1979:
Remembering the International Year of the Child

Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim’s Two-Year Campaign for the Welfare of Children
1979

International Year of the Child:
From Local to Global -
The Two Year Campaign for the Welfare of Children

by

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The contents of this book reflect the views of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Children’s Fund or any other United Nations organization.

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FOREWORD

It has been almost three decades since the International Year of the Child (IYC) was celebrated. Yet its impact on children around the world continues to be felt, as countries and international organizations alike, notably the United Nations, relentlessly pursue programs that in many respects had their provenance in the IYC. Without doubt much more needs to be done for our children, confronted as they are, in varying degrees, with issues that undermine their development and prevent them from enjoying their rights to the full. Yet, no one can make light of the numerous global initiatives that have been undertaken for children, notably the IYC, widely acknowledged as a success.

The IYC played a major role in the formulation of the country programming system now actively being pursued by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF counts this as one of the most enduring contributions of the IYC to international efforts to promote the well-being of children. Such a system is more appropriately called situation analysis of children. Countries that participated in the IYC used this approach to develop programs intended to demonstrate their commitment to the IYC.

Situation analysis informs the evaluation of children’s condition in specific areas. Through this approach priority issues affecting children, and major gaps in existing programs, are identified. The emerging findings form the basis for designing appropriate interventions for children.

“Under the impetus of IYC,” said former UN Special Envoy for IYC, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim, “many countries have initiated national surveys on the situation of children, as a basis for long-term planning.” Malnutrition. Child abuse and neglect. Lack of
education. Child labor. Substance abuse. Children in special situations. These—and more—were the issues that came to the fore following the participating countries’ efforts to identify the problems involving their children. These same issues became the focus of their subsequent actions for children.

Such measures were not confined at the country level, as various UN organizations saw it fit to sustain the momentum generated by the IYC. As Dr. Aldaba Lim noted, “The UN agencies had taken a proactive role to assure the success of the IYC, with staff of various agencies at headquarters and field offices contributing considerable resources and collaborating with governments.”

Among the International Years spearheaded by the UN, the IYC stood out for training the spotlight on children, inspiring individual countries to take cognizance of children’s issues within their borders and pursue the necessary action. It also expanded the focus on the child to include the family, and hastened the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which lies at the heart of many of today’s programs for children. Thanks to the IYC, the scope of children’s rights took on new dimensions, extending beyond basic needs and services.

Dr. Nicholas K. Alipui
UNICEF Representative
This book offers a window into the International Year of the Child (IYC) from the unique perspective of a key participant—Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim, who served as the United Nations Special Envoy for the Year. This book provides a chronological record of her experience as IYC’s most prominent and visible advocate, traveling to more than 60 countries in two years, and meeting with world leaders and VIPs in each country.

The visits of the IYC Special Envoy provide the structure for weaving together different strands of information that make this book quite comprehensive in scope. One of the principal threads concerns the origin and significance of the year, and how it contributed to promoting the rights of children and bettering their lives.

Readers will also find in these pages a record of action at country and government level. Background information is provided about each of the countries visited, their policies and services relating to children, and the different ways countries and national IYC commissions chose to mark the Year. The concluding chapter, discussing the legacy of IYC, describes it as “one milestone in a series of initiatives taken during the twentieth century to improve the well-being of children.”

But what sets this book apart is the way it blends facts with personal memoir. While written in the third person, this book reflects Dr. Lim’s descriptions and assessments of policies, events and people, as well as her own input in national IYC programming. This account of IYC is enlivened by her observations and insights into the people she met—Heads of State, First Ladies, and people engaged with IYC in their respective countries.
“Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”
(Mark 10:14)
On 17 October 1993, then Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos, along with government and private representatives involved in anti poverty programmes, unveiled a commemorative stone at the Rizal Park on the occasion of the “National Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty.”

The commemorative stone was a duplicate of the original set at the Plaza of Human Rights and Liberties in Trocadéro, Paris, France by the *Aide a Toure Detresse* Quart Monde. Trocadéro is an elevated plateau where the buildings of the 1878 Paris exposition were built. It is located at the Champs de Mars on the right bank of the Seine River and the place where the Eiffel Tower was erected in 1889. Both the Rizal Park and the Trocadéro were significant symbols of the importance that each country gave to the structures and monuments included in their respective landscape.

One of the notable personalities present at the Rizal Park commemoration was Dr. Estefanía Aldaba Lim. Also known very fondly by her close friends and colleagues as ‘Tita Fanny,’ she was instrumental in giving recognition to the efforts of poverty reduction by the *Aide a Toure Detresse*-(Aid to All in Total Distress) Quart Monde (Fourth World), founded by Fr. Joseph Wresinski. The “Fourth World” refers to people who are not represented or under represented due to their extreme poverty. The term emanated from the Fourth Estate of the French Revolution (the first three being the clergy, the nobility and the commoners). Fr. Wresinski was the very first visitor to call on Dr. Aldaba Lim when she reported for work as the United Nations Special Ambassador for the International Year of the Child (IYC) in 1979. That early, he was thinking about setting up the ATD Quart Monde in the Philippines.
Fr. Wresinski was also the priest who advocated along with non governmental organisations for Dr. Aldaba Lim to continue and serve the world’s children as a coordinator under UN auspices with functions similar to those as IYC Special Envoy. Dr. Aldaba Lim, however, decided that she wanted to be with her family in the Philippines and that her work for children will continue despite her retirement from the international scene.

During those memorable years when Dr. Aldaba Lim was the Special Envoy for IYC, Fr. Wresinski was the second Catholic priest who wanted to see Dr. Aldaba Lim accomplish more for the benefit of the world’s children. The first was Canon Joseph Moerman, a Belgian Catholic priest, who was the Secretary General of the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB) based in Geneva, Switzerland.

