiative through a joint publication issued in 1998.³⁷ Commitment to universalize access to basic social services was reconfirmed at a second international meeting held in Hanoi in October 1998, with 20/20 recognized as a key instrument to achieve this and the principles of equity and efficiency reinforced.³⁸ Recognition of the initiative was further reflected in the December 1998 GA resolution on the implementation of the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the OECD/DAC 'report card 2000' on progress towards the international development goals, and the 'Copenhagen +5' declaration in follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

Over the decade, UNICEF has advocated and supported efforts to implement the 20/0 initiative as a tool for universalization of basic social services in a number of ways. In particular, UNICEF has assisted in national budget reviews in over 30 countries, using the results to stimulate policy dialogue and discussion and encourage greater allocation of budgetary resources for basic social services.³⁹ As a result, a number of countries have raised their inputs to basic social services and implemented budget reforms. In most 20/20 study countries, social sector ministries used their results in budget discussions with Ministries of Finance to argue for increased allocations. In Cameroon and Colombia, parliamentarians were briefed on budget allocations to basic social services before voting on the national budget and national development plan respectively. In at least four countries (Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Niger and Vietnam) allocations to these services have specifically been raised in Consultative Groups and Round Tables as a result of the internalization of 20/20 ideas. Country studies have also been used to extol to the media and civil society the importance of investments in basic social services. Capacity-building has also been strengthened, with budgets being redesigned in some 20/20 study countries to promote effective service delivery. For example, in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal budget allocations in the late 1990s were being decentralized to centres of service delivery so that schools and health centres receive allocations according to numbers served. In Dominican Republic, municipalities have been seeking advice on how to allocate resources to basic social services and improve budget execution. In Ecuador, 20/20 has prompted the design of mechanisms to protect basic social service expenditures during the structural adjustment process, and to ensure integration between social and macroeconomic policies.⁴⁰

UNICEF has promoted periodic assessments and analyses of basic social services spending in the context of consultative group and round table discussions and public expenditure reviews; state party reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as pre-session meetings; sector investment programmes (SIPs) and sector-wide approaches (SWAPS).⁴¹ UNICEF has also helped advocate and provide support for improved reporting on basic social sector spending within official development assistance (ODA), in collaboration particularly with UNDP and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). During the period 1993-1995, for example, the number of DAC members reporting their allocation to basic health and/or basic education increased from 11 to 16; by 1997-98, the number had risen to 20.⁴² UNICEF has further contributed over the decade to efforts to refine costing analyses for both national and international action. In 1999, for example, UNICEF improved the cost estimates for reaching universal access to basic social services, with the revised estimates used in support of advocacy on this issue.⁴³

Despite these and other efforts, ODA declined over the decade, with few donor countries meeting the agreed target of 0.7% GNP allocated to development cooperation, and allocations to basic social services accounting for only 10% to 11% of the declining aid budgets⁴⁴. Moreover, with a few exceptions, the budget studies supported by UNICEF and UNDP showed national allocations for basic social services ranging only between 12% and 14% of total public spending, with evidence that the richest quintile received, on average, twice as many subsidies in health and education

³⁶ UNICEF Website policy brief on 20/20

³⁷ *Implementing the 20/20 initiative: achieving universal access to basic social services*. A joint publication of UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank. UNICEF NY, DOC, September 1998.

³⁸ *Report on the Hanoi meeting*, New York, March 1999.

³⁹ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2000/4)*, Part II.

⁴⁰ **20/20: Promoting partnerships for reducing poverty** SG's report on future directions in implementing the 20/20 initiative PrepCom 2 for WSSD+5 Draft report, December 1999. See also series of reports on 20/20, listed in bibliography.

⁴¹ From UNICEF website programme/policy brief on 20/20

⁴² *Implementing 20/20*, op.cit ; and *Development Co-operation 2000 Report* , the DAC Journal, 2001, vol.2, no. 1, OECD.

⁴³ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2000/4)* , Part II.

⁴⁴ *We the children (A/S-27/3)*, 4 May 2001, para 34, p. 13

as the poorest quintile.⁴⁵ Both the mid-decade review of progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children in 1996 and the end-decade review in 2001 showed clear evidence of a shortfall in the promised resources necessary for achievement of the goals. As the Secretary-General concluded at end-decade, “*The world has fallen short of achieving most of the goals of the World Summit for Children, not because they were too ambitious or were technically beyond reach. It has fallen short largely because of insufficient investment.*”⁴⁶

Debt relief

Since the early 1980s, UNICEF has been voicing its concern about the plight of children in the world’s heavily indebted poor nations, which are driven by unsustainable debt burdens to spend more on servicing their external debt than on the basic health and education that would safeguard their own and their children’s future. Crippling debt has been one of the reasons why progress has not kept pace with the promises made at the 1990 World Summit for Children.⁴⁷ UNICEF’s advocacy for debt relief is very much in line with and linked to its support for 20/20, based on the recognition that in many countries the combined spending on debt servicing and defense is higher than that on basic services. A 1998 UNICEF/UNDP study found that only nine out of 27 countries surveyed managed to spend more on basic social services than on debt servicing, with African countries spending nearly twice as much on debt services than on basic social services, and in ten countries, debt payments absorbing more than 30% of the national budget.⁴⁸

Early in the decade, in conformity with decisions of its Executive Board, UNICEF engaged in direct action to develop socially acceptable instruments for ‘debt relief for children’ as part of its ongoing efforts to foster human and social development by making additional resources available for programmes benefiting children and women.⁴⁹ Under this programme, commercial bank debt was either donated to UNICEF or purchased at a discount in secondary markets by national Committees for UNICEF. The debt was then swapped for local currency payments by debtor governments to finance UNICEF supplementary-funded programmes.⁵⁰ Early initiatives in debt relief for children benefited social sector programmes in Nigeria and Sudan, with Jamaica, Madagascar, and the Philippines added to the list in 1992.⁵¹ Altogether, between 1989 and 1995, UNICEF and its national committees carried out more than 20 debt conversions in some ten countries, eliminating debt of \$193 million and generating local currency worth \$48 million.⁵² In 1995, due in part to the labour-intensive nature of managing such activities, these programmes of debt swaps for children were phased out, with UNICEF focusing on advocacy for debt burden relief and other poverty-reduction measures.⁵³

In the latter part of the decade, UNICEF continued to advocate for debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative which was launched in 1996. This Initiative marked the first comprehensive attempt to solve the debt issue, but by early 2000, HIPC had resulted in debt relief to just four countries. UNICEF in 1999 joined in partnership with OXFAM on a proposal to strengthen and expand the initiative, setting the eradication of poverty at the heart of debt relief reform, with the core goal of the HIPC Initiative to convert debt liabilities into human investment to act as a catalyst for accelerated progress towards

“*The perpetuation of a crippling debt burden in the poor nations is not only international negligence. It is a morally indefensible act. When the lives of millions of children in poor countries could have been saved, and when the future of millions more could have been secured through the judicious use of financial resources, freed from debt, one is left wondering why the resolution of this crisis has been so elusive and why the vision of the global financial community has faltered so visibly.*”

Address by UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy at a meeting G8 ministers in Cologne (CF/DOC/PR/1999-21)

the realization of children's rights. Both the proposal and the assessment of the HIPC Initiative were presented in the hard-hitting publication *Children in Jeopardy: the challenge of freeing poor nations from the shackles of debt.*⁵⁴ offered as “*a contribution to the continuing dialogue on how best to reconcile the interdependent objectives of human*

⁴⁵ PD programme and policy briefs on 20/20 initiative; *We the children* (A/S-27/3), 2001; and UNICEF 2000, *Poverty reduction begins with children.*

⁴⁶ *We the children* (A/S-27/3), para 33, p. 12.

