

# Third Intergovernmental Conference on

## "Making Europe and Central Asia fit for Children"

Palencia, Spain 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2006

### Report of the Conference



SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO  
DE SERVICIOS SOCIALES,  
FAMILIAS Y DISCAPACIDAD  
DIRECCIÓN GENERAL  
DE LAS FAMILIAS  
Y LA INFANCIA



# **Third Intergovernmental Conference on Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children**

Palencia, Spain, 19th - 20th June 2006

## **Conference Report**



MINISTERIO  
DE TRABAJO  
Y ASUNTOS SOCIALES



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## FOREWORD

The III Inter-Governmental Conference ‘Making Europe and Central Asia fit for children’, organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain in collaboration with UNICEF, was held on 19-20 June 2006 in the historic city of Palencia. We had the pleasure to welcome 44 high-level national delegations from Europe and Central Asia.

The Conference, held as a follow-up to the previous Conferences of Berlin (2001) and Sarajevo (2004) represented an unique opportunity for the Region’s governments, international organizations and most concerned civil society organizations to review the progress made on child rights and lay the basis for the establishment of a common agenda in favour of children.

The 2006 Conference is therefore the third and last intergovernmental meeting to be organized in the Europe and Central Asia Region before the first review of progress against the goals set out in the Plan of Action ‘A World Fit for Children’, adopted during the 2002 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. The General Assembly will reconvene on the fifth anniversary of the World Fit for Children Declaration to assess how far we have achieved these bold goals.

The Conference, which was structured in plenary and roundtable sessions, concluded with the Palencia Statement that reaffirms and reflects the common will to continue working for children’s rights in our region in the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It was an honour for Spain, always at the forefront in the ratification or undertaking of international engagements in favour of human rights, to host this Conference in Palencia. It illustrates explicitly our strong commitment to Children and Adolescents. In order to ensure the success of this common endeavour, it is paramount to continue with, and encourage further, collaboration and exchange of experiences between our countries. This is reflected in the present report which has been prepared with the view to share and disseminate its content and recommendations widely, and to try, all together, to build a fairer Europe and Central Asia truly fit for our children.

JESÚS CALDERA SÁNCHEZ-CAPITÁN  
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



## PALENCIA STATEMENT

On June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006, representatives of fortyfour Governments of Europe and Central Asia, international organizations and civil society organizations, convened in Palencia for the III Intergovernmental Conference on “Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children”.

### *Considering that*

1. Our purpose has been to assess national progress against the goals of *A World Fit for Children*, the outcome document of the United Nations General Assembly’s Special Session on Children of May 2002, and to assist in preparing ourselves for reporting back to the UN General Assembly in 2007.

2. The III Intergovernmental Conference complements recent milestones for children’s rights in Europe and Central Asia, including the 2002 Berlin and 2004 Sarajevo *World Fit for Children* Conferences, the 2005 Ljubljana Regional Consultation on Violence against Children, and most recently the Council of Europe’s April 2006 Monaco Meeting ‘*Building a Europe For and With Children*’.

3. *A World Fit for Children* establishes an international agenda that strives for a world in which children’s rights are indeed implemented, specifying the priority actions, timelines, and expected results.

4. We must close the gap between aspiration and reality for many children in our region, and to achieve this we need to renew our existing commitments, translate earlier commitments into action and mobilize the political and social will necessary to fully recognize children as holders of rights.

5. *A World Fit for Children* was undertaken in the broader context of obligations deriving from the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. As part of these obligations, all countries in Europe and Central Asia have agreed to ensure that all the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are respected in legislation, policy development and service delivery – at all levels of government – and that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

6. We have examined ways in which *A World Fit for Children* and the Convention on the Rights of the Child need to be implemented at the national and sub-national level.

7. The implementation of the Convention demands a continuous process of monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of efforts across five ‘pillars’: law, policy, resource allocation, wide dissemination of the Convention and participation of children. These are all tied directly to governmental responsibilities across sectors for implementing children’s rights.

8. The Conference’s outcomes focus on the importance of establishing accountable mechanisms for achieving progress on implementation of children’s rights and call for action in specific critical areas of children’s lives, including tackling social exclusion, child poverty, and violence against children.

We reaffirm our commitments undertaken at the United Nations General Assembly’s Special Session on Children and related regional Conferences, with the clear purpose to achieve their proposed goals and create a World Fit for Children through National Plans and/or specific strategies.

In particular, as all the States of our region have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we recognize the importance of taking the following measures:

- a) To continue directing our greatest efforts to systematically measure the extent to which the rights of the child are effectively implemented.
- b) To establish comprehensive self\_monitoring structures to measure and evaluate on a permanent basis the effectiveness and impact of our efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, using tools such as child impact assessments and evaluations, budget impact assessments and evaluations, and the collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated data. It is necessary to support the documentation of compliance by governments of their obligations through mechanisms such as ombudspersons for children as well as by other similar like institutions.
- c) To make social inclusion and reduction of child poverty an explicit target of integrated national policies that take into account both the multi\_dimensional nature of exclusion and the intergenerational transmission of poverty.
- d) To eliminate child labour as part of the above strategies including enforcing minimum ages for admission to employment and safeguarding quality education while directly tackling social exclusion.
- e) To develop mechanisms that integrate and encourage the exchange of experiences, as well as coordinate local, regional and national programs to implement existing strategies and develop services and support systems for children and adolescents.
- f) To adopt legal procedures and systems to prevent violence, taking into account the recommendations of the Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children and the study of the UN Secretary General. These should include aware-

ness campaigns as well as making available integrated and coordinated services. They should be based on research, the compilation and analysis of experiences and data regarding the incidence of violence against children.

- g)** Children's participation is itself a part of the process of monitoring. Authentic mechanisms need to be put in place at each level to ensure the contribution of boys and girls to decision making in areas that affect their lives.
- h)** New methods and indicators are needed in order to measure progress towards the fulfilment of children's rights.

The III Intergovernmental Conference on Children in Europe and Central Asia has noted important gains since the 2002 Special Session on Children. Yet it remains clear that further progress must be made. While the necessary commitments are already in place, the III Intergovernmental Conference calls for urgent and accelerated action to make Europe and Central Asia *A Region Fit for Children*.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How seriously do we take children in our societies? To what extent do children benefit from legal and policy measures taken on their behalf? What proportion of children are growing up in poverty or face exclusion? How much progress has been made for children, and how much more might have been made? These are questions that any society should be able to answer. Too often, the answers are far from clear. Often data on the issues that matter for children is not gathered systematically, or is not sufficiently disaggregated to give a clear picture of trends. Some of these issues are sensitive and meet with denial. Systems of public scrutiny for children are not in place; Children themselves are rarely involved in such processes.

The Third Intergovernmental Conference on Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children, held in Palencia, Spain, on 19-20 June 2006, brought together 44 countries, civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and United Nations (UN) agencies to ask these questions anew.

The Government of Spain hosted the Conference, with support from UNICEF and in collaboration with the Council of Europe building upon the foundation of the First Intergovernmental Conference of Berlin in 2001, and the 2004 Second Intergovernmental Conference in Sarajevo.

The Conference took as its focus monitoring of progress against the obligations assumed by states under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the commitments made at the 2002 UN Special Session on Children- towards creating a 'World Fit For Children'.

A new study by the Innocenti Research Centre, Florence examining progress on the General Measures of the CRC in 30 countries of Europe and Central Asia provided background and reference point to the Conference. The study assesses the impact of the CRC in 4 critical cross-cutting areas of law reform, institutional reform, co-ordination mechanisms and monitoring of child rights implementation. It captures the remarkable spread of independent institutions for the right of the child over the last 15 years in the region.; and highlights the enduring influence of the CRC in shaping national and regional norms and practice. In doing so the study also provi-

des a framework for measuring progress on these central dimensions of child rights across the region.