On 24 January 1975, Canon Moerman presented to the Executive Board of UNICEF a “Proposal for an International Year of the Child (IYC)”.

- To provide more adequate services for handicapped children.

- To focus attention on, and seek remedies for, the plight of children caught in special circumstances which threaten their well-being, e.g., children of prisoners, children of migrant workers, children born out of wedlock, children brought before courts of law, children in war-torn areas, children exploited for labour. Action programmes would be aimed at providing relief and assistance for children already in need, and obtaining the necessary legislation or intergovernmental conventions to protect the interests of such children in the future.

Underlying all the other objectives of an IYC would be that of obtaining a substantial increase in the amount of money and other resources available for programmes benefiting children. While many things can be done to improve the situation of the child without large expenditures of money, still the need for material assistance is so great that one could scarcely justify an IYC unless it promised to have important results in that regard. We do not minimize the difficulty of raising funds for anything these days, but it seems to us that an IYC could, with well-conceived and executed programmes, succeed on two fronts:

1. To raise funds from the general public and from special groups in support of children's programmes - and here the pooling of effort by NGOs could make a critical difference; and
2. To make key planners and decision-makers more conscious of the effects on the child of decisions taken in the social, economic and environmental spheres, and to persuade them to allocate a greater share of total resources to children's needs. Investment in the child, which contributes to the sound social structure of a country, should be given at least as much priority as investment in economic and industrial infrastructure - this is the opinion of many professionals who work with children, especially in the Third World, and who feel that children's needs are not sufficiently taken into consideration.

In the preliminary discussion of objectives for an IYC, it would surely be pointed out that implementation of any of these objectives must take into account national, regional, and cultural differences of many kinds. The objectives would differ in developed and developing countries, at least in the priorities assigned to them. But it is clear that there are children with unmet needs in all parts of the world. The UNICEF declaration of a World Child Emergency has rightly called attention to the plight of millions of children whose very survival is threatened by malnutrition and disease. Absolute priority must be given to “bringing them the assistance they need.

In addition we recognize that we have only begun to assess the effects on children of living in highly industrialized, “technological” societies. There may be consequences for the child which, though less readily apparent than the ravages of malnutrition and disease, will in the long run pose equally serious threats to the individual, his society and all mankind. Therefore an IYC would by no means be limited to children in developing countries. Some disquieting problems are apparent among children in the developed
world and may be aggravated in the period of economic and social uncertainty which
seems to lie ahead. In our opinion an IYC would be inadequate if it did not adopt a future-
oriented approach to the well-being of all the world’s children.

An IYC would be a time for serious analysis of all that affects the child, and a time for
sharing of expertise and knowledge. Approaches to child study and child care are manifestly
different, for example, in socialist and non-socialist countries, in developed and developing
countries, and in various geographical regions. These different experiences are not well
enough known outside the countries where they took place. This was clearly shown at a
recent UNESCO meeting on “the psychological development of the child and its
implications for the educational process” (ED-7U/CONE 623/8). If we must not ignore
any of the problems associated with children around the world, likewise we must not
overlook the many positive achievements in dealing with these problems. Nor should the
adults in charge of the Year forget that the greatest single resource for a better future for
each child lies in the positive forces within the child himself.

In the meantime, it was noted that — this book is more than a diary of IYC. To
further see whether, indeed, the objectives set forth in the Moerman Proposal, were
achieved, you are invited to read on.
Chapter I

FLASHBACK 42 YEARS

Dr. Aldaba Lim: Future Special Envoy

It would have been easy to write about the experience of Dr. Estafania Aldaba Lim as the Special Envoy of the United Nations for the International Year of the Child (IYC). All one has to do is to get all the reports, documents, and communications and put them together. But that may not necessarily answer the question, “Why was she chosen as the Special Ambassador to the UN?”

To answer this question, one should go back to 1937, or 42 years before the IYC Declaration in 1979. This was the year when the future IYC Special Envoy enlisted as a member of the first Philippine–Japan Student Cultural Exchange, which was jointly sponsored by the Asahi Shim bun, a major newspaper in Japan, and the Japanese Ministry of Culture. At the time Dr. Lim had just graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree, major in Physics, in 1936 from the Philippine Women's University and was enrolled in M.A. Psychology at the University of the Philippines. Joining the cultural trip was another step in her quest for liberty and intellectual stimulation in a society that generally relegated women to a cloistered and sheltered lifestyle, as was the case in the Philippines.

Looking back, Dr. Lim realized that the “cultural exchange” was an attempt to brainwash the young Filipino student leaders. “At the outbreak of World War II, I was informed that those friendly Japanese ‘students’ who spoke English so well actually belonged to an elite corps of the Japanese Army.” Sinister or not, the trip to Japan is among Fanny’s fondest memories. “It was my first time out, my first foreign journey, my very first venture into an international forum. I was initiated into the art of relating
to fellow professionals across a conference table. What I learned from that experience would serve me well in the years of my involvement in the global concerns of the United Nations.”

But that was just the beginning. In 1939, after earning a Masters degree in Psychology from the University of the Philippines, the then 22-year old future UN special envoy was awarded the Levi Barbour Scholarship for Oriental Women at the University of Michigan (UM), USA, where she eventually pursued her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. That academic experience opened up and nurtured a career involving children and youth.

Her Ph.D. adviser, a Dr. Charles Griffith, head of the University Institute for Human Adjustment, encouraged her to focus on psychological counselling and guidance. “I spent most of my time at this Institute as an intern assisting the senior staff in testing, interviewing and recording,” recalls Dr. Lim. “At that time, Clinical Psychology was a very new field of study on the UM Campus, born out of the need to provide psychological help for returning soldiers suffering from traumatic stresses or war fatigue. In my last year of internship, I would drive to Pontiac, Michigan, to the Home for Delinquent Children where my classmates and I actually handled the testing and counselling functions of the Home.”