⁴⁷ UNICEF 1999, *Children in Jeopardy.*

⁴⁸ UNICEF PD programme and policy briefs; reported in *Country experiences in assessing the adequacy, equity and efficiency of public spending on basic social services* (UNICEF/UNDP), 1998.

⁴⁹ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director E/ICEF/1992/2.* See also “*Debt relief for children: an information note* (E/ICEF/1991/CRP.4), 1 March 1991.

⁵⁰ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1992/2).

⁵¹ UNICEF *Annual Report 1993*

⁵² UNICEF. *Progress report on the follow-up to the World Summit for Children.* (E/ICEF/1995/15).

⁵³ *Moratorium on debt-swaps for children until September 1997* (CF/EXD/1996-010)

⁵⁴ UNICEF 1999. *Children in jeopardy.*

rights, economic growth and social development.” The UNICEF global partnership with OXFAM has been particularly useful in strengthening the ability of UNICEF to mount compelling arguments on debt in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. In late 1999, the World Bank and IMF adopted the Enhanced HIPC Initiative, which reflects many of the UNICEF/OXFAM proposals and introduces the "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" to link debt relief more closely to poverty issues.⁵⁵

Ongoing advocacy for debt relief has been pursued through at the highest levels, including in speeches by the UNICEF Executive Director, for example, at the meeting of G-8 ministers in Cologne in 1999 (see box). The issue has also been taken up persistently in the *State of the World's Children* and the *Progress of Nations*, with arguments particularly in favour of debt relief to Africa⁵⁶

A focus on Africa

It was clearly recognized at the time of the Summit that achievement of the development goals for children in sub-Saharan Africa represented a particularly difficult challenge which would require extra efforts and the mobilization of additional resources. Marked by persistent economic decline and deteriorating health conditions, including the rise of HIV/AIDS and a resurgence of malaria and other diseases; with recurrent natural disasters contributing to environmental stress; and ongoing political and social turmoil leading to armed conflict in an increasing number of countries, the situation called for a specific response.

At the 1991 OAU Summit, African leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the goals for children in the 1990s and called for the convening of a special donors' conference to help mobilize resources.⁵⁷ In 1992, UNICEF helped mobilize and support a landmark International Conference on Assistance to African Children convened by the OAU, with representatives from 44 African countries, 18 donor countries and 18 inter-governmental organizations, which presented a unique opportunity for African governments and NGOs to put their own efforts for children and women on the international agenda. Through a series of joint OAU/UNICEF publications, the needs and possibilities for action in Africa were comprehensively reviewed in each principal sector of action.⁵⁸ In the Consensus of Dakar, African countries committed themselves to a set of interim, mid-decade goals and agreed to link national plans of action for children with national development planning and financing structures. They also agreed to continue to the NPA process at sub-national levels and identified the need for external assistance, with a specific emphasis on capacity-building.⁵⁹

The UNICEF Executive Board decision of 1991/13 to make Africa the region of highest priority for programme cooperation⁶⁰ was reaffirmed in subsequent decisions over the course of the decade, with UNICEF reporting regularly on progress and challenges in ensuring child survival, protection and development in Africa and ensuring child rights.⁶¹ From 1991 onwards, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for the largest proportion of total programme expenditures for UNICEF, rising from 36% in 1991 to 38% in 2000.⁶² (For the least developed countries as a whole, the share in allocation of UNICEF's regular resources rose from 42% in 1990 to 50% in 2000⁶³) A similar rise was seen in the proportion of staff posted to Africa – from 32% of all staff at the beginning of the decade to 37% in 1998.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/2000/4), Part II.

⁵⁶ For further information, see UNICEF website on *UNICEF and the debt crisis, Programme and Policy briefs, 1999*.

⁵⁷ UNICEF 1992 *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1992/2), Part II; See also E/ICEF/1993/L.4 on *Ensuring child survival, protection and development in Africa*

⁵⁸ See, for example, the 1992 publication, *Africa's recovery in the 1990s*, which sets out an alternative development path focused on human development and provides a strong analytical basis for UNICEF advocacy for children and other vulnerable groups.

⁵⁹ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1993/2)

⁶⁰ In UNICEF *Report of the Executive Board* (E/ICEF/1991/15)

⁶¹ See for example E/ICEF/1993/L.4 (op cit). Towards the end of the decade, the terminology in the titles of these reports changed from 'ensuring child survival, protection and development' to 'ensuring children's rights', reflecting the growing rights-based emphasis of the organization.

⁶² Information on total programme expenditures provided in UNICEF annual reports of the executive Director. In line with the modified system for allocation of available general resources approved in 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev 1, decision 1997/18), the share of total general resources allocated to country programmes in sub-Saharan Africa rose to 40.2% in 1999, Africa also accounting for the largest share (65%) of first allocation of the 7% of available general resources for programmes set aside for special allocation by the Executive Director (decision 1997/18), used particularly for accelerated efforts in immunization, control of HIV/AIDS and malaria, and guinea worm eradication (*Ensuring Children's Rights in Africa* E/ICEF/1999/12)

⁶³ UNICEF 2000, *Poverty reduction begins with children*, p. 38.

⁶⁴ *Ensuring Children's Rights in Africa* (E/ICEF/1999/12)

UNICEF support for social mobilization around the World Summit goals was particularly significant in Africa, where artists and intellectuals; rural radio broadcasters, traditional chiefs, municipal authorities, religious leaders, women's groups and civil society organizations were all enlisted as part of the 'grand alliance' for child survival, development, protection and – increasingly – participation. Community-level empowerment and capacity-building were promoted, including through strategies such as the Bamako Initiative for the revitalization of health care and other actions aimed at supporting emerging processes of democratization and decentralization occurring over the decade. A number of African countries (for example Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda) developed national programmes (NPAs) for children extending to sub-national level in support of national policies of devolution. In some cases, NPAs were integrated into overall development plans and provided as well an analytical base for monitoring implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and mobilizing private sector partners. NPAs also helped to strengthen the focus of UNICEF country programmes in Africa on the policy environment and intersectoral approaches to achieving results for children.⁶⁵ In South Africa, UNICEF took on a special role in support of the peaceful transition to non-racial democracy,⁶⁶ with the NPA mainstreamed as a significant element of the national reconstruction and development programme and institutionalized with sustained political commitment.⁶⁷ But as was the case elsewhere, the extent to which NPA initiatives were sustained varied widely among countries and in some cases, NPAs were superseded by conflict, with UNICEF in such cases helping spearhead efforts for child protection and restoration of access to basic services, including education.⁶⁸

UNICEF has supported efforts to advance sector-wide approaches and reform processes in Africa, and has participated actively in a number of inter-agency efforts to address development needs, including, for example, the UN programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and its successor, the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. UNICEF has also cooperated with the World Bank, WHO, UNESCO, UNDP and others in key areas of activity of the UN-wide Special Initiative for Africa launched in 1996, with a UNICEF focus on health and education – particularly education for girls (*see sectoral write-ups for further details*). Joint work was undertaken with the Economic Commission for Africa in the production of a series of analyses of social development trends in Africa; with collaboration as well with the African Development Bank and specific sectors of the Southern African Development Community. Activities to combat the rise of HIV/AIDS have stepped up in coordination with UNAIDS, and UNICEF has found a particular convergence of concerns with OAU on the anti-war agenda and issues of conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance directly relevant to children and women.⁶⁹