The Conference itself provided an opportunity for distinguished speakers to take stock of progress on child rights in the region. What are the challenges facing a region that historically has been a leader in human rights? What are 'strategic elements' that drive progress in child rights? What do children themselves see as goals? What has been learned from recent experience of addressing deprivation and exclusion? What kind of structures are needed at national and regional level to monitor change and build state accountability for child rights?

23 government delegations took the floor to share recent developments in their national contexts, highlighting the breadth and diversity of experience across the region. It also revealed its often incomplete nature underlining the need, even for the most progressive societies to keep reviewing where there are gaps and where implementation is falling short.

Three specific challenges were examined in Round Tables :

- **National monitoring of child rights**. Monitoring is too often reduced to international reporting rather than to inform national advocacy, policy making and resource mobilization. Participants explored regional good practice in making monitoring relevant to progress in child rights. Emphasis was on government self-monitoring and the need for strengthened co-ordination across government departments, public assessment of progress, and the role of civil society and independent institutions such as ombudspersons for children. A recommendation was made that all countries should establish such mechanisms within a time-bound frame (2010)
- **Child poverty and exclusion**. On no matter what indicator, the situation of children across Europe and Central Asia has deteriorated over the last two decades, and upward trends have been reversed. Although there are great differences in levels of absolute deprivation, every country has areas where they could do better. Child poverty and exclusion is beginning to receive political attention, notably by the EU and individual governments. Discussions underlined the need to challenge the idea that economic growth alone will resolve child poverty as a residual. Explicit targets for reduction of child poverty are needed in national and sub national development plans; and monitoring progress against these should be a focus of political debate and attention. Too often the choice of indicators does not capture the different dimensions of children's well-being. Innovative approaches for use across the region were presented. Better use of existing data can go a long way in these directions.
- **Violence against Children** is one of the new areas where momentum to challenge existing norms and practices in society has been growing. Building on the work of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children, the focus of discussion was on translating ideas into action. What are the means by which a state should respond in its own area of accountability, in elimi-

nating violence in schools, in institutions, and in the community. Three ‘core elements’ of action were identified: translating legal provisions into mandates and standards; building capacities of professionals; and improving their accountability. Measuring and monitoring change in this critical area of children’s rights calls for new mechanisms, ones that make the system more responsive to children and which they can access easily, without fear of the consequences.

State accountability for the implementation of child rights was a thread that ran through many of the discussions. How can this be strengthened? What capacities need to be put in place? Government commitment to monitoring is often lessened by the perception that gathering of such information will lead to criticism; or is limited by absence of data that really matter for children. Yet it is clear that monitoring can be a vital means for a society to self assess its own performance, and gauge to what extent its own investments are being translated into outcomes that are valuable for children. Resources need to be allocated for such monitoring to come about.

Action in these areas is also framed by the September 2007 Commemorative Plenary Session of the General Assembly on the 2002 Special Session on Children. National progress reports on *A World Fit for Children*, due to the UN Secretariat by the end of 2006, are an important part of these next steps. Countries were called upon to make this process of reporting creative and thoughtful, resisting making it a bureaucratic exercise, and adding value at national level.

Looking beyond, the Third Intergovernmental Conference reflected upon future directions for children’s rights in Europe and Central Asia, particularly at the national and regional levels.

The ‘Palencia Statement’ sets out recommendations in the three main thematic areas of focus. It reaffirms existing state commitments. It also calls for decisive action by all countries to keep children at the centre of the political agenda and as a key indicator of social progress.

There was consensus that Governments, the Council of Europe, the European Union, UNICEF, civil society, and other key partners need to continue the process of their collaboration and exchange across the broader region. A forum for continuing this sharing of ideas and best practices on child rights on a sustained basis is needed. It is possible that child poverty is eliminated in a generation; that any violence against children becomes unacceptable; that all countries have national monitoring mechanisms in place by 2010. Each of these are concrete steps which if supported by other measures, will take Europe and Central Asia becoming a region truly fit for all children.



## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

### **Global Launch of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Study: “The General Measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Process in Europe and Central Asia”**

Ms. Amparo Valcarce, State Secretary for Social Services, Families and Disability, Government of Spain, welcomed participants to the Third Intergovernmental Conference on Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children, and opened the Global Launch event.

Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, officially launched the Innocenti Research Centre’s new publication ‘The General Measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Process in Europe and Central Asia’. This study focuses on the region’s experiences with the cross-cutting measures that contribute to the realization of all the rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

It sets out to document how far commitments made by state parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child actually led to the adoption of concrete measures to improve rights of children and the extent to which these measures have had a real impact on the lives of children.

The study’s findings are striking. They confirm that:

- The CRC has had significant consequences in all of the countries reviewed. Extensive and substantial changes in legislation on children have taken place that brought far greater conformity with the CRC. This especially has been the case in Central and Eastern Europe, where constitutional provisions have been inspired by the Convention. At the same time, Ms. Santos Pais reminded that in all countries, law reform is a never-ending process requiring both comprehensive children’s rights laws and sector-by-sector reform to fill in gaps on legislation, matched with effective law enforcement.
- There has been a remarkable spread of independent institutions for children’s rights across the region during the last 15 years. No longer a fragile or tenta-

tive movement institutions such as Ombudspersons for Children or Children's Commissioners are playing a crucial role in ensuring systematic attention to children in society. While many models have been adopted, in each case it has been found that their effectiveness hinges crucially on their independence. A strong recommendation of the report was that all countries in the region set up such independent institutions for children.

- Much greater governmental coordination of activities is needed, however, to promote child rights - across government departments, and between national and regional authorities. These efforts depend on strong political backing, allocation of adequate resources. Civil society needs to be closely involved.

***“Progress in the realization of children’s rights is closely linked with States’ openness and ability to monitor change, acknowledge challenges and introduce required adjustments”***

*Marta Santos Pais  
Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre*

- Finally, progress in the realisation of children’s rights is closely linked with States’ openness and ability to monitor change, acknowledge challenges, and introduce required adjustments in law, policy and practice.

Ms. Santos Pais noted that the CRC was adopted in the same year as when Europe began its own most recent process of reunification. The coincidence of these events underlines a continued interrelationship between today’s understanding of child rights – very different from that back in 1959 when the Declaration on the Rights of the Child was adopted - and democracy, the value that defines modern Europe.

## **Opening Session**

In a special video message to the Plenary, Ms. Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director, UNICEF, commended Europe and Central Asia for its leadership on children's rights, called upon the region to show its strength in tackling urgent challenges for action. Ms. Veneman, reaffirmed UNICEF's partnership with the region in moving ahead for all children.

Mr. Heliodoro Gallego, Mayor of Palencia, welcomed all participants to the city of Palencia, continuing the legacy of Berlin and Sarajevo in reflecting the towns, cities, and states across the region committed to the protection and promotion of all children's rights.

Consuelo Crespo, President, Spanish Committee for UNICEF, commended the Government of Spain for hosting the Third Intergovernmental Conference, as part of a region-wide process to move beyond a world where the CRC is ratified but still not fully implemented.

Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, recalled that the Third Intergovernmental Conference was part of the preparation for reporting back to the UN General Assembly in 2007 on progress made on *A World Fit for Children*. As such, it offers a special opportunity to take stock of achievements and re-energize action to improve the lives of children in Europe and Central Asia. While the region benefits from a number of "champion" countries that have put children's rights at the centre of their policies, difficult challenges remain across the entire region, especially in areas such as child poverty and social exclusion.. She called for a 'Movement' around and towards Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, bringing together all the relevant actors needed to advance children's rights at the national and local level. Guided by the Convention, such partnerships must turn the economic and social system, and its institutions and structures, 'decisively towards children'. To stay on course, such a Movement also needs the guidance of independent monitoring institutions, of national coalitions of civil society, and of children themselves.