While Dr. Aldaba Lim was pursuing her studies in the USA, which took all of four years, the Second World War was being waged. This allowed her to cross paths with the most vulnerable victims of war—women and children. Later, she became involved with an institution that provided relief to children orphaned by war—the SOS Kinderdorf International. This was followed by her involvement in another institution for the poor.

**SOS Children’s Village**

SOS Kinderdorf International was founded by Herman Gmeiner in 1949 to help children orphaned by WW II. He eventually set up SOS Childrens Villages in 131 countries all over the world, including the Philippines, where Dr. Aldaba Lim subsequently became the founding chairperson. Four principles governed the operations of the SOS Villages: 1) ‘There should be an SOS ‘mother’ for every child, who would love and care

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2 Ibid., p. 51
for him or her unconditionally; 2) Boys and girls, biologically related or not, should grow up together as brothers and sisters; 3) The mother and the children under the SOS Villages’ care must live together as a family in one house with all essential amenities; 4) The houses or cottages, typically 8 to 15, comprise one village with the children interacting normally and taking part in activities within the community where the “village” is situated.3

The first SOS Children’s Village in the Philippines was established in 1967 in Lipa City, Batangas, by Dr. Aldaba Lim and then Honorary Consul of Austria, George von Winternitz together with his wife, Susie. Other SOS Villages were eventually set up in Tacloban City, Leyte (1970), Calbayog City, Samar (1972), Cebu City, Cebu (1979), Davao City, Davao del Sur (1982), and in Manila (1989).

Conscious of the global impact of poverty on children, Dr. Aldaba Lim was instrumental in the establishment of the International Movement Aide à Toute Détresse (ATD), or “Aid to All in Distress, Help to All Those Suffering”) Quart Monde (Fourth World). The Movement was founded by Father Joseph Wresinski and a group of poor families living in a town outside of Paris, France in 1957. The Movement’s objectives were to enable individuals and families: (1) to free themselves from extreme poverty; (2) to live in dignity; and (3) to participate in the development of their community and their region. Quart Monde, was a reference to people in every country who, due to their poverty, are under-represented and unable to make their voices heard. The name was coined from the Fourth Estate of the French Revolution—to give a positive identity to families living in persistent poverty and struggling to make a better life for all.4

In 1987 ATD Quart Monde sent a representative to the Philippines, Johanna Stadelmann, to establish a team of core workers and to develop programs that would help poor communities in Manila. According to Dr. Aldaba Lim it was in 1986 when Father Wresinski began to consider opening an ATD branch in the Philippines. It was around this time when the hunger and oppression gripping Negros caught the attention of Europe. Soon Father Wresinski heard about the widespread poverty affecting the children in Manila, forcing many to become street children. Even then Fr. Joseph Wresinski was already aware of the growing worldwide concern about street children. He felt that ATD had a mission to fulfil to help these children.

The search for contacts in the Philippines soon began. Dr. Aldaba Lim's name readily cropped up when someone recalled that Father Wresinski had previously met her in her capacity as Special Envoy for the IYC to the UN. He knew she was a person who shared his concern for poor children. Contacts were renewed and Dr. Aldaba Lim was asked for advice concerning the possibility of opening a branch of ATD in Manila. Dr. Aldaba Lim, who had known about ATD as a result of her visit to the international center of ATD Fourth World in Méry-sur-Oise, where she met Wresinski, backed the plan and agreed to support the volunteers who would come to the Philippines.

In 1987, Dr. Aldaba Lim arranged a meeting between Joseph Wresinski, then ATD Fourth World President Alwine de Vos van Steenwijk, and President Corazon Aquino. “It was thanks to her (Dr. Aldaba Lim’s) steadfast commitment to the vision of ATD, to the poor and to her country that in 1993 then President Fidel V. Ramos declared October 17 as National Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (A year before, the UN had declared it as World Day) and inaugurated in Rizal Park the Commemorative Stone honoring the courageous daily struggle of the poor for a life in dignity,” said ATD founder Joseph Wresinski.  

The Beginnings of IYC

Dr. Aldaba Lim would ultimately cross paths with the premier global institution serving children in war, poverty and disaster—the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which was still known by its original name, “UN Children’s Emergency Fund” to underscore its focus in rehabilitation, relief and support to children under emergency situations, right after the Second World War. UNICEF was created in December 1946 by the United Nations to provide food, clothing, and health care for children. It currently focuses on establishing programs designed to provide long-term benefits to children everywhere, particularly those in developing countries who are in the greatest need of help.

In 1959, UNICEF published a Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which stated: “mankind owes the Child the best it has to give . . . the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.” The Declaration further specifies that

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6 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
...all children have the right to affection, love, understanding, adequate nutrition and medical care, education, full opportunity for play and recreation, a name and a nationality, special care if handicapped, be among the first to receive aid in time of disaster, learn to be useful members of society and to develop individual abilities, be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood, and enjoy these rights regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national or social origin.”

In 1973, a Belgian Catholic priest, Canon Joseph Moerman, began to advocate the celebration of an International Year of the Child. By 1976, the IYC became a fait accompli, and it was agreed that UNICEF should take the lead in much of its activity. The date for the Year was fixed for 1979, the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. UNICEF now set out to make sure that the plans for it emphasized action, and that its administration and budget would not adversely affect UNICEF’s regular program of work.

One of UNICEF’s online publications describes in detail the rationale for the IYC:

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child provided an internationally sanctioned checklist of what was meant by the dictum: ‘Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give’. The operative question for the Year to determine was whether and how far ‘the best’ was being delivered in countries around the world, and how much closer to ‘the best’ every country, rich and poor, might reach.