Despite such efforts, both the mid-decade and the end-decade review of achievements towards the WSC goals revealed that childhood in Africa remains in jeopardy: sub-Saharan Africa continues to lag behind other regions, with an actual decline experienced in key social indicators such as child mortality in a number of countries of the region. In its own programmes of assistance, UNICEF continues to prioritize the region and to advocate for a more global response from the world community to the call of the Millennium Declaration (GA resolution 55/2) to establish 'first call' for the children of Africa. As the *Millennium Report* of the Secretary General has noted (A/54/2000), nowhere is a global commitment to poverty reduction needed more than in Africa south of the Sahara, because no region of the world ensures greater human suffering.⁷⁰

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD & A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO PROGRAMMES

"Parallel to the entry into force of the Convention had been the WSC which had adopted a broad-ranging, visionary Plan of Action that addressed the entire gamut of children's rights. Together, they defined the UNICEF agenda into the 21st century, as the CRC gave added force and legitimacy to the commitments made at the WSC." (UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy, opening address to first Executive Board session of 1997)

Introduction

"We will work to promote earliest possible ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child." So proclaimed leaders at the World Summit for Children, which recognized the Convention as "a

⁶⁵ *Ensuring Children's Rights in Africa* (E/ICEF/1999/12)

⁶⁶ *UNICEF Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1993/2)

⁶⁷ Tadesse 2001

⁶⁸ *Ensuring Children's Rights in Africa: (E/ICEF/1999/12)*

⁶⁹ *Ensuring Children's Rights in Africa: (E/ICEF/1999/12)*

⁷⁰ cited in *We the Children* (A/S-27/3), 2001, Box 1

comprehensive set of international legal norms for the protection and well-being of children,” providing a new opportunity to “make respect for children’s rights and welfare truly universal.” The Summit Plan of Action urged all governments to promote ratification, as well as wide dissemination of information, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 45 of the Convention highlights the importance of international cooperation to foster effective implementation, singling out a special role for UNICEF in this regard. Even beyond such formal calls for international cooperation, the Convention has inspired and set in motion a movement of international solidarity with and accountability for children based on a transformation of perspective - from one of children as the object of charity to children as the subject of rights. In partnership with others, UNICEF has been a key player over the decade in promoting such a transformation of perspective and solidarity for children and in establishing processes for the realization of this transformation on the ground.

The current document as a whole has highlighted the essential complementarity and mutually reinforcing nature of follow-up to WSC commitments and implementation of the CRC, as UNICEF has sought throughout the decade, through its support for National

“As UNICEF has learned in its efforts for child survival, setting goals can prove a powerful catalyst for change and an efficient tool for implementing rights. The promises made by the international community at the WSC have been strengthened by commitments made to fulfill the obligations of the Convention.”
(1996 UNICEF Annual Report. p.7)

Plans of Action, its country programmes of cooperation, and its global advocacy and alliance-building to establish a global ethic of ‘first call for children’ and to realize both goals and rights through concrete actions on the ground. The correspondence between goals and rights has been clearly perceived and expressed within the organization (*see box*) – the one seen to reinforce and provide grounding and motivational force to the other. At the same time, the broad vision of children embodied in the Convention has helped to frame and anchor the specific goals of the Summit more firmly within the visionary commitments articulated within the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action and to promote sectoral convergence in programme actions and processes designed to achieve them. The Convention has also helped to expand the focus on children beyond survival and development in order to more fully delineate and encompass children’s rights to protection and participation - including all rights of all children. The unique nature of the Convention itself – uniting under one framework both civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights – has helped foster an increasingly holistic view of the child (defined as anyone under the age of 18), a view which is further bolstered by its key ‘foundation’ principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child.

WSC and CRC: Correspondence between goals and rights*

Major WSC goals	CRC reference
1. Reduction of infant and child mortality	Right to life (article 6) and health (article 24)
2. Reduction of maternal mortality	Right to health (article 24.2.d and f)
3. Reduction of malnutrition	Right to health (article 24.2.c); and standard of living (article 27)
4. Universal access to clean water and sanitation	Right to health and environmental sanitation (article 24.2c and e)
5. Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education	Right to education (article 28, 29, 32)
6. Reduction of adult illiteracy	Right to education (article 24.2e and f; and article 28)
7. Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances	Right to protection from violence, abuse and neglect (19); economic exploitation (32); drug abuse (33); sexual abuse (34); traffic, sale, abduction (35); all other exploitation (36); torture, death penalty; life imprisonment (37); if refugee or asylum seeker (22); disabled (23); affected by war (38); deprived of family environment (20 and 21); right to periodic review if placed for care, protection, or treatment (25); right to recovery and reintegration if victim of abuse or exploitation (39); right to be treated with dignity and worth if in conflict with the law (40)
<i>*Source: Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ed. James Himes, UNICEF ICDC, Florence 1995</i>	

Consistent with UNICEF Executive Board decision 1989/10 urging UNICEF to continue its efforts to facilitate adoption of the Convention and, thereafter, to promote and support implementation of its provisions, UNICEF has worked with a variety of partners to apply its considerable expertise in advocacy, social mobilization, capacity development, and technical support to the task at hand. With the role of UNICEF in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child defined by its Executive Board in 1991 (*see chapter 2*), initial efforts focussed on advocacy for ratification – a process spurred particularly by the inclusion of universal ratification as a mid-decade goal. With ratification rapidly achieved in country after country, UNICEF moved to support effective implementation of the Convention through public information, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, combining this with continued help in monitoring and

analyzing the situation of children; support for reviews of legislation with the aim of harmonizing national laws with the principles and provisions of the Convention; and training on the Convention for those responsible for children's well-being as well as children themselves. Much support has also been provided to States parties reporting processes on implementation of the Convention to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. These efforts have complemented and extended UNICEF's traditional operational support for the concrete realization of children's rights through expanded delivery of basic services (e.g. in health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education). They have also merged with and reinforced the other elements of UNICEF's strategic focus on capacity development, social mobilization and empowerment.

Over the decade, as actions, coalitions and partnerships for children have increasingly coalesced around the Convention, and as the twin strands of human rights and development concerns have merged ever more closely together on the international agenda – a gradual shift has characterized UNICEF's Convention-related activities, with a move from the early focus on advocacy and information activities to a greater integration of the Convention and its principles into the planning, design, and implementation of country programmes. A number of country offices took the lead in this process, which was accompanied by an even more gradual definition and adoption of a human rights-based approach to programming throughout the organization in the second half of the decade. This transition within UNICEF – most clearly marked in the 1996 Mission Statement and the 1998 guidelines on the rights-based programme approach – accompanied and reflected the increased centrality of human rights within the wider context of UN reform, a process which UNICEF, in turn, has helped to influence.

While in the broadest sense, all of UNICEF's actions over the decade can be seen as supportive of child rights (as illustrated in previous chapters), this chapter attempts to chronicle in more detail some of the specific actions undertaken by UNICEF in support of the Convention, and to identify particular aspects of the dynamics involved in its adoption of a human rights-based approach to programming for children.