*"We need to make the economic and social system, its institutions and structures, turn decisively towards children. Nothing less."*

*Rima Salah  
Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF*

Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe (CoE), asked what had been the progress in Europe and Central Asia since the Sarajevo meeting? How many promises have been kept? Why are we progressing so slowly? There are signs, such as the results of the Ljubljana Regional Consultation on Violence against Children, that Europe is moving in the right direction. Yet blatant violations of children's rights occur daily in all our countries. All this suffering 'should haunt our conscience until we have done absolutely everything in our power to prevent it'.

Ms. Boer-Buquicchio called for everyone present to pool their efforts to achieve the goal of a Europe and Central Asia fit for children. In this spirit, the CoE's new Programme 'Building a

Europe for and with Children' seeks to mobilize expertise to help member states promote children's rights and eradicate violence against children.

*“Blatant violations of children’s rights occur daily in all our countries (...) this suffering should haunt our conscience until we have done absolutely everything in our power to prevent them”*

*Maud de Boer-Buquicchio  
Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe*

Families and schools are strong assets through which well-designed policies and services can be directed to prevent poverty and exclusion. The May Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs, in Lisbon, saw Ministers agree that the well-being of families and their children, and in particular support to 'parenting' should be a policy priority. The Palencia Conference needs to provide 'the building blocks' for a bridge 'over the gap between children's needs and realities'. 'Between policy makers and implementers; between commitments and resources; between ambitions and expertise, and between data and facts.'

Mr. Jesús Caldera, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain, welcomed all participants to Spain, and reiterated Palencia's mission of uniting in partnership to make Europe and Central Asia truly fit for children. Above all else, this means a region where children enjoy all their rights without discrimination. As long as violations of children's rights continue to be part of the daily landscape across the region, they serve as a constant reminder of our common responsibility for and with children, because these violations simply cannot be accepted.

*“Poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination, suffered by countless children, continue with a painful presence in our daily landscapes”*

*Jesús Caldera  
Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain*

In this spirit, the Government of Spain has made the fight against poverty and exclusion a core component of its national and international policies. The First Strategic National Plan on Childhood and Adolescence was recently released, which will coordinate for the first time all strategic actions regarding children across all government levels. It aims to achieve the full development of all rights for all children in Spain. Europe and Central Asia does face significant challenges for children and their rights. In the face of these challenges, the goals and even how to achieve them are known. What is needed is to forge ahead in concrete terms, applying our kno-

wledge and resources. To a large degree, the health of children and societies depends on meeting these challenges. With these words, Mr. Caldera inaugurated the Third Intergovernmental Conference on Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children.

### **Plenary Session 1 ‘Progress and Challenges’**

Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, reached back to a month before the First Intergovernmental Conference in Berlin in 2001, to its preparatory meeting of children in Budapest. There, youth delegates from across Europe and Central Asia formulated their message to the Berlin Conference. Stated simply, their call was that all young people:

- Finish secondary school
- Have equal opportunities to develop their capacities
- Have access to the information they need
- Can participate in political life and decision-making
- Are protected against exploitation and abuse
- Have recreational places to go that are safe.’

Mr. Hammarberg reminded the agenda laid out by those young people in Budapest is still there calling for action from us. There have been positive developments in some areas, with children more often on the political agenda than before, but the youth delegates would still be disappointed today. They asked for more.

*“The time has come for governments to refine the tools  
for realization of child rights”*

*Thomas Hammarberg  
Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe*

Further action is needed in exactly the areas highlighted in the IRC report launched that morning on progress on the CRC across the region. First, there is a need for a clear stance that *violence* is no more permissible against children than against adults. Second, *further* investment and improvements in *education* are a must. *Child poverty* requires stronger political remedies in all the countries of Europe and Central Asia. Finally, children’s *participation* needs to be central in all related efforts. In order to make progress, a series of key steps and considerations are called for, all of which work towards genuine *implementation* of the CRC and related commitments. These include *national strategies* for the rights of the child; *harmonization of laws* with the Convention; *better coordination* of efforts across *political and administrative systems*; central and visible *consideration of children in the budget process*; and effective *monitoring* as part of the national strategy. Only concrete action in such areas can provide the political will for genuine change, and offer a response to the expectations of children today.

Mr. Danilo Türk, Professor of International Law, University of Ljubljana, reflected upon progress in the implementation of child rights in a region and era of profound, complex, and continuing change. That we need to be clear about the ‘strategic elements’ that lie behind and reinforce such progress. He noted that at the time when the CRC was being prepared, the world was divided between two hostile ‘blocks’. The CRC overcame that division in a unique way. Post 1990, Europe entered a period of optimism where it was believed that mobilization around human rights would change the world. This also led to an oversimplistic belief that the revolution in civil and political rights taking place in many countries in Europe would in itself, resolve most problems. A consequence was neglect of the economic and social rights that the CRC had managed to maintain equal attention to.

*“One thing is clear: the rights of the child must be at the top of the human rights agenda in every country of our region. This should be a basic principle of the entire human rights strategy of our time.”*

*Danilo Türk  
Professor of International Law, University of Ljubljana*

The time for such a dichotomy is now over. There is need for a better balance where serious consideration is also given to economic and cultural rights of children. If we look at reality in these areas, too often the world has regressed, with parts descending into conflict and war. We cannot overlook that between the meeting in Sarajevo and now, some of the worst violations of children’s rights has occurred, such as in Beslan.

Professor Türk reminded that poverty and deprivation needs to be seen equally as a problem of exclusion and discrimination, recognizing the impact of child poverty early in life. One core tool – our education system– needs to be at the centre of all discussions on child rights. Education is a strategic and necessary priority to ensure human rights for all in a systematic and sustainable manner. Unfortunately, the past decade and a half has brought, in parts of the region, serious deterioration in educational systems. This trend needs to be reversed, in order to make reality out of the vision of all essential human rights that the CRC brought together. Even more, the quality of societies tomorrow, and the future of the region as a whole, depend upon success today in ensuring all children’s rights.

## Interventions by Delegations

Twenty-three delegations took the floor to describe the progress and challenges for implementation of child rights in their own countries. Approximately half of these interventions were at the ministerial or vice-ministerial level; all interventions exemplified core themes of the Palencia conference within national contexts.

The majority of delegations made reference to processes of law reform and implementation in order to harmonize national legislation with the CRC (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). For instance, Portugal has prioritized a review of its penal and family codes for CRC compliance and to ensure fulfilment of child rights; Kazakhstan is reviewing a draft law on adoption that will supplement legislation already in force; Tajikistan has been systematically reforming its legislative framework in health and particularly in education; and Romania pointed to four relevant laws approved by Parliament and coming into force in 2005.

Almost half of the delegations' interventions described national plans of action (NPAs) on children's rights and efforts to coordinate implementation across government levels and sectors (Andorra, Bulgaria, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). Andorra's current NPA involves all relevant actors and civil society organizations, working *inter alia* to promote the Convention among all sectors of society. Similarly, in Bulgaria, the State Agency for Child Protection, local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have developed an integrated NPA for 2006-2009, which among other points unifies and coordinates all policies for children with a rights-based approach. The Russian Federation's 2003-2006 Programme of Action specifically seeks to improve coordination of different bodies at state and regional levels.

