

Regional Consultations

Excerpts from the regional, high-level-meetings that were held in 2000-2001 in preparation for the Special Session on Children.

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The African Common Position

*as adopted by
The Pan-African Forum for Children*

As a contribution to the United Nations Special Session on Children, representatives from governments, civil society, youth groups and other institutions came together at the Pan-African Forum held in Egypt, 28 to 31 May 2001, and adopted a common position. The basic principles of their plan of action are excerpted below.

- *“The challenge now is to reaffirm our commitment to ensure that the goals of today are met. We recognize that the future of Africa lies with the well-being of its children and youth. The prospect for the socio-economic transformation of the continent rests with investing in the young people of the continent. **Today’s investment in children is tomorrow’s peace, stability, security, democracy and sustainable development.** We acknowledge that African children and youth represent more than half of the continent’s population. But their views have not been sought concerning the pressing social, economic and human rights issues that directly affect them. **Africa’s young voices must not be ignored; they must be heard.**”*
- *We affirm that responding to the needs of Africa’s children is an imperative. Children should be at the core of priorities for policy makers. **Africa’s children are indispensable actors for the present and future of our continent.**”*
- *We note that Africa’s children in many ways are the most disadvantaged in the world. Their lives are often too short and their life-chances are too limited. They are exposed to violence and HIV/AIDS infection; they are deprived of education; they are vulnerable to malnutrition and disease. The special needs and demands of Africa’s children and youth require focused attention now and in the coming years. **Africa’s children need full support and commitment and they need it now.**”*
- *We note further that Africa’s youth are facing a future affected by violence and poverty, and all-too-often foreshortened by HIV/AIDS, malaria and other pandemics. We also note that natural and man-made disasters as well as the negative impact of external debt servicing, globalization and trade liberalization have added to the plight of Africa’s children. Youth has been overlooked in national and international action and policy-making, and the links between children and youth have been too long neglected. But the energy and commitment of youth represent a formidable force for positive change. They will determine which direction Africa takes in the coming decades. **The children and the youth are our greatest untapped resource.**”*
- *We reaffirm that children have a right to enjoy a healthy environment for the realization of their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Equally they have a duty to participate in activities that rehabilitate or protect the environment.*
- *We are deeply concerned that Africa continues to be plagued by war and armed conflicts which have an enormous and disproportionate negative impact on the civilian population, particularly children and women, a situation in which the human rights of children can never be fully realized.*
- *We reaffirm Africa’s commitments to peaceful co-existence and the settlement of disputes through negotiations, dialogue and reconciliation as an essential condition for the creation of a child and youth friendly and conducive environment for the protection, survival, growth and development of children and youth.*
- *We admit that although some progress has been achieved, the record of the last eleven years is still unsatisfactory. Overall, Africa’s children have lost another decade, and with the foreseen but unprevented tragedy of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Africa stands in danger of losing a generation. This record compels us to recognize our neglect of basic obligations, and challenges us to adopt alternative paradigms for tomorrow. We cannot afford to give up on another decade of African children and youth. **Africa’s children need to enjoy their rights to health, education and training now. At the same time, they must assume their responsibilities.**”*
- *We submit that the special needs of Africa’s children have to date not been adequately reflected in international policies and programmes. Africa’s children and youth need and demand a special place in all policy-making structures and in the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. This Forum is intended to articulate those special needs: its recommendations must be specific and relevant to Africa. **The concerns of children and youth in Africa must be at the centre of the global agenda.**”*
- *We stress that responsibility for realizing the Rights of the Child falls at all levels, children, youth, on families, on communities, on civil society, on the private sector, on national governments, on subregional and regional organizations and on the international community. **The agenda of ‘Africa Fit for Children’ must ignite real commitment, sustained resolve and concrete action.**”*
- *More than ten years after the historic World Summit for Children, and the adoption of the World Declaration and Plan of Action that set specific goals for child rights and welfare to be met by 2000, we are in a position to evaluate progress. (See Annex.) Much has been achieved, but many promises and aspirations remain to be met. Some of the shortcomings have arisen from external factors, while others are our own responsibility.*
- *We reaffirm the principle of the universality of the rights of children within the framework of positive cultural diversity.”*

Beijing Declaration

on Commitments for Children in the East Asia and Pacific Region for 2001 – 2010

Meeting at the Fifth East Asia and Pacific Ministerial Consultation held on 14 to 16 May 2001 in Beijing, delegates from 21 countries in the region unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration. The Declaration included the following set of principles and strategies as the basis for their actions in meeting their responsibilities to protect the rights of children.