Ratification as a first step

The Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force in September 1990 – the same month as the World Summit for Children, and less than a year after its adoption by the General Assembly on November 20, 1989. This represents the most rapid entry into force of any human rights treaty. Since the Summit, UNICEF has actively promoted wide ratification of the CRC (and more recently its Optional Protocols) as well as other relevant Conventions, including, particularly, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).⁷¹ It has been widely acknowledged that ratification of the Convention was indeed accelerated in an unprecedented manner by UNICEF's advocacy both at the grass roots and at the highest levels of political leadership.⁷²

Already, by the end of 1990, partly as a result of the momentum built up by the Summit itself, which served as an engine that maximized the speed of ratification, 63 states had ratified the Convention. A year later, the figure had jumped to 106, and by the end of 1993 it had risen to 154. When the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights called for universal ratification of the Convention by 1995, establishment of universal ratification as one of the mid-decade goals (endorsed by the Executive Board in decision 1993/13) further spurred progress by offering a concrete objective around which to mobilize. An agreement was signed between UNICEF and the UN Centre for Human Rights (currently the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights) to join efforts to promote universal ratification by 1995, along with awareness-raising and training on the CRC and its follow-up⁷³. Regional and national seminars, visits to capitals by senior UNICEF officials and the provision of technical assistance were all part of UNICEF's efforts in this regard.⁷⁴ As a result of such extensive mobilization, 188 states had ratified the Convention by the end of 1996, and another – the US – had signed with the intent to ratify.⁷⁵ The end-decade tally for ratification and signature reached 191, with Somalia signaling its adherence to the CRC at the time of the Special Session on Children in May 2002.

⁷¹ UNICEF has also been very active in support of the Ottawa Convention on landmines, with high-level advocacy at global, regional and national levels

⁷² Kul Gautam's review of Black 1996.

⁷³ See also, the *Joint plan of action on the promotion of the rights of the child between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Centre for Human Rights, 1994*; and *UNICEF responses to the questionnaire for the analysis of system-wide human rights-related assistance available from the United Nations* (n.d. internal);

⁷⁴ See, for example the report on *Improving the operation of the human rights treaty bodies: 07/09/98*. (HRI/1998/4, 7 September 1998), which acknowledges such support and states that "*The efforts of UNICEF towards promoting universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been successful and clearly appreciated.*"

⁷⁵ The last public speech of UNICEF Executive Director James Grant, before his death in January 1995, contained an impassioned plea to the UN General Assembly to make child rights a central moral imperative of our time: "*I cannot think of any more*

While much of the early focus of UNICEF's advocacy efforts aimed at ratification, the importance of going beyond ratification to support for implementation was not lost from view. As expressed in the organization's medium term plan for the period 1992-1996, "Globally, UNICEF will work towards ratification and implementation by all countries, helping UNICEF offices and national committees to facilitate work, and ensuring that elements of the Convention are integrated into UNICEF advocacy and the country programme process."⁷⁶ Already in 1992, country programme recommendations submitted to the Executive Board showed that new UNICEF programmes of cooperation specifically used both the CRC and the Summit goals as a normative and strategic framework, with UNICEF's role depicted as one of helping governments achieve the goals and implement the Convention.⁷⁷ Due, in part, however, to the different socio-economic settings in which UNICEF works, as well as to the varying speed at which ratification was achieved, effective integration of the Convention into the programming process occurred earlier in some country programmes than in others. The following documents experiences of some of the early 'pioneers'.⁷⁸

The CRC at country level – UNICEF programming pioneers

In 1991, an Innocenti review of the experiences of 8 UNICEF country offices demonstrated how the Convention was already becoming a powerful tool for advocacy with policy makers, helping to broaden the framework for the analysis of the situation of children and to stimulate new thinking about effective strategies for fulfillment of the UNICEF mandate. Several of the case studies made reference to the new vision of children that was developing as a result of the Convention's holistic and integrated approach to defining their rights and pointed to the added source of legitimacy it conferred on development goals for children.

Case studies from Bolivia, Brazil and Kenya in particular showed how the Convention's concepts permeated all aspects of UNICEF programming, and how effective application of its principles was dependent on a broad-based situation analysis and appropriate policy and programmatic responses to children's needs. Nationally significant events in these countries helped unleash public support for efforts to address specific children's rights issues, giving birth to national alliances working to bring about lasting reforms. The Bolivian case provided a clear analysis of the Convention's impact on the programming process, particularly as it affected situation analysis and the monitoring of development goals for children. The Kenyan study highlighted the usefulness of the Convention in helping government, UNICEF and NGO partners set goals for children within the framework of the National Development Plan. The Brazilian case documented how constitutional and legislative reform applied through policy and institutional change translated into direct benefits for children.

Experiences from Egypt showed how successful programmes to achieve universal child immunization and to improve children's health enabled UNICEF to stimulate debate among Islamic scholars on the place of children in the teaching of the Koran and Hadith texts. This led to the publication of an authoritative work on *Child Care in Islam* which, in turn, provided a framework for discussing the application of the Convention in Islamic societies. Several case studies (for example, Sri Lanka) highlighted the normative value of law in setting standards for the development of comprehensive social policies, while others showed the importance of taking into consideration the force and values of customary law. Linkages between children's rights and women's rights were stressed in Bolivia, where campaigns for ratification of CRC led also to ratification of CEDAW. In Sri Lanka and Thailand, the Convention helped programme cooperation move beyond the provision of basic services and the immediate goals of survival and development, to address sensitive issues of protection, quality of life issues and participation rights for children who are marginalized in spite of their countries' significant social and economic progress.

All of the studies underscored the importance of training and highlighted yet again the value of strong partnerships with a broad array of actors. They also stressed the role of advocacy and public information as integral components of the programming process and as essential elements of any sustainable effort to implement the Convention – demonstrating how UNICEF could most effectively draw upon its proven strength and expertise – honed over years of efforts in promoting child survival and development - in stimulating demand for programmes to protect children's rights.

(*Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Kenya, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) *The Convention: Child rights and UNICEF experience at the country level* (Innocenti Studies), UNICEF 1991 (taken from foreword by Marjorie Newman-Black, UNICEF, NY)

Wide dissemination of information/training/awareness-raising

UNICEF has worked vigorously at both global and national levels to expand awareness, commitment and understanding of the Convention among its programme partners, the general public, and its own staff. With UNICEF support, and in

appropriate way for the world to signal its commitment to human life and social progress in the year of the United Nations' fiftieth anniversary than by making the Convention the first truly universal law of humankind" (Statement of Mr. James P. Grant to the Third Committee of the 49th General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, 11 November 1994). His last official act from his death bed was a plea to the US president Bill Clinton to sign the Convention (Kul Gautam's review of Black 1996)

⁷⁶ UNICEF MTP 1992-96.

⁷⁷ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director* 1992/2.

⁷⁸ A series of case studies on effective application of the rights-based approach in country programmes of cooperation is under preparation.

cooperation with a host of other partners, the Convention has been translated into local languages around the world, produced in formats easily understandable to children, and incorporated into school curricula – including, for example, in law school curricula in a number of countries in the Middle East. Training materials intended for various audiences have been prepared, including a practical guide for learning about the Convention intended primarily for youth group leaders and teachers working with young people in both industrialized and developing countries.⁷⁹ Such efforts have been accompanied by the organization of conferences, seminars, training workshops and symposia involving government representatives, religious leaders, local NGOs, teachers and university personnel, members of the press, the private sector., and children themselves.⁸⁰

A variety of other public information campaigns, media events, and awareness-raising activities have helped keep child rights issues high on the national and international agendas. Media in a number of regions have been key allies in such efforts, as for example in Costa Rica through the Central American Network of Radio and Communication Media for Sustainable Development and Children's Protection.⁸¹ The International Children Day of Broadcasting (ICDB), held every December since 1992, has served as a particularly potent advocacy tool on issues affecting children. With participatory broadcasts organized around the world, the ICDB has enabled children to use the power of mass media to send key messages to policy and decision-makers – thus supporting the child's right to express themselves and be taken into account.⁸² UNICEF has also promoted awareness of the Convention through the use of television and the Internet, as well as through its widely circulated flagship publications, *The State of the World's Children* and *The Progress of Nations*.