Several delegations addressed the monitoring of children's rights implementation, including data collection and analysis and the development of better rights-based indicators (Armenia, Bulgaria, Italy, Serbia, Uzbekistan). Armenia's Strategic Programme emphasizes the collection of data on children in difficult circumstances, including child data centres to monitor violence, as well as efforts for regional data collection. Serbia stressed its priority on monitoring and evaluating implementation for tangible results, and highlighted the importance of disaggregated data analysis in this work. While Serbia's profile of indicators was normal for a country in transition, disaggregated data showed that Roma children were four times more likely to be living in or near the poverty line, and these results have led policymakers to devote greater attention to combating child poverty and social exclusion. The value of such insights is why Serbia has integrated the DevInfo human development and rights database system into main government ministries, and is focusing extensively on the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

A number of delegations discussed how to include children's participation and viewpoints in these and other efforts (Finland, Latvia, Malta, Uzbekistan). Malta's

Council for Children, for instance, includes children in its membership, while Uzbekistan seeks to bring children's opinions into political discourse through the children's parliament. Latvia's new national helpline for children, which is free of charge even from mobile phones, receives 1,000 to 1,500 phone calls from children every day.

Delegations (Azerbaijan, Finland, Italy, UN Administered Province of Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Malta) also described the role of ombudspersons in their countries, including where ombudspersons are currently being established. Finland's Ombuds Office was established in 2005 with an Advisory Board that includes NGOs and other stakeholders, and that is replicated at regional and local levels. The Ombuds-person of the Republic of Azerbaijan spoke directly about her own role as Ombuds-person in relation to children.

Child poverty and questions of social inclusion, discrimination, and equality figured prominently among a majority of delegations' remarks (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Germany, Italy, UN Administered Province of Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Norway, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan). Turkey's action programme for the poor focuses extensively on child poverty and children's social inclusion, as seen in its work with the European Union (EU) on inclusion, a forthcoming conference on child poverty co-sponsored by UNICEF, and efforts across settings via education, incentives, access to services, and collaboration with local governments and NGOs. The UN Administered Province of Kosovo emphasized the social inclusion of Roma children and children with disabilities, particularly through the role of education and schools. Kyrgyzstan likewise focused on collaboration with local authorities to support families, and the Republic of Moldova is undertaking institutional reforms and creating needed structures to support children. Norway noted that relative poverty does affect children in the country, and that there was a need to target efforts to help children more directly. Lithuania noted its priority within child poverty reduction efforts on social services in rural areas, while Azerbaijan stressed the importance in legislation of children's rights in reducing child poverty.

Over half of the delegations addressed aspects of violence against children (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Malta, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). For example, Italy is developing a range of activities against exploitation and violence, including cooperation between the central and regional governments to establish centres for child victims of sexual abuse, legislation governing NGO work with child victims, mechanisms to gather data on occurrences of abuse, and stronger penalties against perpetrators. Likewise, Germany's NPA places child protection from violence among its highest priorities. In Slovenia, the 2006-2016 NPA seeks to amend legislation on corporal punishment, and foresees strategies across ministries to prevent violence in the home and in other settings.

While delegations brought to light significant work and accomplishments towards making Europe and Central Asia fit for children, they also acknowledged pressing challenges with great candor.

## Plenary Session 2 ‘Critical Issues, Urgent Actions’

Ms. Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, observed that monitoring mechanisms are among the most overlooked aspects in national implementation of the Convention in the region. However, the Committee on the Rights of the Child considers self-monitoring as an obligation of Governments under the CRC; the Committee also regards independent monitoring of progress towards implementation as essential, by, for example, parliamentary committees, NGOs, academic institutions, professional associations, youth groups and independent national human rights institutions.

The Committee’s message to the Conference is that those at the highest political levels need to be aware of children and their rights and have both on their agenda. Strong national self-monitoring helps identify, anticipate, and address new challenges as well as those that will emerge in the future. Beyond international and national monitoring, many challenges require even closer cooperation and more active State participation in regional and sub-regional monitoring of the CRC.

*“Monitoring is an easily achievable goal. As a measure of implementation, it can be successfully carried out throughout Europe and Central Asia within a matter of years”*

*Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic  
Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*

Ms. Vuckovic-Sahovic observed that child rights monitoring in contrast to the deeper challenges such as the eradication of poverty, is an easily achievable goal that can be realized across the region within a matter of years. Here is a chance for Europe and Central Asia to prove its leadership- as an example to the rest of the world. States need to help each other and if possible collectively set out a date – say in 4 years - by which time such a monitoring system will be in place.

Mr. David Piachaud, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom, addressed the many challenges in ending child poverty, which remains a major problem in almost all of Europe and Central Asia, and ensuring children’s social inclusion. Child poverty, the more widely-known concept, is linked to worse outcomes in health, housing, education, family stability, and environmental safety later in life. The complementary concept of social inclusion brings a change in perspective, in part out of concern with wider child rights, away from the long-standing focus on income poverty, and focuses on the interaction between an individual and societal processes which result in exclusion or inclusion. The important question then becomes what are the conditions of participation for that individual or child in society, conditions which are not themselves necessarily dependent upon poverty.

*“Child poverty can be ended: A target for a generation!”*

*David Piachaud  
Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science*

There are compelling reasons to act decisively against poverty and exclusion. For this to happen, there is a need for a major change in thinking on how to act, requiring a breadth of vision beyond traditional responses. Both a focus on the public sector as well as a vision for society overall are essential.

It is helpful to approach children as the center of a series of concentric rings determining crucial aspects of child poverty and social exclusion: Family, Community, Economy and Society. Governments must see themselves as agents of change that can leverage their limited resources to provide strategic support across these different levels, and ensure effective policy responses are available in each. With well-crafted policies child poverty can be ended, even within one generation’s time. Eliminate child poverty within a generation. Could this be a target for the region?

## Roundtable Sessions

### Roundtable on Children's Rights Monitoring Mechanisms

**Chair:** Ms. Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic, *Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*

**Panelists:** Ms. Marta Santos Pais, *Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence*; Mr. José Chamizo, *Ombudsman of Andalusia, Children's Ombudsman of Andalusia*; Ms. Roberta Ruggiero, *Research Coordinator, ChildONEurope Secretariat: European Network of National Observatories on Childhood*; Mr. Tomica Milosavljevic, *Minister of Health, Serbia*

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Mieke Schuurman, *Secretary-General, The European Children's Network*

This Roundtable took its starting point that governments must self-monitor implementation efforts according to their obligations under the CRC, and that such processes should be mirrored by independent monitoring of government compliance. Despite progress, monitoring is still perhaps the most overlooked aspect in national implementation of children's rights in Europe and Central Asia. The Roundtable highlighted examples of government monitoring structures and tools, including child impact assessments and evaluations, budget analyses, and data collection and analysis, as well as models of statutory independent institutions for children's rights. In particular, the Roundtable examined key gaps in monitoring in the region, as well as strategies to build upon existing mechanisms in order to achieve comprehensive national children's rights monitoring.

**Roundtable conclusions were broadly framed around the following considerations:**

- 1. Monitoring should not be seen exclusively as a supra-national process; it should be first and foremost a national process aimed at enabling national authorities to measure how well they are living up to their commitments and plans on children's rights, including in particular the effectiveness and impact of laws, programmes and policies that they have adopted.**

A basic understanding of the CRC shows its framework as anchored in three pillars, the first of which is state's accountability for children's rights. Accordingly, the role of government self-monitoring on CRC implementation is fundamental, requiring coordination across governmental departments and between central and sub-national authorities, while mainstreaming children's concerns in national planning and the budget process. It also calls for public assessment of progress and social mobilization for children's rights, reflecting the second CRC pillar: a system of public scrutiny. As Ms. Santos Pais stated, 'keeping children at the centre of the political agenda is a key indicator of social progress and a core dimension of democracy.'

Roundtable discussions brought out a number of examples of national self-monitoring, including child impact assessments, child rights observatories, and parliamentary oversight of government action. The delegation of Sweden described how

one dedicated governmental unit monitors children's rights progress across the entire government, including all departments and agencies. The practical challenges of coordinating, monitoring, and improving multi-sectorial implementation efforts were acknowledged, especially in budgetary matters, but the role of Parliament was stressed in taking these necessary steps. The delegation of Georgia expressed its willingness to put in place a designated monitoring body, emphasizing broad-based efforts to sensitize the public to children's rights.