- *“Support a global movement for children and a child friendly society through expanded community mobilization, including children and youth, in cooperation with government, civil society and the private sector;*
- *Monitor and evaluate achievements in terms of the fulfillment of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;*
- *Mainstream children’s well-being at the centre of the national agenda, as the most important indicator of national economic and social progress, and allocate sufficient resources for investing in children;*
- *Promote and protect the best interests of all children by focusing on critical stages in the life of a child when interventions will have the greatest and most lasting effect. As such we will ensure that all children have:*
 - *The best start to life through optimal early childhood care and development, universal birth registration and the right to acquire a nationality;*
 - *A basic education of high quality;*
 - *The opportunity to develop fully their individual capacities and to participate in and contribute to their societies, especially during adolescence;*
- *Encourage the formulation and subsequent implementation of national plans of action for this decade with inputs from children, parents and communities, consistent with the goals and targets of the forthcoming Special Session on Children of the United Nations General Assembly;*
- *Strengthen the capacity of national and sub-national institutions to implement integrated national plans of action, within a decentralized system;*
- *Expand the strategic alliances and partnerships for children at all levels for the implementation of integrated, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary programmes for children;*
- *Prevent and minimize the negative impact of man-made and natural disasters through better preparation and strengthened social services including the provision of safety nets for those affected;*
- *Strengthen mechanisms for the empowerment of children and adolescents in the consideration of their concerns and in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of appropriate actions to address those concerns;*
- *Recognise and support parents and families as the primary caretakers of children and strengthen their capacity to provide the optimum care, nurturing and protection;*
- *Strengthen the capacities of social services providers and other care givers for the greater development, protection and care of children;*
- *Welcome the sharing of the responsibility to ensure the well-being of children with communities; local governments; social, cultural, religious, business, local people’s and children’s organizations; and civil society, including the media. Within this, support the empowerment of other organizations to play a greater role in contributing to the best interests of children;*
- *Give priority to developing sustainable solutions and systems for improving the situation for children by fully involving children and their communities;*
- *Recognise that although globalization has facilitated economic growth and development in many instances, it has also marginalized many poor countries. Consequentially, it is necessary to review trade policies and commitments which may have adverse effects on children and provide social safety nets and national protection mechanisms to protect children and their families from the negative effects of globalization;*
- *Harness the opportunities offered by the global information and communication revolution and use, in the most effective way possible, new technologies that can benefit children and women. At the same time protect children from their harmful effects;*
- *Ensure the best interest of the child in all programmes and at all levels and sectors by ensuring good governance and transparency;*
- *Build upon lessons learned and develop a better understanding of the success factors that improve the efficacy and efficiency of interventions and responses;*
- *Develop a strong disaggregated information base to help assess problems, develop solutions, target interventions and monitor and evaluate results. Recognise the value of measurable indicators and targets as benchmarks of success or failure and;*
- *Develop indicators and systems, with inputs from children and those concerned, for monitoring the situation and progress of poor and vulnerable groups, down to the lowest administrative level.”*

The Berlin Commitment

for Children of Europe and Central Asia

Following a series of regional consultations, delegates from 52 European and Central Asian countries and the Holy See, met in Berlin, 16 to 18 May 2001 in a high-level meeting organized by the Governments of Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina in preparation for the United Nations Special Session on Children. Their discussions resulted in 20 specific commitments for improving the lives of children and young people, the basis of which is excerpted below.