In 1998, in association with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF published and distributed an *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child* intended to advance the efforts of governments, NGOs, and UN agencies to apply the principles of the Convention. With its detailed, article by article analysis, the handbook serves as an important advocacy and training tool to promote wider understanding of the principles and provisions of the Convention.⁸³ A child rights training package was also developed and applied in the training of UNICEF's own staff.⁸⁴

Intellectual study and exploration of the Convention and the principles it expresses has been vigorously pursued by the UNICEF International Child Development Centre in Florence, which continues to make a major contribution to a growing body of literature on the subject (*see box*).⁸⁵ UNICEF also supports information-sharing through the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) which includes NGOs, UN agencies and academic institutions.⁸⁶

UNICEF Innocenti Centre

Founded in 1988, the Centre serves as an international knowledge base and training centre working for the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in both developing and industrialized countries. Principal activities include policy analysis, applied research, capacity building and training initiatives. In its first decade, the Centre has informed and helped to shape the UNICEF human rights agenda. It has made a seminal contribution to increasing international awareness and understanding of the Convention, serving as the 'engine' for research on the Convention and for interpretation of its various articles and principles. It has also served as an important forum for networking and dialogue as well as for the development of strategic approaches which could facilitate the fulfillment of children's rights, including in a number of child protection areas. Its diverse publications, seminars and workshops provide information on the implementation of the Convention, and explore child rights issues which UNICEF and its partners are increasingly grappling with, such as violence against children, children in conflict with the law, children in armed conflict, child labour, children of minorities, early marriage, and others. The work of the Centre continues to be guided by the universality of rights established by the CRC and CEDAW, with the view that development programmes must address both the causes and effects of the denial of rights, including the processes which perpetuate inequality, discrimination and exploitation. The proposed programme for 2003-2005 builds on the Centre's established areas of expertise, seeking to contribute cutting-edge research to influence policy-making in favour of the world's poorest and most marginalized children and their families; to inform policy

⁷⁹ *It's only right! A practical guide to learning about the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, by Susan Fountain, UNICEF Education for Development Unit, Geneva and New York, 1993, 1999

⁸⁰ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director E/ICEF/1996/10* (Part I); also "Mainstreaming human rights in UNICEF's work" (internal paper, n.d.).

⁸¹ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director E/ICEF/1996/10* (Part I); also "Mainstreaming human rights in UNICEF's work" (internal paper., n.d.).

⁸² "The Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF" in Information packet on *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

⁸³ *Prepared for UNICEF by Rachel Hodgkin and Peter Newell, UNICEF 1998; reported in UNICEF Reports of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1998/4, Part II and E/ICEF/1999/4, part II).*

⁸⁴ Reported in *UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1994/2)*, Part II

⁸⁵ *Towards defining the child rights perspective for UNICEF* (NYHQ/PD/1997-043)

⁸⁶ UNICEF *Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1996/10)*, Part I.

formulation with UNICEF; to strengthen UNICEF's role as advocate for children's rights; and to support programme development and capacity building.

from *International Child Development Centre: Progress Report and Proposed Activities for 2000-2002* (E/ICEF/1999/16); and UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Progress report and proposed activities for 2002-2005 (E/ICEF/2002/13)

Support for implementation and monitoring

As more and more states ratified and near universal ratification was reached, the role of UNICEF vis-à-vis the Convention shifted from one of promoting ratification and advocating the rights of children to one of supporting national capacity-building to monitor implementation and support follow-up to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁸⁷ *“While implementation of the Convention is the responsibility of Governments, UNICEF will assist at country level through support for policy formulation, improved and broadened situation analyses, mobilization of public opinion, facilitation of national legislation and programming and advocacy that directly involves the participation of children and youth.”*⁸⁸

Guidelines for situation analysis - as the basic diagnostic programming tool for UNICEF - were revised and expanded to give scope for a broader and more consistent analysis of the legal framework for children's and women's rights and to identify sources of exclusion and discrimination.⁸⁹ Situation analysis through a human rights lens is seen to imply the need for rights-sensitive indicators, adaptation of UNICEF's multi-causal conceptual framework to include role/pattern analysis of various 'duty-bearers', and participatory processes of assessment and analysis that are crucial for accelerating change.⁹⁰ Moreover, with closer coordination of UN agencies at country level fostered through the UN reform process, UNICEF has promoted inclusion of child rights issues and indicators in the CCA/UNDAF processes as a means of helping maintain a focus on the centrality of child rights in development processes. Monitoring instruments developed by UNICEF to assess progress at end-decade towards the WSC goals have also included a number of key additional child rights indicators (*see chapter 6*).

UNICEF has provided technical and financial support to initiatives and strategies that address legislative, policy, budgetary and programmatic issues. With UNICEF technical assistance for capacity-building and analysis, numerous countries embarked on processes of harmonizing national laws with the Convention.⁹¹ Over the past decade, countries from every region have engaged in important reform efforts to ensure conformity of their national legal orders with the principles and provisions of the CRC. Committees have been established to review existing legislation that affects children, to propose amendments which would allow the law to better protect their rights, and propose new legislation in areas of importance to children which the law had previously failed to address. As a result, many new Children's Acts, consolidating, harmonizing and improving legal protections for children, have been passed, legal regimes in areas such as family and personal status laws have been fundamentally restructured, and a host of individual laws have been transformed.⁹²

By mid-decade at least 15 countries had incorporated the principles of the Convention into their national constitutions, while more than 35 had either passed new laws or amended existing ones to bring domestic legislation into line with the standards set forth in the Convention. As noted at the time, *“These measures, coupled with the widespread public awareness of the Convention, have kept the needs of children firmly in the forefront of public policy and have thereby promoted, directly and indirectly, activities leading to the fulfillment of the goals.”*⁹³ By end-decade, more than 50 countries had promoted a process of law reform and more than 20 had accorded children's rights a constitutional status.⁹⁴ Examples of new constitutional rights for children include Ethiopia (article 36); South Africa (article 28); Venezuela (article 78); Brazil (articles 227 and 228); and Cambodia (article 48).⁹⁵ In Latin America and the Caribbean,

⁸⁷ UNICEF MTP 1998-2001.

⁸⁸ UNICEF MTP 1992-96

⁸⁹ It is to be noted that UNICEF situation analyses have included assessment of legal frameworks even before the Convention. Analyses inspired by the 1979 International Year of the Child, for example, covered legal issues related to family law, and the introduction of CEDC in 1986 served to renew the focus on laws and children in conflict with them. This in turn helped set in motion actions that led to a greater awareness of the need for legal reform and protection that was further strengthened through the CRC.

⁹⁰ *A human rights approach to UNICEF programming for children and women* (CF/EXD/1998-04), 21 April 1998.