While national self-monitoring is central, there is also a need for parallel monitoring at the local, regional, and international levels, all of which must have children at the center. This includes trans-national cooperation in monitoring and anticipating the challenges of a 'Europe on the move'. The delegation of Bulgaria proposed continuing the discussions of the Roundtable and the Third Intergovernmental Conference by developing a regional and international monitoring consultative process.

**2. Monitoring should not be restricted to any specific areas, but should cover all the rights and principles contained in the Convention.**

Monitoring efforts have to be framed by the four general principles of the CRC (non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; promotion of survival and development to the child's fullest potential; and respect for views of the child), as well as the thematic clusters of the Convention (general measures of implementation; civil rights and freedoms; family environment and alternative care; basic health and welfare; education, leisure and cultural activities; and special protection measures). Monitoring is thus a holistic process covering all rights and principles of the CRC. In practice, this represents a challenge as monitoring too often remains limited to only a few areas or sectors.

The strengths of national statistical agencies in specific sectors, such as monitoring and data on child abuse, can be built up and enhanced for comprehensive monitoring. Indeed, there is a need to develop and use indicators covering all the rights of children. Participants accepted that the biggest obstacle in implementing and monitoring children's rights is not money, but gaining a clear definition of what strategies are needed to make sure that all children enjoy all their rights. Here, the importance of using the whole Convention to guide activities, and carrying this through into concrete terms in NPAs, or mainstreamed in national planning processes, was underscored.

**3. Data collected needs to be disaggregated, not only by sex but also by region and other relevant criteria, including by groups that are particularly vulnerable or traditionally marginalized.**

Mr. Tomica Milosavljevic described the crucial impact in Serbia of data monitoring systems for assessing and improving rights implementation for all children. The latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey results brought to light the challenges for vulnerable and marginalized groups: overall data reflected 95% immunization rates for children, while disaggregated data showed that 19,000 Roma children were not

immunized. Such quantitative measurements were matched with a participatory survey on child poverty, including the views of children most affected by poverty and social exclusion, one of whom responded, 'Finally someone is asking us what we feel!' EU experiences in data monitoring were also discussed, bearing in mind the frequent recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to strengthen nationwide systems for comprehensive collection of indicators and comparative disaggregated data on all children and all areas covered by the CRC.

**4. Many actors can and should contribute to monitoring, including ombudsmen and civil society, in particular academic institutions and children themselves.**

The third pillar for the CRC's framework is the participation of civil society, including children themselves. A wide range of civil society actors, institutions, and children, including regional bodies, national observatories on child rights, NGOs, and ombudspersons are active in monitoring child rights. For example, the delegation of Germany described the visible role of the NGO network in Germany in fostering political debate on children's issues. It was stressed that governments need the contributions of all sides, including more critical voices monitoring the status of children's rights, to create a broad base of responsibility for ensuring all rights for all children.

The Roundtable focused on ombudspersons and independent institutions for children's rights for their work in monitoring and the broader promotion and protection of children's rights. Delegations, including the delegation of Kazakhstan, expressed great interest in establishing and strengthening ombudspersons in their countries. Participants agreed upon the importance of such institutions' independence; Mr. Jose Chamizo noted that his position as Ombudsperson for children required a 3/5 majority vote in Parliament, with a mandate of 5 years that outlasts the term of the electing Parliament. Such mandates must cover all children, based directly upon contact with children, children's participation, and making children visible to political leaders. Ombudspersons must be more than a bureaucracy; they need to push the future of children's rights in a bold and visionary fashion.

**Key Recommendations:**

1. Guided by the CRC, a clear national strategy for the realisation of children's rights needs to be developed with required mobilisation of resources and time-bound targets.
2. Timebound targets should be set for establishing mechanisms for self-monitoring and independent monitoring by 2010.
3. Compilation, analysis and use of data, information and research in monitoring should be developed.
4. Involve children in monitoring efforts.
5. Expand regional and subregional consultations to share experiences and build partnerships.

## **Roundtable on Child Poverty and Social Inclusion**

**Chair:** Mr. David Piachaud, *Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom*

**Panelists:** Ms. Petra Hoelscher, *Consultant on Child Well-Being Indicators, UNICEF*; Mr. Hugh Frazer, *Independent Expert on Social Inclusion Policy and Practice*; Ms. Tatiana Maleva, *Director, Independent Institute for Social Policy, Moscow, Russian Federation*; Mr. Victor Renes Ayala, *CARITAS - Spain*

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Aylin Taftali, *Assistant Programme Specialist, Division of Human Rights, Human Security and Philosophy, UNESCO*

Already in the First Intergovernmental Conference (Berlin, 2001), poverty and social exclusion were identified as two of the greatest obstacles for children's rights across the region – both remain major challenges in 2006. In the EU, new commitments have been made to address child poverty and exclusion but there is a very mixed picture at members state level. In CEE/CIS, economic growth opens up new possibilities of state action in raising living standards, but children are missing out. Children are now the group most vulnerable to poverty in every country. Family coping mechanisms are reflected in the demographic crisis facing many countries and in migration.

Presentations covered new perspectives from Europe and CEE-CIS countries in analyzing exclusion as it affects children and measuring child well-being in multi-dimensional aspects. The experience of the EU in tackling child poverty, what led it to become a political priority, and what is the way forward on child poverty became the focus of debate.

**Roundtable conclusions were framed around the following considerations:**

**1. The need to challenge the false notion that economic development and rising prosperity will automatically help all children.**

The common thread of argument running through the discussion was that economic development does not automatically benefit children; and yet social exclusion can be overcome. Many of the most economically developed nations in Europe and worldwide have serious levels of child poverty and social exclusion. 1 in 5 children across Europe live below national poverty lines. 'We are obliged to lead a hidden life'. Approaches for adult and family poverty are important but not sufficient for children. Targeted policy measures must be put in place. Furthermore, the argument was made that tackling child poverty and promoting children's social inclusion can be a major driver of economic and social development. Child poverty has moved from being a peripheral issue just a short while ago to become a key political priority for the EU's social inclusion agenda, and countries that have been able to garner political will are those that have proved most successful in reducing child poverty. These positive experiences now need to be systematically shared across the region.

**2. The need to recognize that the social inclusion of children is the concern and responsibility of all levels of society – the family, the community, the economy and the whole society.**

Discussions centered on the approach of the EU Social Inclusion Process in emphasizing the mobilization and participation of all stakeholders in bringing about social inclusion. In particular, there is a need to promote a greater participation of children and children's organizations in such processes. The delegation of Bosnia-Herzegovina commented that the EU Social Inclusion process overall, including its role for all levels of society, presents both a model and a leadership opportunity for EU Member States, Accession states, and EU neighboring states across the broader region. The delegation of Austria supported one of the key elements of the EU Social Inclusion Process – the 2-year National Action Plans on Social Inclusion – as a useful approach to ensure that all sectors are involved in addressing the cross-cutting issues of child poverty and social inclusion.

**3. The need to develop multi-dimensional and integrated policies to promote the social inclusion of children and to counter child poverty.**

Monitoring of child poverty and social exclusion needs to address different dimensions of well being of children. These almost by definition, need to be multi-dimensional. They also need to be benchmarked and linked to policy. A model for understanding and measuring child poverty and social inclusion was explored, while examining specific policy implications and options that emerge from this perspective. EU Member States in developing and implementing their National Action Plans on social inclusion have shown gaps in terms of limited focus on children's rights, and piecemeal approaches and lack of overall integrated strategy.