- **“Recognising** that progress has been achieved during the past decade in fulfilling the rights of the child throughout Europe and Central Asia, in particular with regard to commitments taken at the 1990 World Summit for Children and the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, universally ratified by countries of Europe and Central Asia,
- **Welcoming** the important contribution of civil society, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and regional and international organisations, especially the UN System, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States, to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- **Also welcoming** that children throughout Europe and Central Asia are increasingly acknowledged as subjects of human rights and that government strategies and legal frameworks, administrative policies and practices progressively respect the right of the child to participate in social life and to partake in the decision-making processes which affect their lives,
- **Bearing in mind** our responsibility towards future generations, which implies, inter alia, that any action undertaken today, must not endanger the enjoyment by our children of their human rights,
- **Recognising** that poverty and economic and social disparities, including growing income inequalities especially in the countries in transition, lack of opportunities for leisure and recreation and changes in family structures limit the chances of children of fully developing their personalities, mental and physical abilities, and of growing into a fulfilled adulthood,
- **Concerned** that a growing number of children, particularly in the countries in transition, are being deprived of their right to grow up in a healthy, safe and supportive family and community environment which results in growing numbers of children at risk of social exclusion, in significant increases in morbidity, stunting of growth and child development delay as a consequence of poor quality of care as well as in reduced numbers of children participating in basic education programmes and increased rates of juvenile delinquency, accidents and suicides,
- **Recognising** that much still needs to be done to improve the health and social environment for children as well as the quality and relevance of educational programmes, and that low and/or declining public expenditure in the countries in transition caused by overall financial constraints and other factors, continues to affect the provision of social services for children and their access to quality education and health care,
- **Stressing** the need to ensure support, including through the restructuring of national budgets, international aid flows, and appropriate foreign investments, for the implementation of social reforms and programmes aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of the child in the countries of Europe and Central Asia, particularly in the countries in transition,
- **Concerned** at the rise in tuberculosis, malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, anaemia and iodine deficiency disorders in the countries in transition and noting with concern that HIV/AIDS continues to spread in many countries of Europe and Central Asia, greatly affecting those under 18 years of age and increasingly girls,
- **Aware** of the negative impact of an increasing level of substance abuse, including alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, on children’s and young people’s physical and mental health,
- **Also aware** of the increasing numbers of children of Europe and Central Asia at risk of all forms of abuse and violence, such as corporal punishment, sexual and economic exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, trafficking and homelessness,
- **Concerned** that armed conflicts and natural disasters continue to affect and destroy the lives of children in Europe and Central Asia and in this regard **stressing** the need for a growing awareness of protecting children’s rights in conflict situations as well as the importance of protecting children from environmental threats such as chemical contamination and nuclear pollution and of ensuring that children grow up and live in an environment that is conducive to the highest attainable level of health,
- **Aware of the fact** that children belonging to minorities, internally displaced, refugee and migrant children, stateless children, children with disabilities and children infected with HIV and suffering from AIDS are at special risk of being victims of discrimination, and are in need of, and have the right to, special protection, inclusion and participation,
- **Taking note** of the results of regional and sub-regional preparatory conferences and consultations, including the proposals submitted by young people and civil society organisations working for children’s rights, and welcoming the Political Message from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for communication to the Special Session,
- **Aiming** to contribute in collaboration with the UN System, civil society and children themselves to the preparations for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children and to further the development and implementation of actions for children in the next decade.”

Kathmandu Understanding

Investing in Children in South Asia

In May 2001, delegations from seven South Asian countries, including ministers of finance and planning, corporate leaders and young activists known as the 'Change Makers', met together in the South Asia High Level Meeting on Investing in Children. They issued the Kathmandu Understanding as an outcome of the meeting, part of which is excerpted below.

"WE agree that children are the future of our nations and, therefore, investing in children should be a national priority...."

WE affirm, therefore, that investing in children is a priority issue and that poverty reduction should begin with children.

WE affirm, once again, that there is no greater investment than laying a stable foundation for every child by ensuring the fulfilment of rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is our obligation to allocate the required financial resources and take all requisite actions towards the survival and development of all children in South Asia. This covers good health and nutrition of the populations, especially infants, adolescents and women, quality education for girls and boys, improved drinking water and environmental sanitation, and protection of children from all forms of discrimination, exploitation, violence and abuse, trafficking, and hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour. We recognise the urgent need to protect adolescents and young people from HIV/AIDS and children affected by armed conflict.

WE recognise that universal access to quality education is the critical foundation for economic growth. However, the quality of education and learning available to the majority of our children is a matter of great concern. We strongly affirm that South Asia cannot afford disparities in education between boys and girls. Efforts, therefore, must be intensified to achieve gender parity in access and learning.

WE recognise that governments, the corporate sector, civil society, communities, young people, international organisations and media need to work in partner-

ship to ensure adequate, timely and productive investments in fulfilling the rights and achieving the well-being of all children in South Asia, and in strategies towards poverty alleviation.