⁹¹ UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1996/10), Part I

⁹² *Draft - Law reform* (draft paper prepared by Lee Waldorf for UNICEF, EPP, 2001)

⁹³ SG's MDR (A/51/256)

⁹⁴ UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2000/4), Part II. See also *Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the domestic legal order* (Background paper prepared by the Division of Evaluation, Policy and Planning, UNICEF, NY, 1999); and *Making Children Count: Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (www.intranet.unicef.org/living/index.html)

⁹⁵ *Making Children Count: Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (www.intranet.unicef.org/living/index.html)

in particular, there was early recognition of the potential of the Convention as a framework for legal, institutional and policy reform which has been promoted through a number of UNICEF country programmes (*see box*).⁹⁶

In recognition of the fact that the real value of legislative review and reform lies in positive changes in the lives of children, a working paper published by UNICEF in 2000 on “*Translating law into reality*” explored the degree to which the Convention has been invoked or reflected in court decisions and practice. What emerged from the case law examined was the increased visibility of children’s interests as well as the growing trend for Courts to take the wishes of children into account in decisions affecting them and/or their parents.⁹⁷

New partnerships and programme thrusts: Latin America

In Latin America, UNICEF has developed close partnerships with a broad range of actors, including bar associations, national legislatures or groups of concerned legislators, the Supreme Court, trial courts, prosecutors, ministries of the Interior, national police, official ombudsmen or human rights commissions and NGOs, including human rights NGOs. With child rights as a priority in advocacy for legislative and administrative reform, a number of countries have made significant legislative changes. With particular attention focussed on juvenile justice, UNICEF offices actively advocate for legislative reform and provide technical assistance in the drafting of new laws and instituting Constitutional amendments.
 “*Mainstreaming human rights in UNICEF work*”. Internal UNICEF document, n.d.)

What emerged from the case law examined was the increased visibility of children’s interests as well as the growing trend for Courts to take the wishes of children into account in decisions affecting them and/or their parents.⁹⁷

With the broad-based constituency it has mobilized, the Convention has helped foster new partnerships for UNICEF advocacy and programme cooperation. These extend beyond those in the well-established programme areas of health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and education, to include legal and judicial bodies, the police, the military, and a broader array of welfare services, particularly those involved in special protection measures. Partnerships have been established and strengthened as well with a wide spectrum of human rights institutions and organizations at the national and international level, with particular reference to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Moreover, the Convention is increasingly serving as a focus and framework for cooperation with national and international NGOs.

Guided by the spirit of accountability that animates the Convention, broad-based participation is sought in processes of monitoring implementation of the Convention – with all stakeholders seen to have a role. UNICEF encourages such participatory processes. The Child Rights Monitoring project, for example - initiated by Child Watch International and supported by UNICEF and several other donors over the period 1994-1998 - stimulated the development of child rights monitoring activities at the local level in a number of countries, including Nicaragua, Senegal, Thailand, Turkey, Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. A training package resulting from this work provided a basis for developing local level child rights monitoring systems in additional countries. The growth of the ‘child-friendly’ initiative also provided experience in the participatory use of indicators for such systems. Checklists provided in the UNICEF *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child* serve as another tool to assist partners in programming and monitoring.⁹⁸

UNICEF has supported governments to fulfil their implementation and monitoring duties through a variety of measures, ranging from support for data collection and situation analysis; training, orientation, and consultations on processes for reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and follow-up to the Concluding Observations of the Committee on States Parties’ reports. UNICEF also provides the Committee on the Rights of the Child with relevant information, as requested, for their review of States’ reports.⁹⁹

The reports of States Parties and the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child have played an increasingly important role in influencing national policy choices related to children, as well as in helping to identify priority issues for country programmes of cooperation. Guidelines for UNICEF country office support to the CRC reporting process were issued in 1997,¹⁰⁰ and country offices are increasingly reporting on the mutually beneficial

⁹⁶ Elisabeth Lewin. *Programming for the realization of children’s rights: lessons learned from Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela* (UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean), July 2000.

⁹⁷ *Translating law into reality*. UNICEF Staff working papers, Evaluation, Policy and Planning Series, Number EPP-00-004, UNICEF, NY, May 2000.

⁹⁸ *Programme cooperation for children and women from a human rights perspective* (E/ICEF/1999/11)

⁹⁹ *Human Rights for children and women: how UNICEF helps make them a reality*; and *UNICEF Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1999/4), part II.

¹⁰⁰ *UNICEF Country Office Support to the Convention on the Rights of the Child reporting process* (29 January 1997 CF/PD/SR/006-97, 29 January 1997); and *Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child: A UNICEF Resource Guide* (from Stephen Lewis, 10 March 1997). See also the *Manual on Human Rights Reporting* prepared by OHCHR, UNITAR and the United Nations Staff

outcomes of their participation in and follow-up to such processes.¹⁰¹ The work of UNICEF at country level has helped to inform States Parties' reports, as well as the Committees' process of review. The special role of UNICEF in support of CRC implementation and monitoring has been acknowledged by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its consolidated reports to the General Assembly, which include an important section on international cooperation and solidarity. In its report for 1998, for example, the Committee recognizes UNICEF's assistance in facilitating informal regional meetings which help promote greater awareness of the principles and provisions of the Convention; enable Committee members to gain a greater understanding of regional realities and enhance international cooperation in the implementation of the Convention. In its 2002 report, the Committee further cites its good cooperation with UNICEF on awareness-raising activities.¹⁰²

The Committees' concluding observations on States Parties' reports, as well as additional information provided by United Nations agencies and NGOs have helped in turn to inform choices for country programme cooperation. One example is the greater emphasis placed by UNICEF on support to birth registration and public information on children's rights as a result of observations provided in 1997 on Bangladesh's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The national reporting process also provides an opportunity for UN agencies to examine how they can best collaborate to support national efforts to both monitor and comply with human rights treaty obligations.¹⁰³

A special note on National Committees

The 37 National Committees for UNICEF (NatComs) around the world have been key stakeholders in and supporters of development goals for children and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, providing a significant source of funding for UNICEF-supported programmes –and helping to extend advocacy for children to industrialized countries.¹⁰⁴

The CRC has provided a major focus of activities for the NatComs, starting from advocacy for ratification to support for implementation. National Committees have undertaken and continue to undertake a variety of public information and advocacy efforts around the Convention, working with schools, youth organizations, service clubs, the media and governments to promote knowledge and effective implementation. Such activities include production of information kits booklets and videos, press briefings, training materials and other publications. National committees organize seminars, workshops, round tables and consultations and support research on child-related issues. The UK Committee coined and pioneered the slogan "Children First" for its CRC advocacy. A number of national committees (for example Belgium, France, Germany; Netherlands) have helped stimulate or are involved in national coalitions for child rights and support the work of a variety of NGOs both domestically and in developing countries. Some (for example Australia) are particularly active in efforts to establish independent national bodies and institutions for children; others are members of joint government/NGO committees (Ireland) or working groups (Luxembourg) to study application of the Convention. Many Natcoms are involved in processes related to reporting on CRC implementation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Some (for example Denmark) have worked closely with governments in preparation of their national reports. Others (for example the Netherlands, Germany) have been involved in drawing up alternative reports to the Committee. Yet others (Bulgaria, Korea) have participated in the drafting of laws concerning children.

In Canada, the Convention on the Rights of the Child forms the blueprint for the programme of international cooperation between the National Committee, the Canadian International Development Agency, and selected UNICEF country offices and provides a touchstone for development of a global-local framework for child rights advocacy. In Greece and Italy, national committees are key partners in implementation of the "Mayors as Defenders of Children" initiative. Several Natcoms have supported efforts to implement particular rights for children, such as the breastfeeding through support for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (Netherlands; Korea; Slovenia; Spain). In collaboration with national experts, the Slovenian National Committee helped prepare the situation analysis of children and families as the starting point for the identification of priorities for implementation of the CRC during the transition period.

College (UN, Geneva 1997), with a chapter on the Convention on the Rights of the Child prepared by Marta Santos Pais and distributed to all UNICEF country offices in 1997.