As one prominent example, the relationship between poverty, employment, and the position of the child was explored, wherein child poverty reduction is not only a question of creating employment but also creating means and facilities to support families. The challenges - yet importance - of policy coordination and decision-making was stressed, as well as coordination at the broader regional level and the crucial role of 'political will' in making these happen. Development and coordination of local level initiatives is a necessary component, as well as linkages between local initiatives and national policies. The delegations of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway described the coordination mechanisms in place in their countries to ensure a multi-dimensional approach against child poverty and exclusion.

**4. The need to develop tools to monitor related progress, and to recognize the importance of evidence-based (data collection, monitoring) policy-making in this field.**

Under the EU Social Inclusion Process, Member States agree to a set of common indicators on social inclusion that underpin regular reporting and monitoring mechanisms. Despite this, few countries have taken the step of setting quantified targets on child poverty in particular. A consensus formed around the importance taking a

broader vision of child poverty and social inclusion, and of developing new indicators on that will move beyond current measures limited to income.

**Key recommendations:**

- All countries should develop multi-dimensional and integrated policies to counter child poverty and to promote the social inclusion of all children.
- Countries should ensure close links and cooperation between ministries and main stakeholders promoting the rights of children, and work to prevent poverty and social exclusion among children.
- All countries should develop effective mechanisms for mainstreaming and coordinating policies and programmes to promote the social inclusion of children at local, national and regional levels. This requires explicit political will and the participation of children.
- All countries should ensure the collection of quality data based on child-specific indicators and establish clear mechanisms for monitoring progress in promoting the social inclusion of children.
- The promotion of exchange and peer-learning (between and within the countries) in terms of preventing poverty and social exclusion of children should be developed further.
- All countries should ensure the involvement of civil society partners, young people and children in the design, implementation and monitoring of the policies.
- EU should give a key priority to child poverty and exclusion not only within the EU but also in its cooperation with other countries.
- All UN agencies should address the issue in a coordinated manner at the country level.

## **Roundtable on Violence Against Children**

**Chair:** Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, *Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe*

**Panelists:** Ms. Jennifer Gray, *Policy Adviser, Department for Education and Skills, United Kingdom*; Ms. Svetlana Trbojevik, *Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Ss Cyril and Methodius, Macedonia*; Ms. Iris Marusic, *Research Associate, Centre for Educational Research and Development, Croatia*; Ms. Pepa Horno, *Officer on Violence and Children Programs, Save the Children – Spain*

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Elda Moreno, *Programme Manager, "Building a Europe for and with Children", Council of Europe*

Regional frameworks and commitments to end violence against children have grown impressively in recent years, as seen most recently at the July 2005 Ljubljana Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children, and the April 2006 Monaco Launching Conference of the CoE Action Programme on “Children and Violence.” Nonetheless, children across the region remain vulnerable and exposed to violence in its many forms and settings. This Roundtable focused on how to translate into action at the national level the most pressing and promising strategies already identified, examining in particular three core elements: translating legal provisions into enhanced functions, mandates and standards; building professionals’ capacity; and improving accountability. Discussions also considered inter alia improving system responsiveness to children.

**Roundtable conclusions were framed around the following considerations:**

### **1. Translating legal provisions into clear by-laws**

All countries in the region – even those with the most progressive legal frameworks against violence – face the challenge of translating legislative provisions into practical by-laws so as to guide all relevant institutions and professionals. Often there is a lack of clear definitions of responsibilities and obligations for relevant professionals (e.g., teachers, health personnel, and social workers). This is especially true when national strategies filter down to local and community levels, where the specificities of the local environment and the role for local autonomy and decision-making need to be considered. The nature of various institutions, and their mandates, functions and inter-relationships, may differ, even from one region to another within countries. ‘Local Safeguarding’ Children Boards in the United Kingdom were discussed as an attempt to carefully define mandates and functions while partnering national and local strategies (and bodies) around shared objectives.

Institutional frameworks should be both coherent and adapted to the needs and realities of the national and local contexts. They should identify very clearly the mandates and functions of each institution and service. Participants agreed that the mandate of each institution should include :

- reference to the statutory and broader institutional frameworks;
- reference to the main legal provisions guiding the institution work;

- overall purpose of the institution and description of its functions;
- provisions concerning identification, referral, reporting and follow-up of cases;
- job descriptions of main categories of staff including individual obligations and responsibilities, skills, and competences of staff in direct contact with children;
- guidance for co-operation and interaction with other institutions and stakeholders; and
- guidance for communication with children.

## **2. Building professionals' capacity and ensuring internal accountability**

Shortcomings in staff skills and competences often mean that professionals are not able to meet their core responsibilities and job expectations. The importance of involving, motivating, training and informing all relevant actors across relevant contexts was underlined, as well as the usefulness of identifying incentives to support needed changes and make them effective. Additionally, it is critical for institutions to have in their mandates provisions for staff accountability, for internal monitoring and performance evaluation.

## **3. Guaranteeing external accountability**

All institutions also need to reserve a place for external monitoring and evaluation tied to effective accountability mechanisms. Institutional frameworks should be assessed and their performance monitored in order to make sure they serve the objectives of the national (or local) strategy for the protection of children. This function can be carried out by a combination of bodies and mechanisms, including independent institutions such as ombudsmen for children; governmental coordinating bodies (if possible, at a high level, with a mandate to cooperate and interact with other actors); data collection and research institutions; observatories or agencies that promote the development and dissemination of information and provide training, capacity-building, and advice; and specific mechanisms for the referral of cases of violence. NGOs also have an important and multi-faceted role to play, including as contributing partners and as independent voices of assessment. Assessment of existing systems systematically points to the need for reforms for which financial resources and expertise need to be found. This step should also be anticipated well in advance.

### **Key recommendations:**

- Legislation and guidance that address both children's welfare/well-being and criminal justice should be in place.
- Legislation and guidance must be implemented effectively, which requires a strategy at national, regional and local levels. Guidance and implementation strategies must include an understanding of policy intentions and appropriate training, all of which needs to be customized in particular for local conditions and local implementation.

- National agencies should make training programmes available for local implementation. Training initiatives require their own strategy and implementation plans.
- Key stakeholders (national, regional and local levels of government; NGOs; local communities; faith groups; children and parents; etc.) must be involved throughout the process from development of legislation/guidance to its implementation, strategy planning, and delivery and monitoring of services.
- Information is needed on what is happening on the frontline with the implementation of legislation and policy, including by research; monitoring and inspection; and complaints procedures. Resultant data should be used to identify issues/gaps which require addressing, and improvements can be monitored over time.
- Utilization of resources from national, regional and local bodies should be considered in a coherent manner working to an agreed local plan. Governments may make resources available to support implementation, such as by grant funding (where the purpose is specified and monitored), and in the use of human resources to support/facilitate implementation at the local level.
- Implementation of policies, training, etc., must be evaluated to see if the intended outcomes are being achieved, and if not, to see the need to refine implementation plans. Such evaluations can be completed through research, internal and external monitoring, and inspections.

### **Plenary Session 3**

Mr. Philip O'Brien, Regional Director for Europe, UNICEF, reviewed several of the recent milestone events towards making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children. These include:

- the 2001 Budapest meeting bringing together youth delegates from across Europe and Central Asia;
- the First Intergovernmental Conference in Berlin in 2001;
- the 2002 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children;
- the Second Intergovernmental Conference in Sarajevo in 2004;
- the 2005 Luxembourg meeting on Taking Forward the EU Social Inclusion Process;
- the 2005 Europe and Central Asia Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children;
- the April 2006 Launching Conference of the CoE Programme Building a Europe for and with Children;
- and the Palencia Third Intergovernmental Conference.

*“The World should know the state of all of the World’s children:  
No Exclusions, No Exceptions, and No Forgotten Children”*

Philip O'Brien  
Regional Director for Europe, UNICEF

The UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence Against Children will be presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2006, and in September 2007 the General Assembly will convene a Commemorative Plenary Session on the 2002 Special Session on Children.