WE call upon the international community to create a supportive environment for the survival, development and protection of children and promote a non-violent, non-exploitative international order. We urge the donor countries to meet all their commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, implement measures for debt relief, assess and monitor the impact of sanctions on children and ensure humanitarian exemptions that are child focused to address the possible adverse effects of the sanctions. We also urge donor countries to earmark a higher percentage of their Official Development Assistance for the welfare of children under the 20/20 Initiative. We urge UNICEF and our development partners to reaffirm, in spirit and in actions, the need for structural adjustment with a human face, and trade and tariff arrangements for preferential access to developed country markets.

Noting the situation of children in South Asia we:

- *Reaffirm our commitments to accelerate progress to achieve the goals for children agreed at the World Summit for Children in 1990 and the 1996 SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children;*
- *Support and call for increasingly greater investment in children;*
- *Urge our development partners to enhance their aid and assistance to support higher investment in children in South Asia;*
- *Recognise the need to listen to children and actively explore ways of involving*

them in decisions that affect them at all levels;

- *Recognise the importance of partnerships between government, private and corporate sector, civil society organisations, communities, individuals, children, international organisations and media;*
- *Call for the sharing of national experiences and best practices, and common strategies, which reach families and communities at the grassroots level for fulfilling the rights of children;*
- *Recognise the importance of regular monitoring and review of progress as part of the accountability for results;*
- *Propose that this Kathmandu Understanding be brought to the attention of UN General Assembly Special Session and the Third Special Session of the Standing Committee of SAARC which will meet in Colombo 8-9 June 2001, which provides another opportunity for a common position to be taken by our countries to the UN Special Session.*

WE pledge to work towards the implementation of this Understanding."

The Kingston Consensus

Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas

Ministers and government representatives met in Kingston, Jamaica, on 9-13 October 2000 for the Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas. The Kingston meeting was the first of the regional consultations held in preparation for the Special Session on Children. The following is excerpted from the Consensus statement.

“(We) are determined to:

- Make every necessary effort so that children and adolescents have opportunities to fully develop their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social capacities and to guarantee and promote respect for human rights.
- Develop and implement integrated policies and actions aimed at breaking the inter-generational cycles of poverty, and eradicating exclusion, discrimination and lack of respect for human rights.
- Promote actions and mechanisms to maximize the participation of children and adolescents in decision-making in all matters that directly and indirectly affect them.
- Support the creation of mechanisms that facilitate the participation of civil society in all matters that affect children and adolescents.
- Promote actions to eliminate discrimination and exclusion of ethnic groups, religious groups, linguistic or other minorities or indigenous peoples, and to strengthen their diverse cultural identities.
- Ensure the protection of children and adolescents from all forms of abuse, including injury, violence, neglect, sexual abuse, commercial exploitation, sale and traffic, forced labour, and from forced or compulsory recruitment for armed conflicts....
- Ensure the protection of children and adolescents from all forms of discrimination and harm, and support policies, plans and programmes to advance equality and respect for them.
- Ensure that every child and adolescent in conflict with the law has due process and is treated in accordance with the relevant principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and national legal instruments and standards for child protection. Further, to take such steps as are needed to provide training in human rights and in the administration of justice for children and adolescents, to all those involved with children and adolescents in conflict with the law.
- Ensure the rights of children and adolescents with different abilities, including those with disabilities, to appropriate services, attention, and education adequate to their capacities. Similarly, to create mechanisms to support their families and/or caregivers and their full integration into the society.
- Encourage the partnership between governments and civil society to assist children and adolescents to develop values that promote human rights and equality, peace, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equitable gender relations.
- Continue progress towards universal access to comprehensive health services, including effective prevention, early intervention, treatment and rehabilitation strategies. Also, increase knowledge of adolescents and children about sexual and reproductive health, with special emphasis on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Progress toward universal high quality early childhood and primary education in an environment that promotes the full development of children and adolescents, instills respect for human rights, and prepares them for responsible life in society.
- Increase resources, based on availability, for comprehensive early childhood care and development to ensure better learning outcomes, reduce inequalities, and ensure fulfillment of human rights. Cooperate with civil society and families to support proper health, nutrition, and education.
- Develop and implement programmes geared to creating opportunities for children, adolescents, and adults who have not benefited from formal education or have dropped out of school. Special attention should be given to disadvantaged children and adolescents, such as those with disabilities, those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, adolescent mothers, and those in conflict with the law.
- Urge all countries to consider signing, ratifying and implementing all international legal instruments relating to the rights of children, in particular, ... These legal instruments represent major advances in the international effort to strengthen and enforce legal norms and national plans of action for the protection of the most vulnerable children.
- Call on donor and creditor countries and international financial institutions to consider accelerating the adoption of concrete ways to relieve the public debt burden....
- Reaffirm the implementation of the 20/20 Initiative....
- Increase horizontal technical cooperation between countries in order to share positive experiences and strategies which can help to accelerate the processes necessary for achieving the agreed goals....
- Recognize that equitable sustainable human development could be facilitated if the rights and well-being of children are promoted and protected. The individual development of children is intrinsically connected to the development of the human society, thus shaping the future of the world.
- Respond to the unexpected challenges which will arise, that this Consensus does not address. In all such cases, decisions will be based on the principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child, maximum survival and development, and participation of children and adolescents.”