¹⁰¹ See, for example the draft report on *Application of human rights-based approaches to programming in UNICEF country offices* (UNICEF NY, n.d.)

¹⁰² *Reports of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*. General Assembly Official Records (A/49/41, 1994; and A/55/41, 2000).

¹⁰³ *Programme cooperation for children and women from a human rights perspective*(E/ICEF/1999/11)

¹⁰⁴ All information taken from "*The work of UNICEF National Committees in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*", prepared by the UNICEF Geneva Regional Office for Europe, September 1997; see also UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1996/10), Part I.

Natcoms have also been significant actors in global advocacy efforts for ratification of the optional protocols to the CRC and related treaties and conventions such as ILO convention 182, and the landmine convention. National Committees (for example Ireland, Spain, the UK) have also supported the campaign to incorporate child rights into the Maastricht treaty. National Committees have provided significant support to heighten participation in and awareness of issues raised by global conferences on issues related to children – such as the conferences against commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour. They have also provided support for the ground-breaking Graca Machel study of the effects of armed conflict on children (for example, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan; Sweden; UK) and help promote awareness of and support for UNICEF's anti-war agenda (Austria). A number of national committees are founding members of the Mediterranean Group promoting Education for Peace.

The CRC and human rights-based programming

Over the latter part of the decade, UNICEF moved from viewing the Convention primarily as a basis for global advocacy to exploring both its role and the role of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women as normative frames of reference for the design and implementation of programmes of cooperation with national partners. *“Both Conventions provide a basis for policy dialogue with Governments and other development partners, through a process which assists the understanding of the overall factors affecting the realization of children’s and women’s rights and of the specific priority actions which need to be taken in each country context in order to promote them.”*¹⁰⁵

The UNICEF Mission Statement agreed by the Executive Board in January 1996 provided formal recognition that the pursuit of children’s rights is a fundamental purpose of UNICEF and that UNICEF’s work on behalf of children should be guided by the Convention for the overall protection of childhood.¹⁰⁶ Guiding Principles adopted as a companion to the Mission Statement committed staff to upholding a standard of behaviour consistent with the principles of the CRC and other human rights treaties.

UNICEF MISSION STATEMENT

- ◆ UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.
- ◆ UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.
- ◆ UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.
- ◆ UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families.
- ◆ UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.
- ◆ UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care.
- ◆ UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority.
- ◆ UNICEF aims, through its country programmes, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social and economic development of their communities.
- ◆ UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session, 22 January 1996

Implications for UNICEF programmes of cooperation have been multiple and varied, reflecting an evolution in thinking and approach that is ongoing. It has not been easy: *“For UNICEF the greatest challenge has been the effort to fully grasp how the principles of the CRC should guide programmes of cooperation for children. Promoting public awareness of the CRC, helping countries to revise legislation, briefing the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the range of challenges children face and how difficult implementation can be for poor countries, has been far easier than learning how to develop programmes for children from a human rights perspective.”*¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Programme Cooperation for Children and Women from a Human Rights Perspective (E/ICEF/1999/11)

¹⁰⁶ Towards defining the child rights perspective for UNICEF (NYHQ/PD/1997-043).

¹⁰⁷ Marjorie Newman-Williams 1999 paper on UNICEF and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

To help guide organizational thinking in defining a child rights perspective for UNICEF, a multi-disciplinary team was established at HQ and field offices in 1997.¹⁰⁸ After long and extensive processes of consultation and debate, including production and circulation of a number of discussion papers,¹⁰⁹ guidelines for a human rights-based programming approach were developed in 1998 and issued to all UNICEF offices.¹¹⁰ These guidelines, which mark a significant turning point for the organization and a pioneering effort within the UN system, drew particularly on the rich insights and experience of several pioneering country programmes that helped teach the organization how human rights and human development mutually reinforce each other.¹¹¹ An outline for a human rights conceptual framework was also produced, with the legal and moral foundation for human rights approach situated within the wider UN framework and the implications for UNICEF programming in the eight thematic clusters of the Convention outlined.¹¹² The UNICEF programme policy and procedure manual was revised according to the 1998 corporate guidelines,¹¹³ as was the Programme Process Training Package, and a core course on human rights principles for programming was developed, tested, and distributed to all UNICEF offices and divisions.¹¹⁴ This has been accompanied by efforts to ensure that all programme sector guidance incorporates a rights approach.

Key issues in programming and partnerships from a rights perspective

- ◆ the complementarity of CRC and CEDAW in underpinning the mandate and mission of UNICEF;
- ◆ the four foundation articles of the CRC as the overarching principles to be considered in programme design; namely: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the rights to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child which – taken together – lead to a child-centred focus and approach;
- ◆ the application of the human rights principles of universality, indivisibility and accountability
- ◆ the critical need for disaggregated data collection in situation analyses, policy support, advocacy and programme responses to address issues of disparities and discrimination in order to foster universal realization of human rights;
- ◆ refinement of situation analyses and assessments in order to better analyze vulnerabilities and distinguish different levels of causality of shortfalls in human rights, identifying the institutional actors who have obligations to promote, respect and protect the best interests of children, and fostering greater understanding of the synergies between legislative processes, the development of public policy and national development choices;
- ◆ the importance of establishing effective links – through the programming process - between UNICEF’s situation analyses and assessments (undertaken through a human rights lens) and state processes for reporting on treaty obligations to children and women, particularly CRC monitoring and reporting;
- ◆ an affirmation that children and women are subjects of rights, not objects of charity (sometimes expressed as a shift from a needs-based to a rights-based perspective), leading to a heightened concern for participatory processes and an accent on the accountability of the State;
- ◆ programmatic imperatives to address the full range of children’s civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights, leading particularly to an expansion of actions to support children in need of special protection as well as children’s right to be heard and consulted on issues that affect them;
- ◆ expansion of programmatic concern for the older child as well as the younger one (in line with the Convention’s definition of the child through age 18);
- ◆ new partnerships with legal bodies and alliances with civil society organizations as a cornerstone for the effective private/public collaboration essential to CRC and CEDAW implementation;
- ◆ heightened collaboration to advance the human rights agenda of the UN and the international financial institutions (for example through CCA/UNDAF and PRSP);
- ◆ the importance of intersectoral approaches, with convergent interventions aimed at achieving immediate results for children as well as fostering longer-term processes and transformations that will guarantee the sustained and universal fulfillment of children’s and women’s rights.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ *Towards defining the child rights perspective for UNICEF* (CF/EXD/MEM/1997-004), 10 March 1997 (accompanying the document, NYHQ/PD/1997-043)

¹⁰⁹ for example CF/EXD/MEM/1997-004 (op cit)

¹¹⁰ *Guidelines for human rights-based programming approach* (CF/EXD/1998/04).

¹¹¹ Marjorie Newman-Williams’ 1999 paper on *UNICEF and the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. In addition to the early country examples cited above, a good example of country programming within a rights framework at country level was provided by UNICEF Mali in its programme development in 1996, with wider conceptual and programmatic issues derived from the experience in 1997. As a region, Latin America has taken the lead in much of the process of applying a human rights framework to UNICEF’s work at country level (see a synthesis of experiences in Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela in *Programming for the Realization of Children’s Rights*, UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2000. Work in the Eastern and Southern Africa region has also been notable (see *Operationalization for ESAR of UNICEF global guidelines for human rights programming*, UNICEF Regional Office (ESAR), Nairobi, 29 October 2001).