General Assembly Resolution 58/282 of April 2004 set out the mandate and objectives for the 2007 Commemorative Plenary Session, requesting all UN Member States to complete National Progress Reports on their follow up actions related to the 2002 Special Session on Children outcome document A World Fit for Children. UNICEF will forward in July 2006 a note verbale to all Permanent Missions to the UN on the timeline and format. Governments are being asked to forward National Progress Reports to the UN Secretariat before the end of 2006. These reports and the 2007 Commemorative Plenary Session remind us that the world needs to know the state of all of the World’s children, with ‘no exclusions, no exceptions, and no forgotten children’.

## Closing Session

Ms. Amparo Valcarce, State Secretary for Social Services, Families and Disability, Spain, thanked government delegations, conference participants, and plenary and roundtable session speakers for their valuable contributions to the success of the Third Intergovernmental Conference. The Palencia Statement built upon their work will serve as a reference point in continuing efforts across the region to realize all children's rights.

*“We are determined to develop and push ahead comprehensive public policies with a focus on children's rights”*

Amparo Valcarce  
State Secretary for Social Services, Families and Disability, Spain

Mr. Heliodoro Gallego, Mayor of Palencia, extended his warm invitation for all participants to return to the city of Palencia.

Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director UNICEF, in closing the meeting, reiterated the importance of Europe and Central Asia in pioneering new approaches to realizing children's rights across the world, and the region's continuing role in moving the global agenda for children forward. In particular, she was struck by the genuine possibilities that Palencia was pointing to:

- Child poverty can be eliminated in a generation;
- No form of violence against children – in whatever form – can ever be tolerated;
- Each country in our region can establish an effective monitoring system within a time-bound period (3-4 years).

*“You are the region that has gone further than any other in translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child into practical action for children. Your challenge, of course, is to deliver on these promises”*

Rima Salah  
Deputy Executive Director UNICEF



# ANNEX I - PROGRAMME

**MONDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2006**

**09.30 Arrival of Participants**

(Venue: Auditorio Caja España, Palencia)

**10.00 Global Launch of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Publication:**

*“The General Measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:  
The Process in Europa and Central Asia”*

**Chair: Ms. Amparo VALCARCE**

State Secretary for Social Services, Families and Disability, Spain

*With the presence of:*

**Ms. Rima SALAH**, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

**Ms. Aghvan VARDANYAN**, Minister of Labour and Social Issues, Armenia

**Ms. Tomica MILOSAVLJEVIC**, Minister of Health, Serbia

**Speaker:**

**Ms. Marta SANTOS PAIS**

Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence

**11.00 Coffee Break**

**12.00 Opening session**

**Chair: Mr. Jesús CALDERA**

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain

*With the presence of:*

**Mr. Paolo FERRERO**, Minister of Solidarity, Italy

**Mr. Heliodoro GALLEGO**, Mayor of Palencia

**Ms. Maud de BOER-BUQUICCHIO**

Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe

**Ms. Rima SALAH**

Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

**Ms. Consuelo CRESPO**

President, Spanish Committee for UNICEF

**Ms. Amparo VALCARCE**

State Secretary for Social Services, Families and Disability, Spain

Special message by **Ms. Ann M. VENEMAN**

Executive Director, UNICEF

**13.00 Official photo of Delegations**

**13.30 Official Lunch offered by the Spanish Minister of Labour and Social Affairs**

(Venue: Hotel “Castilla Vieja”, Palencia)

**Bus transportation to Hotel “Europa Centro”, Magaz de Pisuerga**

(Venue: Hotel “Europa Centro”, Magaz de Pisuerga)

**16.00**

**18.30 Plenary Session 1**

Overview of Child Rights in the Region – Progress and challenges

*Co-Chair:*

**Ms. Lidija TOPIC**, Ambassador, Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU

**Ms. Amparo Valcarce**, State Secretary for Social Services,  
Families and Disability, Spain

*Speakers:*

**Ms. Montserrat GIL**, Minister of Health, Social Affairs and Family, Andorra

*Speakers:*

**Mr. Thomas HAMMARBERG**, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe

**Mr. Danilo TÜRK**, Professor of International Law, University of Ljubljana

**Ministerial Interventions**

**Closure of 1<sup>st</sup> Day and Announcements**

**19.30 Bus transportation to Palencia**

**19.45 Cultural Visit in Palencia**

**21.00 Reception hosted by the Government of Spain**

(Venue: Hotel “Rey Sancho”, Palencia)

**Transport by bus to hotels**

**TUESDAY, 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2006**

**09.00 Plenary Session 2**

(Venue: Hotel “Europa Centro”, Magaz de Pisuerga)

Children’s Rights, Critical Issues, Urgent Actions

*Co-Chair:*

**Ms. Idália MONIZ**, State Secretary for Disability, Portugal

**Mr. Frank NEUMANN**, Federal Republic of Germany

*With the present of:*

**Ms. Bakyt SYZDYKOVA**, Chairman, Committee on  
Protection Children Rights, Kazakstan

*Speakers:*

**Ms. Nevena VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC**

Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

“National Monitoring of Children’s Rights Implementation:  
Perspective of the Committee on the Rights of the Child”

**Mr. David PIACHAUD**

Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

“Challenges in Ending Child Poverty and Ensuring Children’s Social Inclusion”

**09.45 Introduction to Roundtables**

**10.00 Roundtables (3 Parallel Roundtables)**

(Coffee will be provided during Roundtable sessions)

**Roundtable on Child Poverty and Social Inclusion**

**Chair:** **Mr. David PIACHAUD**  
Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science,  
United Kingdom

**Panelists:** **Ms. Petra HOELSCHER**  
Consultant on Child Well-Being Indicators. UNICEF

**Mr. Hugo FRAZER**  
Independent Expert, Social Inclusion Policy and Practice

**Ms. Tatiana MALEVA**  
Director, Independent Institute for Social Policy, Moscow,  
Russian Federation

**Mr. Rafael del RÍO**  
President, CARITAS-Spain

**Rapporteur:** **Ms. Aylin TAFTALI**  
Assistant Programme Specialist, Division of Human  
Rights and Flight against Discrimination, UNESCO

#### **Roundtable on Violence Against Children**

**Chair:** **Mr. Thomas HAMMARBERG**  
Policy Adviser Department for Education and Skills, United Kingdom

**Panelists:** **Ms. Jennifer GRAY**  
Policy Adviser Department for Education and Skills, United Kingdom

**Ms. Svetlana TRBOJEVIK**  
Institute of Social Work and Social Policy,  
University of Ss Cyril and Methodius, Macedonia

**Mr. Iris MARUSIC**  
Research Associate, Centre for Educational Research and Development,  
Croatia

**Ms. Pepa HORNO**  
Officer on Violence and Children Programs, Save  
the Children Spain

**Rapporteur:** **Ms. Elda MORENO**  
Programme Manager “Building a Europe for and with Children”,  
Council of Europe

#### **Roundtable on Children’s Rights Monitoring Mechanisms**

**Chair:** **Ms. Nevena VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC**  
Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Panelists:** **Ms. Marta SANTOS PAIS**  
Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence

**Mr. Patrick TROUSSON**  
Coordinator for Children’s Rights, European Commission  
Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security

**Mr. José CHAMIZO**  
Ombudsman of Andalusia, Children’s Ombudsman of Andalusia

**Ms. Roberta RUGGIERO**  
Research Coordinator, ChildONEurope Secretariat: European  
Network of National Observatoires on Childhood

**Rapporteur: Ms. Mieke Schuurman**

Secretary - General, The European Children's Network

**13.30 Lunch and UNICEF 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Presentation**

(Venue: Hotel "Europa Centro", Magaz de Pisuerga)