Panama Declaration

United for Children and Adolescents, on the Basis of Justice and Equity in the New Millennium

Heads of State and Government of the 21 Ibero-American countries met in Panama City at the Tenth Ibero-American Summit from 17 to 18 November 2000 and issued a call for renewed efforts to protect the rights of children. Their extended Declaration was based on the following preamble.

“We, the Heads of State and Government of the 21 Ibero-American countries meeting in Panama City on the occasion of the Tenth Ibero-American Summit, on 17 and 18 November 2000, and convinced that in order to achieve sustainable human development, democratic consolidation, equity, and social justice, based on the principles of the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights, it is essential that special attention be devoted to children and adolescents, have once again decided to consider together the situation of the children and adolescents of Ibero-America, with a view to formulating policies and promoting programmes and actions designed to ensure the respect of their rights, well-being and overall development.

We welcome the progress made since our first Summit, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, and note with satisfaction the deep affinities that unite and consolidate the Ibero-American community of nations, as a privileged forum for political dialogue and solidarity, which plays an increasingly active and influential role on the international stage.

We reaffirm our commitment to the promotion and defence of democracy and the state of law; political pluralism and cultural identity; and human rights in their civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects, including the right to development, respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-intervention, the non-use of force, and of the threat to use force, in international relations, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the right of all peoples to construct their political systems freely, under conditions of peace, stability and justice. These principles are part of our legacy to Ibero-American children and adolescents.

Convinced that the expansion of international trade is vitally important to the prosperity of our countries, we reiterate our individual and collective commitment to develop a multilateral trade system that is free, open, non-discriminatory, secure and transparent; regional integration; open regionalism, and the deepening of economic relations between the different regions of the world, under conditions of equity.

In consequence, we vigorously reject any extraterritorial application of national laws or unilateral measures implemented in contravention of international law, the United Nations Charter, or the prevailing laws of international trade. We therefore reiterate the urgent need to abolish such measures and once more urge the United States of America to end its implementation of the Helms-Burton Act, in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

We also wish to stress that the total population of all our countries will soon reach six hundred million people, and that children and adolescents make up the majority of our people and are a source of creativity, energy, dynamism, initiative and social renewal.

We are delighted that most of our countries have succeeded in reducing mortality rates among infants and children under 5, and in eradicating certain immunopreventable diseases, as well as in increasing enrolment and graduation rates in primary education and in reducing illiteracy. However, the persistence of high rates of poverty and extreme poverty, of situations of social exclusion and socio-economic inequality, and of inadequate sanitation and health services, and the shortcomings and backwardness

revealed by a number of indicators, call for a renewed collective effort to consolidate positive trends and guarantee effective observance of the rights of children and adolescents.

We also wish to stress that the infant and adolescent population constitutes an age group that is, by its very nature, particularly affected by negative socio-economic factors, which must be dealt with decisively, in order to eliminate or significantly reduce the damaging effects of the weakening of the social and family fabric caused by circumstances such as family abandonment, irresponsible fatherhood, and conflicts with the law.

We recognize the fundamental importance of children and adolescents as holders of rights in our societies, and the guiding regulatory role of the State in the design and execution of social policies that are intended for the benefit of children and adolescents and serve to guarantee their rights, and we reiterate our determination to build the foundations for the full development of their potential and social integration, in the light of the opportunities and challenges offered by today's global marketplace.