¹¹² Marta Santos Pais, *A human rights conceptual framework for UNICEF*, Innocenti Essays no. 9, 1999

¹¹³ *Revised programme policy and procedure manual, Programme Operations (formerly book D)* (CF/PD/PRO/2000-01)

¹¹⁴ *Core course: human rights principles for programming*. UNICEF NY 2001 (distributed via PD/SR/2001-130), 2 May 2001

¹¹⁵ Based on 1998 programme guidelines (CF/EXD/1998-04) and 2000 revised programme manual (CF/PD/PRO/2000-01)

The medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001¹¹⁶ reflected the heightened move within UNICEF towards a human rights-based approach - explicitly including for the first time as one of the organization's four main organizational priorities the enhancement of partnerships and promotion of advocacy on child rights. Building on past strengths and strategies in advocacy and social mobilization, actions within this priority area have aimed at promoting wide acceptance and support for cost-effective interventions that work; helping establish mechanisms to coordinate and review actions in implementing global standards and legal obligations for children; and advocating for legal, policy and budget reforms to ensure the realization of children's rights with the full involvement of civil society.¹¹⁷

“The international community’s growing acceptance that children’s needs are in fact ‘rights’ has extended UNICEF’s leverage to break the chain of sickness, malnutrition and illiteracy at the hub of the poverty cycle. Near universal acceptance of the Convention and the proposition that the young should have first call on national resources would boost our peaceful revolution for children through the closing years of the decade and into the millennium. (1994 UNICEF Annual Report)

In its year 2000 report on progress and achievements against the medium-term plan, UNICEF offered an assessment of its efforts to strengthen its human rights-based approach. It recorded notable progress in incorporating human rights perspectives, and specific concerns arising from the CRC and CEDAW, in the process of situation analysis. Many had begun to take an intersectoral approach to factors affecting the achievement of social development goals and the sustaining of children's and women's rights, and to consider structural issues, such as gender discrimination and social exclusion, more specifically than in the past. Capacity-building for data collection, analysis and monitoring was, in turn, supporting government reporting on implementation of the two Conventions.¹¹⁸

UNICEF-supported country programmes were also tending to adopt implementation approaches more strongly reflective of human rights principles; to promote civil society participation and state accountability in basic services delivery, including convergent activities for the survival, growth and development of children; and to give priority to truly universal coverage to poorer and more marginalized communities and groups. Mid-term programme reviews were being used as opportunities to assess progress in the human rights-based approach across programme sectors and to adapt strategies accordingly.¹¹⁹

The rapid and near universal ratification of the Convention coupled with UNICEF's role vis-à-vis the Convention and its special relationship with the Committee as international treaty body have served as a source of inspiration and point of reference for the UN reform process aimed at the mainstreaming of human rights in all UN activities, including its operational activities for development. UNICEF served as co-chair with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Right to Development established within the UN Development Group (UNDG). One of the main achievements of this group was the review of guidelines for the Common Country Assessment/UN Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) and the introduction of human rights indicators into that process.¹²⁰ Thereafter, at field level, as a member of the UN Country Teams, UNICEF aims to ensure that assessment, analysis and priority-setting undertaken through the CCA, UNDAF and Strategic Framework exercises reflect human rights principles and adopt a people-centred approach.¹²¹

UNICEF played a leadership role, together with UNDP, OHCHR and UNDG in organizing the first interagency meeting on the human-rights based approach, held in Princeton in January 2001, and that same year was co-chair with OCHCR of the Working Group on the Rights Approach of the UNDG Programme Group. UNICEF support to policy formulation has increasingly involved the identification of national and subnational targets and indicators related specifically to outcomes for children and women's rights, within broader sector-wide approaches (SWAPS). In

¹¹⁶ E/ICEF/1998/13

¹¹⁷ UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2000/4), Part II.

¹¹⁸ UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2000/4) Part II, Panel 1

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ See *Guidelines for the formulation of the United Nation Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) – the role of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*, prepared by Marta Santos Pais (n.d.) and shared with UNICEF country offices: “In all areas of UN reform, opportunities must be seized to use the Convention as a reference, particularly in preparation of the guidelines for the formulation of UNDAF and CCA... Only in this way will it be possible to really place children at the centre of the development agenda and ensure that they constitute a distinct and priority concern in the national political context.” This constituted the basis for the revised CCA/UNDAF guidelines and the incorporation of human rights indicators developed by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Right to Development.

¹²¹ UNICEF Report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2000/4) Part II, Panel 1

coordination with key partners, UNICEF has also begun investing globally in documenting good practices and innovations in its rights-based approach to programming, with complementary initiatives underway by regional offices.¹²²

At the same time, a number of remaining challenges have been identified in the effective implementation of a human rights-based approach. In some cases, difficulties have been encountered encountered in mainstreaming a human rights-based approach across all programme areas, beyond its application to analysis, advocacy and child protection. While initiatives to facilitate the participation of children and young people in programmes have been expanding, they remain uneven in approach and required a synthesis of good practice and improved guidance. Moreover, UNICEF and its partners continue to face the task of developing and making better use of verifiable indicators to monitor progress and outcomes for children's and women's rights, especially in the areas of protection and participation. Work was also underway at the close of the decade on building greater understanding of the most effective ways of developing national capacity for the sustained realization of children's rights and human development outcomes. A further priority was identified as finding new ways of working with a range of often sector-based partners to achieve synergistic outcomes for the survival, development and protection of children, as well as combining professional disciplines within UNICEF country offices themselves to focus holistically on the child.¹²³

As UNICEF concluded in its assessment of the rights-based approach, one of the greatest challenges for the achievement of priority goals for children, and in support of future actions for children beyond 2000, lies in promoting integrated approaches in the context of decentralized authority, accountability and finance for social development. It is acknowledged that multisectoral approaches are required to address problems that have complex causes, such as poor sanitation, child malnutrition, maternal mortality and education failure. As basic services delivery are devolved, often as part of sector-wide reforms, heightened accountability of local authorities will be needed for progress in human development, along with the adoption of locally-defined, measurable goals as steps towards the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other human rights treaties.¹²⁴

Conclusion

It has been said both that “UNICEF’s adoption of the Convention as the basic reference for its work is a major step forward in converting the undertakings of law into day-to-day reality for children”¹²⁵ and that the rights-based approach is basically consistent with much of what UNICEF has been supporting for children and women over the years, including over the past decade: “For the past 10 years, UNICEF had experienced tremendous success in taking *de jure* rights of children, as embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and making them *de facto* rights through their integration in the practical work of the organization.”¹²⁶ It is perhaps enough to note that over the course of the decade, both the World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have served as potent tools and mobilizing factors for actions on behalf of children and women, with UNICEF seeking to maximize the potential for each to contribute to efforts to build a world fit for children. Application of the holistic approach to the human rights of children for development activities has encouraged countries to develop or enhance their national strategies for children and to include children’s rights as a matter of priority on the development agenda. In the words of Marta Santos Pais, “In reality, of course, there is no dichotomy between human rights and development.”¹²⁷ And for UNICEF both human rights and human development begin with the rights of children and women.

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ Foreword by Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights, to Innocenti Essays #9: *Human rights conceptual framework for UNICEF*, by Marta Santos Pais, 1999.

¹²⁶ Dr. Savitri Goonesekere in her presentation to the UNICEF Executive Board in the context of the Board paper on *Positioning UNICEF to meet the needs of children and women in the 21st century*” (E/ICEF/1999/7/rev.1)

¹²⁷ Innocenti Essays no. 9, *A human rights conceptual framework for UNICEF*, by Marta Santos Pais, 1999