In the developing world, UNICEF expected the IYC to be a vehicle for the promotion of basic services, a policy going forward for endorsement from the Executive Board to the same General Assembly that would proclaim the IYC. The IYC resolution passed the General Assembly on 21 December 1976. It emphasized that IYC should be a time for studying children’s needs and launching programmes that were ‘an integral part of economic and social development plans’. This theme dovetailed with the current deliberations on the new international economic order and reflected the ideas UNICEF had propounded since the Bellagio conference of 1964. The resolution, rather more modestly, also underlined the moral purpose of the Year, by stating that the IYC would provide a ‘framework of advocacy’ for children. This, in the minds of its keenest protagonists, was the noble goal: to make governments and people hold up a mirror to their consciences and examine their failures on behalf of their children. In this context, IYC was to surprise everyone.

In May 1976, a special meeting was convened by UNICEF “to assess the situation of children in Asia” in Manila. Each country in the region sent a delegation to this meeting and Dr. Aldaba Lim was elected as chairperson.

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7 Declaration of United States Catholic Bishops on the International Year of the Child, 12 October 1979
Of her election, Dr. Aldaba Lim says:

I was elected Chairperson, not because I was so special but because the protocol for such international conferences was to elect the representative of the host country. Perhaps my résumé, which everybody read, also helped me get elected.9

By that time, she had also served in many national and international posts, which made her familiar to such elective positions. At that time, she was the Secretary of the then Department of Social Services and Development (DSSD), and had been elected in 1976 as the Asian regional representative of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) Executive Board. She further recalls:

Meetings of experts to discuss poverty, progress, human rights, women’s emancipation, and cultural development had me travelling incessantly to such capitals as Bangkok, New Delhi, Geneva, Dubrovnik, Rio de Janeiro, Kathmandu, Nairobi and Kuala Lumpur. I thoroughly enjoyed those frequent meetings especially when they took me to unusual places like the medieval city of Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia. It was during those years of attending the meetings of UNESCO, WHO, ESCAP, UNICEF and other UN agencies that I acquired a priceless education on global issues. Personal contact with world leaders, the stimulation of face to face debates, encounters with contrary tenets and ideas—all these spelled growth of the mind for me and therefore increased my liberation from insularity.

The experiences, studies, ideas, books I grappled with in the 60’s and 70’s—like the new development models, the value of the NGOs, the concept of people involvement at the lowest level, the holistic approach to community development—are just now beginning to be understood and appreciated hereabouts. They have become accepted as the sine qua non of social development. One thing sure: all those concepts and ideas about development sprang alive for me during my UNESCO involvement... 10

Almost parallel to the Asia meeting, the UNICEF Executive Board also met from 17 to 28 May 1976. One of its major decisions concerned the International Year of the Child.11

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10 Ibid., p. 113-114
11 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1976, Volume 30, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY, USA, 1979
Growing Support for IYC

Reporting to the UNICEF Executive Board, the Executive Director said that support for the proclamation of an International Year of the Child in 1979 seemed to be growing. While the Year was to be concerned with all children of the world, UNICEF thought it was also a good opportunity to advance the concept of basic services for children in developing countries and to raise the level of resources available for them. UNICEF placed emphasis on the necessity to assure the financing for the Year. The Executive Board appealed to governments to make serious commitments to support the Year.

On 5 August 1976, the Economic and Social Council took note of a report of the Secretary-General on the preparation, support, and financing of the International Year of the Child and recommended that the General Assembly proclaim 1979 as the International Year of the Child. The Council also recommended that the Assembly give appropriate consideration to the objectives of the Year, call upon all relevant United Nations organizations to participate in the activities, and designate UNICEF as the lead agency for the purpose.

The Council further requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its 1976 session a brief report, including revised estimates of costs, and invited governments to support the Year. It urged active support by the appropriate United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and individuals, and recommended that all parties intending to participate in the financing of the activities of the Year should announce their intention as soon as possible.

These actions were set forth in decision 178(LXI), which was adopted without a vote on the recommendation of the Policy and Programme Coordination Committee.

On 2 August 1976, the Committee approved the draft decision without a vote, as proposed by its chairman after informal consultations. A draft resolution on the International Year proposed by Austria, Belgium, Colombia, the Congo, Egypt, Mexico, Norway, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia was withdrawn by the sponsors.

On 21 December 1976, the General Assembly proclaimed 1979 the International Year of the Child. The IYC was intended to provide a framework for advocacy on behalf of children, enhance the awareness of the special needs of children and promote programs for children as an integral part of economic and social development plans, to insure sustained activities for children at national and international levels.
The Assembly urged governments to expand their efforts at national and community levels to provide lasting improvements in the well-being of children, called upon organs and organizations of the United Nations system to contribute to the preparation and implementation of the Year’s objectives, designated UNICEF as the lead agency in the United Nations system for coordinating activities of the Year, invited non-government organizations and the public to participate actively in the Year, and appealed to Governments to make contributions through UNICEF to ensure adequate financing of activities for the preparation and carrying out of the Year.

On 21 December 1976, the Second Committee of the General Assembly passed Resolution 31/169 for the support and financing of an International Year of the Child in 1979.12 (See Annex 1)

**Search for UN Special Envoy**

Unknown to her, as Chairperson of the May 1976 UNICEF meeting in Manila, Dr. Aldaba Lim was being closely observed by visiting officials of UNICEF, including its Executive Director, Henry Labouisse, and other senior officials. At that time, they were already seeking the right person to be drafted to the post of Special Representative of the United Nations for the observance of the IYC in 1979. That person would be the Special Ambassador of the UN for more than two years, from the last quarter of 1977 to December 1979, and would lead the international campaign for the welfare of children. For its part, the Philippine government, through Ambassador Narciso Reyes, then Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, lobbied quietly with UNICEF and other governmental delegations on the UNICEF Board to boost the candidacy of Dr. Aldaba Lim.

