

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

A DIALOGUE OF BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, NGO AND UNITED NATIONS LEADERS TO DISCUSS BETTER WAYS TO COOPERATE IN THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

[This document, together with other information on the Special Session on Children, is available on the official site:

<http://www.unicef.org/specialsession>]

Organized by the core partners of the Global Movement for Children, the Public Private Partnership Dialogue was one of the highlights of the Special Session, bringing together Heads of State, UN officials and corporate, foundation, media and civil society leaders to take stock of current forms of collaboration and find better ways to work together to build a world fit for children. The event was moderated by television anchor Riz Khan.

UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan told the group that the private sector is an indispensable partner and reminded them that many of the corporations at the dialogue were also members of The Global Compact, which brings companies together with UN organizations, NGOs and other parties to foster partnerships and to build a more inclusive and equitable global marketplace. He called on civil society organizations to use their influence to lobby for debt relief, an increase in development assistance and “genuinely open markets” so that developing countries can “compete freely and trade their way out of poverty.”

UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy termed the public-private dialogue in the framework of the Special Session a huge step forward. She credited such collaboration since the World Summit for Children with specific successes such as major reductions in iodine deficiency disorders and the near eradication of polio. Effective partnerships such as these have changed the attitudes of many civil society organizations and others who used to consider for-profit corporations as an obstacle to social progress.

Participants agreed that partnerships must become a win-win situation for everyone involved. Brand enhancement, not just philanthropy, are key to these partnerships.

“It will take more than money to meet our ambitious goals,” stressed Bill Gates, co-founder of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Chairman of Microsoft, the global software giant. “We have to draw on each other's strength and expertise. Local companies and organizations must be asked to participate and contribute their knowledge,” he said

Mr. Gates highlighted two successful programmes that are already demonstrating the effectiveness of this kind of collaboration – GAVI and GAIN.

GAVI – the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization – is a public-private network of UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank and others working to increase the supply of vaccines for children and help develop new vaccines against diseases common in developing countries. Launched during the Special Session, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) was created to eliminate the vitamin and mineral deficiencies that threaten the lives and health of millions of children. Mr. Gates said that GAIN will soon be up and running with the resources and staff needed to begin financing food fortification in developing countries. He added that partnerships between corporations and non-profits have also been crucial in combating the global HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Participants in the dialogue identified the need to promote a new culture of social responsibility and giving among businesses large and small. They agreed that employee involvement in helping children can energize and inspire the whole company.

Civil society leaders stressed that good partnerships take time to develop. It takes time to understand and respect each others point of view and perspectives. Effective relationships are built incrementally, and staff exchanges between the private sector and development organizations, such as those between CISCO and CARE, are good ways to foster better understanding and collaboration.

"Limited interventions don't work," said President Museveni of Uganda, adding "If you leave at the end of day without creating sustainable development programmes" there will be no real difference. "And, he added, "we cannot just invest in one stage of a child's development. We have to look at it holistically, at how each stage is connected to the other from birth onwards."

Private-public partnerships require diverse and integrated approaches. They require security, technology and money for a sustainable campaign, the political will of government to act, and access to markets in the industrialized countries. Several government leaders noted that the private sector might help to persuade richer countries to open borders to products from the developing countries.

Corporate leaders also expressed caution about unrealistic expectations of private sector contributions. The biggest role of business is to create jobs, and there is a danger in allowing private-public partnerships become a 'mirage' for solving **all** problems, rather than those that they are suited for.

And while participants hailed the new partnership, Michael Aaronson, Director General of Save the Children Fund (UK) urged: "We must involve young people and put them at the center of our work."

COMMITMENTS MADE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIVE SECTORS PRESENT AT THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

In a public statement the five sectors involved in the dialogue committed to working for children in the following ways:

Governments will: provide for the rights of children in our national legislation; ensure that national development budgets and ODA are appropriately sized and properly utilized in the interest of children; ensure priority to policies and programs to reduce child poverty and promote child development, particularly basic education and health.

Private Sector will: recognize the social and environmental impacts of their operations on children; work actively to address and eliminate the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children; work actively on behalf of children and their rights; find innovative and valuable associations that promote child development, such as foundations established by businesses or business leaders; work to promote a fair market-place that builds healthy communities.

Non-Governmental Organizations will: continue to raise awareness of child rights in all arenas and networks; work with all actors committed to advancing the rights and well-being of children; remain vigilant about stopping the abuses perpetuated against children and work with all sectors of society to find solutions to end such practices.

The United Nations will: continue to promote and safe-guard international conventions, in particular, the CRC that protect children's rights and promote their wellbeing; uphold the commitments made by world leaders at major UN conferences and Summits – in particular the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of A World Fit for Children; promote partnerships with for-profit and not-for-profit entities to implement those goals and objectives. The UN system, including the World Bank and the IMF, must work to ensure children are at the core of development policy.

Global Media will: use its power to focus attention on the state of the world's children and highlight the impact that appropriate policies and actions can have/are having on their lives; continue to play a prominent role in building a Global Movement for Children by respecting and promoting children as their own advocates and their right to participate in debates that affect them.

Members of the dialogue made the following joint commitments:

- To expand the extent to which, given our own businesses, policies and operations, they can increase focus and concern for the world's children, to improve their well-being and promote their rights and will use their offices to engage partners to do the same.
- To taking this Dialogue forward over the next year to build concrete actions that use the resources of all actors – NGO, government, private sector and the media, – to better the condition of children throughout the world.

Participants in the Public-Private Partnership Dialogue

UN officials: Kofi Annan, Secretary-General; Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General; Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, UNICEF.

Business leaders: Bill Gates, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Rolf Dorig, Chairman Switzerland, Credit Suisse Group; Eduardo Gonzalez, President, Bancafe; Steve Hilton, Conrad

Hilton Foundation; John Moridge, Chairman, Cisco Systems; John Pepper, Chairman, Procter and Gamble; Azim Premji, Chairman and CEO, WIPRO; Tim Wirth, President, United Nations Foundation; Riz Khan, Riz Khan Productions; Mark Byford, Director, BBC World Services.

Heads of State: President Halonen, Finland; President Fox, Mexico; President Toledo, Peru; President Museveni, Uganda.

NGO leaders : Dean Hirsch, President, World Vision International; Michael Aaronson, Save the Children Alliance; Peter Bell, CARE; John Greensmith, Plan International; Charles Lyons, US Fund for UNICEF; David Morrison, NetAid; David Toycen, World Vision, Canada