

On the rights of children and women

From *The State of the World's Children 2000*

“An honest narrative [of the last century] would raise questions of what became of the promises made for children and women, or of those pledges for international peace and commitments to universal human rights.” *(page 12)*

“Clearly, not all have enjoyed the fruits of progress – and children and women especially have been denied.” *(page 13)*

“Where leadership for children and women is just, their rights can be protected. Where leadership is abdicated, abuses and human rights violations follow.” *(page 13)*

“When the story turns to leadership on behalf of the children’s rights, there are no more exhilarating chapters than those that tell of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1990 World Summit for Children.” *(page 14)*

“For all the gains made, the story of the 20th century is also about failed leadership – a lack of vision, an absence of courage, a passive neglect. The number of violations of children’s rights that occur around the globe every day are staggering.” *(page 16)*

“The leadership called for in the next millennium extends beyond traditional sectors and governmental structures, to engage all those who share a concern for human progress – people’s movements, community-based organizations, youth movements, women’s groups, professional networks, artists and intellectuals, the mass media.” *(page 17)*

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“The Convention on the Rights of the Child put forward several principles to guide the world’s work on behalf of child rights, including one with the most expansive potential: that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning the child.” *(page 14)*

“The principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provide the world with a vision of what the 21st century could bring – children and adolescents living in stable and nurturing homes and communities where, with adult guidance and protection, they have ample opportunities to develop the fulness of their strengths and talents and where their human rights are respected.” *(page 37)*

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“Despite the progress made on many of the goals set at the 1990 World Summit for Children, this has been a decade of undeclared war on women, adolescents and children as poverty, conflict, chronic social instability and preventable diseases such as HIV/AIDS threaten their human rights and sabotage their development.” *(page 19)*

“Gender discrimination, so entrenched in social norms as to escape notice, keeps young girls from school and women from active and equal involvement in their communities.” *(page 19)*

“This [gender] discrimination is at the base of many of the violations of women’s rights, including the physical duress of domestic violence or the strategic use of rape and forced pregnancies as weapons of war.” (page 19)

“And where women’s rights are at risk, children’s rights are too.” (page 19)

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“The number of people living in poverty continues to grow as globalization – one of the 20th century’s most powerful economic phenomena – proceeds along its inherently asymmetrical course: expanding markets across national boundaries and increasing the incomes of a relative few while further strangling the lives of those without the resources to be investors or the capabilities to benefit from the global culture.” (page 19)

“Children and women are among the first to suffer when crises rip the cover off seemingly prosperous countries to reveal the poverty that exists.” (page 24)

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“Nearly all of today’s conflicts churn within national boundaries, and 90 per cent of war’s victims are civilians, mainly children and women.” (page 24)

“Like the ravages of poverty, the festering conflicts of today, many masked as ‘political instability’, threaten many of the remarkable achievements in health and education that governments, the international community and local citizens have laboured long decades to attain.” (pages 28-29)

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“In Africa, the social and economic destruction caused by HIV/AIDS in the last decade is greater than the combined destruction of the continent’s wars: An estimated 200,000

Africans, most of them women and children, died as a result of conflicts in 1998 while 2 million people were killed by AIDS.” (page 30)

“If the international funds for poverty reduction have been a disgrace over this decade, the outlays to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic are an outrage.” (page 44)

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“...it is in the significant achievements of the last decades, many in the face of considerable constraints, that hope for the future is found: improvements in child survival rates and the nutritional status of children, strengthened systems of basic education and health services, improved conditions for water and sanitation.” (page 35)

“It is from these accomplishments and from the vision and language of possibility that surround the 2001 meeting of global leadership that optimism springs: The barriers to all children everywhere realizing their rights can and will be broken within a single generation.” (page 35)

“Access to basic health, education, family planning and water and sanitation services is what makes sustained and stable economic progress possible, helps people achieve greater productivity and forms an especially crucial buffer for children and women in difficult times.” (page 37)

“We start the 21st century with a vision for the children of the world: that every one of them – without exception – lives a full and healthy life, with rights secured and protected, freed from poverty, violence and discrimination; [and] with a commitment to spare no effort in making certain that all infants start life healthy, all young children are nurtured in caring environments, all children, including the poorest and most disadvantaged, complete a basic education of good quality and that all adolescents have the opportunities to develop fully and to participate in their societies.” (page 52)