The UNICEF Executive Director began the huge organizational preparations for IYC.13 Here is a detailed account of the events leading to that historic chapter in the history of UNICEF:

In 1977, preparations began in earnest. The resolution had recognized that UNICEF’s regular staff and budget were not expected to carry the administrative load or the budget for the Year and its preparations. UNICEF’s Executive Director was identified as responsible for IYC co-ordination, but it was understood that Labouisse might appoint

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12 Ibid., p. 532
a special representative, and solicit special contributions. Norway was the first to pledge a sum of $400,000. The total budget was set at $4 million. Later it was increased to $7-2 million. Labouisse wrote to all foreign ministers of UN member States, asking for contributions and suggesting that they set up national IYC commissions. He also contacted the other agencies in the UN which could be expected to co-operate actively, and UNICEF’s own national committees. Then he began to set up the IYC Secretariat.

As Special Representative, responsible for IYC affairs, Labouisse wanted a woman and preferably one from a developing country. He interviewed several, and his choice was Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim, Minister for Social Services and Development in the Philippines. Dr. Lim was a person of considerable experience with the problems of children in her own country, having served for seven years as the Minister responsible for community development, particularly among the rural poor, and having taken a special interest in family well-being, child nutrition and the problems confronting out-of-school youth. Her competence and dynamic personality equipped her for an exacting role, which included a grueling travel marathon to over sixty-five countries during the course of the next two-and-a-half years. Lim succeeded in enlisting the support of Heads of State, First Ladies, and senior government officials. Her visits and the publicity surrounding them, particularly in developing countries, succeeded in nudging many national IYC commissions into existence and action. She also did the rounds of ambassadors and heads of UN missions in New York and elsewhere, and her own enthusiasm for the Year was infectious. Lim’s contribution made a vital difference to the way in which the IYC subsequently took off.

Under Lim, Labouisse placed two senior UNICEF veterans as respective directors of the IYC Secretariat’s two branches in New York and Geneva: John Grun, a Netherlander whose most recent tour of duty was Regional Director in New Delhi; and James McDougall, a New Zealander who had spent ten years as Regional Director in the Middle East. Their experience overseas and within UNICEF provided a firm anchor for the less experienced IYC staff, most of whom were newcomers.

On 16 September 1977, the UN Office of Public Information issued the following press release on the appointment of Dr. Aldaba Lim.14

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UNITED NATIONS PRESS RELEASE

ESTEFANIA ALDABA LIM OF PHILIPPINES APPOINTED SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD, 1979

Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim, formerly Secretary of the Philippine Government’s Department of Social Services and Development, has been appointed Special Representative for the International Year of the Child (IYC) with the rank of Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Dr. Lim was appointed by Henry R. Labouisse, Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in consultation with Secretary General Kurt Waldheim. She will take up her new post at the IYC secretariat in New York in early October. Her appointment is for the period through 1979.

Dr. Lim will provide leadership to IYC activities and will be directly responsible to the UNICEF Executive Director. UNICEF has been designated by the General Assembly as the lead agency responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the Year, which has been proclaimed for 1979.

The IYC is concerned with children in all countries especially young children. Its major aims are to encourage all countries, rich and poor; to review their programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children, and to mobilize support for national and local action programmes according to each country’s conditions, needs and priorities; to heighten awareness of children’s special needs among decision makers and the public; and to promote recognition of the vital link between programmes for children on the one hand and economic and social progress on the other.

In her new post Dr. Lim will be especially concerned with encouraging governments in both industrialized and developing countries to participate actively in the Year, to raise significantly the level of services benefiting children on a permanent basis, and where possible to increase substantially the resources available for such services.

Dr. Lim, who has six children of her own, has had a deep interest in programmes for women and children for many years. She began her career of distinguished service in the fields of mental health, education and social welfare some twenty-five years ago. She was
a founding member and past president of the Philippine Mental Health Association and has also been actively involved in the work of a number of other organizations concerned with child psychology, family life and human relations. Until recently she was Chairperson of the Population Commission of the Philippines.

Dr. Lim holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Michigan, where she held a Levi Barbour scholarship for Oriental Women.

Dr. Lim is the author of books on human relations and juvenile delinquency and has published over 100 scientific research papers and articles on a wide variety of subjects, including many dealing with children's problems.

In recognition of her contribution to both the academic and civic community, Dr. Lim has received many awards including the “Most Outstanding Achievement Award” from the University of Michigan in 1965 and the “Silver Bell Award” of the Philippine Mental Health Association in 1960.

Dr. Lim served as Chairperson for the special meeting on the situation of children in Asia which preceded the regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board in Manila last May. She is also serving this year as Vice Chairman of the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with which UNICEF co-operates very closely in the field of education and culture, and was recently appointed by Secretary-General Waldheim a member of the Council of the United Nations University.

Dr. Aldaba Lim was the first Filipino woman to assume such a senior post in the United Nations with specific goals to prepare for the global observance of the International Year of the Child. The IYC was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly through resolution 31/169 of 21 December 1976 to be observed in 1979 in recognition of the fundamental importance in all countries, both developing and developed, of programmes benefiting children, not only for promoting their well being but also as part of broader efforts to accelerate the economic and social development process wherein it believes that the concept of basic services should be a vital component of economic and social development.
Chapter II

IYC’s Opening Campaign - Latin America
(21 January–08 February 1978)

The main task of the Special Envoy was to promote IYC through direct advocacy in face-to-face meetings with government leaders, NGOs and the media. Her visits to more than 60 countries would include meetings with heads of state, First Ladies, ministers of health or education, national IYC commissions, and NGO representatives. The goal was to mobilize these actors to promote the well-being of children in ways that were appropriate to their countries’ needs and circumstances. The role of the Special Envoy was to advocate, inspire, motivate, explain, advise and guide the key actors in the countries visited. Clearly, some countries in all regions had to be visited. The ones visited included the rich and the poor; countries which were strong supporters and active participants in IYC, and those which needed more of a push to strengthen their participation in the Year.