**Mr. Philip O'BRIEN**, Regional Director for Europe, UNICEF

**Ms. Amparo VALCARCE**, State Secretary for Social Services Families and Disability, Spain

**Bus transportation to Autitorio Caja España, Palencia**

**15.30 Roundtables' Reporting Back to Plenary**

(Venue: Caja España, Palencia)

**Chair: Ms. María CALIVIS**

Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, UNICEF

*Roundtable Chairs:*

**Mr. Thomas HAMMARBERG**

**Mr. David PIACHAUD**

**Ms. Nevena VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC**

**16.30 Plenary Session 3**

Reporting Back to the UN General Assembly on *A World Fit for Children: What States Need To Do*

**Chair: Ms. Amparo MARZAL,**

Director General for Families and Children, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain

**Ms. Philip O'BRIEN**

Regional Director for Europe, UNICEF

**Ms. Maria CALIVIS**

Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, UNICEF

**17.30 Closing Session and Reading of the Palencia Declaration**

**Ms. Amparo VALCARCE**

Deputy Minister for Social Services, Families and Disability, Spain

**Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany**

**Ms. Lidija TOPIC**

Ambassador, Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU

**Ms. Rima SALAH**

Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

**Bus transportation to hotels**

## ANNEX II - PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRY	NAME/POSITION	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Albania	<b>Mrs. Marjeta Zace</b> Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	mzace@yahoo.com
Albania	<b>Mrs. Albana Shtylla</b> Head of the Legal Department Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	ashtylla@yahoo.com
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## ANNEX III - LIST OF DOCUMENTS

The documents listed below are included on the official Conference CD-ROM, which was distributed to all participants, as well as on the Conference website

<http://www.mtas.es/SGAS/Formacion/Plan2006InfFam/otrasactividades.htm>

Related information can also be found on the website of the UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States: [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/protection\\_4343.html](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/protection_4343.html)

### **List of documents:**

#### **Opening Session Speeches:**

- Ms. Ann Veneman, Executive Director UNICEF.
- Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe.
- Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF.
- Mr. Jesús Caldera, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain.
- Mr. Heliodoro Gallego, Mayor of Palencia.

#### **Plenary Session 1:**

- Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe.
- Mr. Danilo Türk, Professor of International Law, University of Ljubljana.

#### **Plenary Session 2:**

- Ms. Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: “National Monitoring of Children’s Rights Implementation: Perspective of the Committee on the Rights of the Child”.
- Mr. David Piachaud, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom “Challenges in Ending Child Poverty and Ensuring Children’s Social Inclusion”.

#### **Plenary Session 3:**

- Mr. Philip O’Brien, Regional Director for Europe, UNICEF.

#### **Closing Session Speeches:**

- Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF.
- Ms. Amparo Valcarce, Deputy Minister for Social Services, Families and Disability, Spain.
- Mr. Heliodoro Gallego, Mayor of Palencia.

### **Roundtable Sessions:**

- Summary
- **Children's Rights Monitoring Mechanisms:**
  - Children's Rights Monitoring Mechanisms in Europe and Central Asia. Issue Brief.
  - Biographies of Roundtable Members
  - Roundtable Members' Presentations:
    - Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
    - Mr. José Chamizo, Ombudsman of Andalusia, Children's Ombudsman of Andalusia.
    - Ms. Roberta Ruggiero, Research Coordinator, ChildONEurope Secretariat: European Network of National Observatories on Childhood.
  - Background Papers:
    - Laying the Foundations for Children's Rights: An Independent Study of some Key Legal and Institutional Aspects of the Impact of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Philip Alston and John Tobin with the assistance of Mac Darrow. Innocenti Insight, 2005. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
    - Summary Report: Study on the Impact of the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2004. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
    - Survey on the CRC Committee's Concluding Observations on the last EU Countries' Report. June 2006. ChildON Europe. European Network of National Observatories on Childhood.
    - Independent Institutions. Protecting Children's Rights. Innocenti Digest 8, 2001. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
    - Ombudswork for Children, Innocenti Digest 1, 1997. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
    - Monitoring Child Labour: Yoshie Noguchi, International Labour Organization - IPEC, Geneva.
    - Practical Guide to Child Labour Reporting, International Labour Organization, Geneva and International Training Centre. Turin.
- **Child Poverty and Social Inclusion**
  - Child Poverty and Social Inclusion in Europe and Central Asia. Issue Brief.
  - Biographies of Roundtable Members
  - Roundtable Members' Presentations:
    - Ms. Petra Hoelscher, Consultant on Child Well-Being Indicators, UNICEF.
    - Mr. Hugh Frazer, Independent Expert, Social Inclusion Policy and Practice
    - Ms. Tatiana Maleva, Director, Independent Institute for Social Policy, Moscow, Russian Federation.

- Mr. Victor Renes, Director at the Department of Studies, CARITAS-Spain.
- Background Papers:
  - Human Rights and Poverty Reduction. A conceptual Framework. UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
  - “An Index of Child Well-being in the European Union,” *Journal of Social Indicators*, Jonathan Bradshaw, Petra Hoelscher, and Dominic Richardson, forthcoming.
  - Child Poverty in Rich Countries 2005. Report Card No. 6. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
  - Innocenti Social Monitor, 2004. Economic growth and child poverty in the CEE/CIS and the Baltic states, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
  - TransMonee 2005. Data, indicators and features on the situation of Children in CEE/CIS and Baltic States. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
  - Taking Forward the EU Social Inclusion Process: Final Report, 2005. A.B. Atkinson, B. Cantillon, E. Marlier and B. Nolan. Government of Luxembourg.
  - Through Children’s Eyes: An Initial Study of Children’s Personal Experiences and Coping Strategies Growing up Poor in an Affluent Netherlands. Tamara van der Hoek. Innocenti Working Paper 2005-06. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
  - Principles and Practicalities in Measuring Child Poverty for Rich Countries. Miles Corak. Innocenti Working Paper 2005-01. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
  - Child Poverty and Changes in Child Poverty in Rich Countries since 1990. Wen-Hao Chen and Miles Corak . Innocenti Working Paper 2005-02. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- **Violence against Children:**
  - Violence Against Children. in Europe and Central Asia. Issue Brief.
  - Biographies of Roundtable Members
  - Roundtable Members’ Presentations:
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    - Ms. Svetlana Trbojevik, Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Ss Cyril and Methodius, Macedonia.
    - Ms. Iris Marusic, Research Associate, Centre for Educational Research and Development, Croatia.
    - Ms. Pepa Horno, Officer on Violence and Children Programs, Save the Children – Spain.
  - Background Papers:

- Stop Violence Against Children. Act Now! Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence Against Children. 5-7 July Ljubljana, Slovenia. Europe and Central Asia. Consultation Report.
- Introductory Note
- Violence in the Home and Family
- Violence in Residential Facilities for Children
- Violence at School
- Violence in the Community
  - Council of Europe, Eliminating corporal punishment: a human rights imperative for Europe's children, 2005.
  - Council of Europe Actions to Promote Children's Rights to Protection from All forms of Violence. 2005. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
  - Violence against Children in Europe: A preliminary Review of Research. June 2005. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
  - Trafficking in Human Beings in South Eastern Europe. UNICEF, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.
  - UN Human Rights Standards and Mechanisms to Combat Violence Against Children. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
  - II Action Plan to combat the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents 2006-2009. Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Government of Spain.
  - Love, power and violence. A transcultural comparison of physical and psychological punishment patterns: Save the Children Spain. Save the Children - Spain.
- **Final Reports from Berlin and Sarajevo Conferences:**
  - Berlin Conference Final Report
  - Sarajevo Conference Final Report
- **Commitments**
  - Berlin 2001
  - Sarajevo 2004
- **Global Launch Documents**
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# ABBREVIATIONS

CoE	Council of Europe
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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