We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the principles and goals enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in other conventions, declarations and international instruments, both universal and regional, through which our Governments undertake to guarantee respect for the rights of children and adolescents, their access to a higher standard of well-being, and their effective participation in comprehensive development programmes.”

The Rabat Declaration

Arab Regional Civil Society Forum on Children

The Arab Regional Civil Society Forum on Children brought together in Rabat, Morocco, 15-19 February 2001, some 250 participants from 21 countries, representing NGOs, parliamentarians, media, and young people. The meeting was convened by four parties: the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, the Arab Institute for Human Rights, the Moroccan Observatory for the Rights of the Child and UNICEF. It discussed 27 papers covering the themes of the situation of children in the region, building a culture of child rights, early childhood, education, access to IT, adolescence, conflict, poverty, child labour, and the roles of civil society members in the Global Movement for Children. The Forum issued the Rabat Declaration.

- *“Whereas World leaders assembled at the United Nations Headquarters more than a decade ago, in 1990, and adopted the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration in the 1990s;*
 - *Whereas the Arab States, were among those in the international community who committed themselves to the Declaration and pledged to implement its provisions and activate its principles in order to ensure better conditions for children’s present and future;*
 - *Whereas the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children in the areas of health and education and to fulfil nourishing conditions within the child’s family in an environment of well-being and stability, far from all fanaticism or hate, and in an atmosphere that protects children against the tragedies of violence, murder or wars;*
 - *Whereas Governments in the Arab region are committed to taking the initiatives and steps required for facilitating the implementation of the spirit of the Convention and for adopting effective approaches to change the state of childhood and to provide all the opportunities for children to live in a world fit for children and free from discrimination;*
 - *Recognising the important role of Civil Society Organisations in designing, managing and following-up of the implementation of the Convention, or in terms of drawing the attention of, proposing to, or pressuring political leaderships, Governments, the private sector and parliaments to adopt strategies for advancing the situation of children, developing suitable approaches and passing laws for that purpose, in addition to coordinating and entering*
- into partnerships at both the regional and international levels;*
 - *Based on the belief that the future of children depends on the realisation of their aspirations to live in a world fit for children, one that embraces their views and abilities and their strong and rich wills as citizens with rights and opinions, thus predicating their participation in political, economic and social decisions;*
 - *Whereas the survival and development of children is a moral humanitarian pursuit and a responsibility that falls on all parties of society, hence necessitating the enhancement of partnerships, the establishment of inter-country relations among non-governmental organisations, and the optimum utilisation of all available human and financial resources for the promotion of economic policies vis-à-vis children’s programs in various fields, with the aim of bridging disparities and alleviating poverty in order to achieve a new world order that serves childhood, instead one that aggravates the misfortunes of children and accelerates their demise;*
 - *The Arab and Regional non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives, meeting in Rabat between 15 and 19 February 2001, at the invitation of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, the Arab Institute for Human Rights, Morocco’s National Observatory for Child Rights and UNICEF, emphasise the following:*
 - *That they shall work in coordination and partnership with each other to employ all their efforts, experiences and capabilities for the best interest of childhood throughout the world in general, and in the Arab World in particular, in order to activate the values inherent in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a minimum upon which their*
- combined will coincides with the will of the international community;*
 - *That they shall call upon regional and international organisations, as well as States, Governments and leaders world-wide, to be closely bound by the Convention and to draw economic and developmental policies for the benefit of children and their lives, their safety and their dignity in a world of complete equality, free from wars, sanctions and diseases;*
 - *That they shall make child participation and contribution one of their objectives, based on the firmly-established conviction that building the future of children can only be achieved through and with children themselves;*
 - *That they shall leave no stone unturned in urging Arab Governments to rise to their duty of safeguarding and guaranteeing the rights of children, adolescents and youth and of providing all the facilities and mechanisms necessary for building children’s capacities and responding to their needs. In this context, the Arab Governments shall be urged to ensure that national legislation conform with the spirit and contents of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; to endorse all human rights protocol and to lift their reservations vis-à-vis these conventions; to enhance the realm of basic freedoms and to respect opposing views in a democratic manner in a State built on a foundation of rights and the law;*
 - *That they shall renew their commitment to working towards lifting sanctions and boycotts, advocating the cessation of wars, armed conflicts and occupation and alleviating their devastating effects on victimised children in Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, the Occupied Golan Heights and elsewhere.”*