Soon after her appointment as Special Envoy of the United Nations for the International Year of the Child, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim began her two-year advocacy campaign along with her Executive Assistant\(^1\), Laura Lopez. Together they made up the IYC Team whose first stop was Mexico.

\(^1\) UNICEF e-file documents, IYC Budget Estimates for Operational Costs, Formerly listed as programme officer, level P-5 (E/ICEF/AB/L.179, table 1), 2003.
Mexico

Mexico lies south of the United States, separated only by the Rio Grande at their shared borders. The country has tropical coastal plains surrounded by the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in the east and west and partly arid central highlands. Mexico or United Mexican States, or, in Spanish, Estados Unidos Mexicanos, is a federal republic in North America, bordered on the north by the United States; on the east by the United States, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea; on the south by Belize and Guatemala; and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Mexican federal jurisdiction extends, in addition to Mexico proper, over a number of offshore islands. The capital and largest city is Mexico City.\(^2\) It is significant to note that Mexico would also become the last country that would be visited by Dr. Aldaba Lim, this time in a more meaningful way, as will be explained at the end of this book.

Mexico at that time was already setting its sights towards integration of family services—a step toward addressing the inadequate basic services for children, particularly in the remote and scattered rural settlements. This integration, known as DIF, or Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integrado de la Familia (National System for Family Development), was an experiment initiated by the government and chaired by the then First Lady, Doña Carmen Romano de Lopez-Portillo, to fill the gap left by the other Ministries.

The town of Panales, in the Valle de Mezquital, was one of the places visited by Dr. Aldaba Lim. Panales is host to a DIF Centro de Desarrollo (Center for Development).

According to the Mission Report on the visit:

Typical of the poorest Mexican towns, Panales vividly illustrates the problems created by the dryness of the terrain, the absence of water, the paucity of natural resources that could economically sustain a rural community, and the dispersed character of the settlements in the area, which compounds the difficulty of delivering basic services to the town. The Centro de Desarrollo, managed by a young social worker from the region, provides water and bathing facilities for the community, facilities for milling corn flour, recreation facilities for youth, health services, handicraft training and facilities for breeding rabbits, as opportunities for increasing sources of income.\(^3\)

\(^2\) Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

The Special IYC Representative found promise in the DIF. She noted that:

...while other governmental ministries retain their sectoral programs and institutions, DIF functions as a catalyst in the field of social development, an innovator in developing more effective ways of meeting the basic needs of the family. Its work is concentrated in four areas: (1) preventive medicine and nutrition; (2) nonformal education, particularly pre-school training; (3) community development; and (4) social promotion.  

José López Portillo, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) nominee, was elected President in 1976. A former finance minister, he pursued a program of economic austerity after taking office in December 1976. He called on workers to reduce wage demands and on businesses to hold down prices and increase investment expenditures. Considerable improvement was achieved in the following years, although inflation remained high. In foreign affairs, López Portillo improved ties with the United States in 1977 and re-established diplomatic relations with Spain after a lapse of 38 years.

The First Lady of Mexico, Doña Carmen Romano de Lopez-Portillo, chaired the DIF and headed the country’s participation in IYC. The government demonstrated a deep commitment to the goals of IYC by appointing cabinet members to the national IYC Commission and offering to host the 1979 session of the UNICEF Executive Board in Mexico City. The First Lady chaired Mexico’s national commission for IYC, consisting of 19 members, including the ministers of planning, finance, education, public health, the DIF Director and the president of one of Mexico’s largest banks. This development was part of the government’s effort to respond to the immense challenge posed by rural poverty and underdevelopment, and the needs of a steadily growing population of 65 million, of which 45 percent were under 15 years old.

In view of this, the Mexican Government initiated a national family planning program to reduce its high population growth rate. (Ten years later, however, the country would still make the list as one of the Nine High-Population Countries in the world.) Children, however, remained part of the government’s agenda. A food factory located at the DIF headquarters site produced nutritious breakfasts for 300,000 poor children in the schools and feeding centers in the suburbs, including Panales. There was also within DIF a Departamento de Rehabilitacion, a multi-service institution for mentally and physically handicapped children suffering from polio or cerebral palsy. The facility is an out-patient DIF program for about 300 children.

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4 Ibid., p. 9
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Guatemala

Dr. Aldaba Lim’s next stop was Guatemala, a country of Central America, bounded on the west and north by Mexico, on the east by Belize and the Gulf of Honduras (an arm of the Caribbean Sea), on the south-east by Honduras and El Salvador, and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. The country has a total area of 108,889 sq km. The capital is Guatemala City.7

For the Special IYC Envoy, Guatemala was a significant second stop for two reasons.

One, the country was slowly picking up the pieces from a devastating earthquake two years earlier in 1976. This natural disaster made many children orphan and homeless. It was a wake-up call for a government ill prepared to handle a disaster of such magnitude. Dr. Aldaba Lim met with the First Lady of Guatemala, Doña Helen Losi de Laugerud, who briefed her on the factors that “forced the country to assess the situation of children and launch action programs to meet their basic needs.”8 Doña Helen decided to give priority to the orphaned and homeless children and refused proposals from foreign governments to adopt them.

Two, Guatemala had already begun its preparations for the International Year of the Child by initiating a Guatemalan Year of the Child (GYC) in 1977, which provided a foundation for its participation in the 1979 IYC. Four priority areas had been identified by the Commission in charge of the GYC. These consisted of personnel training, establishment of a Centre for Documentation, development of 42 recreation parks for children and youth using local materials, and development of a national policy for child protection. UNICEF provided assistance to the training and national policy components.

Dr. Aldaba Lim notes this development in the Mission Report:

On the positive side, the Guatemalan Year of the Child resulted in a review of legislation for children. It is expected that the process of revising legislation for children will be completed before President Laugerud’s term of office expires. The Guatemalan Year also improved advocacy on behalf of children. The Guatemalan media provided what is perhaps the most extensive IYC coverage encountered during this mission.9

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9 Ibid., p. 5
One of the many problems confronting Guatemala at that time was the lack of basic services and education for children. As in the Philippines, Guatemalan children served as agricultural workers, thus neglecting their education in favor of planting and harvesting crops. The children’s health was also adversely affected, as evidenced by a high infant mortality rate and a high incidence of malnutrition.

The new squatter settlements built on the outskirts of the city following the earthquake compound the problem of providing basic services to poor children. In spite of a high population growth rate estimated at 2.9%, Guatemala has no national population policy, apparently because family planning is still a politically controversial issue, Dr. Aldaba Lim reported.

The Special IYC Representative was in a quandary over the anticipated change of government in Guatemala. Dr. Aldaba Lim further notes:

One of the uncertainties facing Guatemalan participation in IYC is the change of government expected in July, following the Guatemalan tradition of no re-election for incumbent presidents. Although continuity in the operations of the national IYC commission will be ensured at the technical level of the Ministries, it remains to be seen how committed the new government will be to IYC, which is politically associated with the Laugerud Government.

The government assumed power in 1974 after General Kjell Laugerud became president. At that time, however, the country was struck by a different kind of violence: a devastating hurricane (1974) and a violent earthquake (1976) that claimed more than 20,000 lives and left a million homeless. Guatemala’s economy, nevertheless, enjoyed a remarkable growth, stimulated by oil developments and high coffee prices. General Fernando Romeo Lucas García was elected President in 1978.

But Dr. Aldaba Lim’s apprehension was dispelled during her meeting with the First Lady. She knew from the beginning that the road to success in IYC lay in the hands of the women—in particular, the First Ladies of the concerned governments—as would be disclosed during the penultimate commemoration of the IYC toward the end of 1979.
Here is how Dr. Aldaba Lim described her meeting with the Guatemalan First Lady:

At 4:00 pm, the First Lady received us at the Palace. Our conversation revealed the depth and personal quality of her commitment to the welfare of children. In the interest of Guatemala’s participation in the IYC, we expressed the hope that the involvement of the First Lady in IYC would continue beyond the President’s term of office. Due to prevailing political circumstances, this seems unlikely. On the other hand, the First Lady seems receptive to the project regarding the involvement of Heads of Governments on the IYC. Hopefully, the project can be launched in time to include contributions of President Laugerud and Ms. Laugerud.13

Guatemala proved to be a revelation with regard to UNICEF projects. Dr. Aldaba Lim had the opportunity to visit two housing projects in two areas, Sta. Elena and Sakerty, for the homeless and destitute displaced by the 1976 earthquake. In Sta. Elena, the pre-fabricated homes cost US$ 8,000.00 and the occupants were expected to pay the equivalent of US$30.00 monthly, which appeared excessive under prevailing incomes and cost of living. UNICEF had provided play and day care equipment and kitchen utensils for Sta. Elena’s Centro de Bienestar Social (Social Welfare Centre). The homes had been provided with amenities that seemed appropriate for middle-income households but not for the extremely poor. In contrast, those at Sakerty had been built on a self-help, voluntary basis. UNICEF had also provided equipment for the day care centre managed by Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity. “It appears to us that the need for UNICEF assistance is greatest in areas such as these, where the majority of UNICEF’s clientele can be found,”14 says Dr. Aldaba Lim.

Chile

Chile, located down south of the Latin American continent, was the next country visited by Dr. Aldaba Lim’s team. Chile lies in the narrow western corridor with the Andes mountains along its eastern border with Argentina, Bolivia in the northeast and Peru in the north. In 1973, the Pinochet government was installed. The military ruled through a junta headed by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. For the next few years, the junta retained its iron grip on the country, although some token relaxation could be seen towards the end of the decade. The state of siege was lifted in 1978 (although a state of emergency remained in effect), and more civilians were added to the Cabinet. Economically,

14 Ibid., p. 14
the Pinochet government, with its austere controls, slashed inflation and stimulated production between 1977 and 1981.\textsuperscript{15}

As the IYC Team noted, Chile was relatively better off at the time, with a higher per capita income than other developing countries. The Mission Report explained why:

Under the Pinochet regime, the national economy has improved and become more stable. Its outreach to children covers 80-85% of the country’s child population. During our visit we were informed that Chile has just concluded a review of its legislation concerning children and is in the process of adopting an updated national code for them.

This situation suggests that the delivery of basic services is not a fundamental problem in this country. Chile is now in a position to pay more attention to specialized problems, such as gifted children, or foster care for abandoned children.\textsuperscript{16}

Three national bodies under the government were organized to attend to the needs of the children. These were the \textit{Comite Nacional de Jardines Infantiles} (National Committee of Children’s Gardens), \textit{Comite de Ayuda a la Comunidad} (Committee on Community Assistance), and the \textit{Consejo Nacional de Menores} (National Committee on Minors) or CONAME. The CONAME was the government body responsible for coordinating services provided by public and private organizations for disadvantaged children. The \textit{Comite Nacional de Jardines Infantiles}, on the other hand, operated day care centers serving 350,000 children, or 70 percent of the 500,000 children between the ages of two and six. Because services for children in Chile were relatively advanced, Dr. Aldaba Lim suggested launching programs for gifted children.

In Chile, social welfare legislation was first enacted in the 1920s, and by the early 1970s, the country’s welfare program ranked as one of the most extensive in the world. After the 1973 coup d’état, much of the welfare structure was cut back. The majority of the population, however, received free medical care under the National Health Service. In 1999 there was one doctor for every 1,042 people, and the infant mortality rate was 9.4 deaths per 1,000 births in 2001. Workers may be insured to receive old-age pensions, unemployment benefits, disability expenses, and other benefits.\textsuperscript{17}
Dr. Aldaba Lim was informed during the visit that the Chilean Government would actively participate in the IYC with the formation of a national commission and the consideration of contributions to the IYC Secretariat. Its Ministry of Justice, which is in charge of the welfare of children and youth, was expected to be an active member of the commission. The then Lady Minister of Justice, Señora Monica Madariaga, was the IYC Delegation’s host during the visit. The government was also taking the lead in organizing the regional preparations for IYC by securing the cooperation of local UN agencies and the media. Santiago, the capital city, was host to the headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America. In view of this support, several activities were lined up, including provision of technical resources and facilities, preparation of studies and projects on children in connection with the IYC.

Jamaica

From Chile, the Special IYC Representative travelled up north to the Caribbean island nation of Jamaica, located south of Cuba and west of Haiti. Jamaica, one of the islands first reached by the explorer Christopher Columbus in 1494, gained independence from Britain in 1962. It is the third largest island of the Greater Antilles, situated south of Cuba in the northern Caribbean Sea. Kingston is the capital and largest city of Jamaica, and also a large commercial seaport. 18 This visit was like a homecoming for Dr. Aldaba Lim, who was met at Kingston by Mr. Hector Wynter, chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board (1974-1976) when she was the Philippine representative to the Board. Also present were the special assistant to Prime Minister Michael Manley and UNICEF staff.

Elections in 1972 brought the socialist oriented People’s National Party to power under Michael N. Manley, a labor leader who promised a regime of economic growth. His leftist policies and open friendship with the Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, however, violently polarized the population, and when he proved unable to revitalize the economy, he was voted out in 1980.19 The government of Jamaica had been described as left of centre and was said to be spending too much on social development. The Special IYC Representative viewed this positively. As it stated in the Mission Report:

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19 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
An indication of the priority which the government attaches to children is the recent shift of responsibility for child welfare from the Ministry of Youth to a newly created office under the Office of the Prime Minister. This office, headed by a lady Minister of State, Dr. Carmen McGregor, Member of Parliament, is charged with the task of planning and programming for child welfare. It was also learned that the government intends to undertake for the first time a review of its legislation regarding children and on this basis formulate a national code for children. 20

At the time, emphasis had shifted from children of primary school age to the preschool age population. Malnutrition had prompted the adoption of a national food and nutrition policy. The national family planning program was making headway even as the problem of juvenile delinquency in Jamaica was gaining attention. When this matter came up during the Special Envoy’s conversations with government officials, Dr. Aldaba Lim stressed the value of involving youth in decision making and encouraging their participation in IYC. 21

The government of Jamaica had shown keen interest in the IYC and had embraced all sectors, including the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as partners in its planned participation. “The political will manifested at the highest levels of government, together with the availability of highly trained manpower, provides the best prospects for improving the situation of Jamaican children. Since the concept of basic services is already accepted, the main constraint to Jamaica’s participation in IYC and its efforts to bring about better conditions of life for children is not political but economic. It appears that Jamaica’s economic difficulties, which are expected to continue into late 1979, will limit its capacity to expand services for children,” 22 said the Mission Report.

Despite this negative possibility, two important factors could just turn things around. One was the strong government organization and NGO partnership, and the other was the existence of institutions for children. As the Report indicated:

On Wednesday, 1 February, a meeting of NGOs was convened at the UNICEF Office. Notwithstanding the fact that 1 February fell on an official holiday, some 20-25 NGOs attended, an indication of their enthusiastic interest in the IYC. In our opening statement to the NGOs, we again emphasized the importance of (their) role in IYC and expressed the conviction that Jamaican NGOs would play an important role in its preparation.

20 IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to Jamaica,” 05-08 February 1978, p. 4
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., pp. 4,5
The discussion clearly brought out the outspoken and critical attitude of Jamaican NGOs towards their government, their doubts concerning the government’s firm commitment to children ‘in light of past delays’ and ‘general ineffectiveness of the government in meeting the needs of its children.’ The meeting served the NGOs as a forum for putting pressure on the government to do more for children. Fortunately, Mrs. McNeil, who represented the Prime Minister’s Office, confirmed the government’s policy to work in partnership with the NGOs, but noted that the specific modalities for NGO participation in the national commission were still being worked out. She pointed out that governments would need to rely on the assistance of the private sector.23

In another meeting with Mrs. Beverley Manley, wife of the Prime Minister, and Dr. Carmen McGregor, Minister of State for Child Care and Development and Jamaican IYC Coordinator, Dr. Aldaba Lim was informed that the Prime Minister and Mrs. Michael N. Manley would be Patrons of the Year. The government had decided to set up a national commission with representation from government ministries and NGOs. According to the Mission Report:

It was also learned that an estimated 200,000 out of 300,000 children in the 4-6 year age group are covered by institutions known as ‘basic schools’ which provide pre-primary education. They have targeted an additional outreach of 50,000 within the next five years. On the other hand, we were informed that Government services reach only 2% of the 0-4 year old age group. During the course of the discussion of NGO activities benefiting children in Jamaica, we suggested ways in which NGOs could promote children’s welfare in the field of nutrition and rehabilitation of the handicapped for whom the services are very limited. We also encouraged the NGOs to consider the problems of gifted children. 24

In the course of the Special IYC Envoy’s visit to Jamaica, she was also apprised by the UNICEF Office in Kingston of the interest of other countries in the IYC. Cuba, for example, invested substantial resources in programs and services for children. It planned to organize a seminar with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on children, as well as a youth encounter for about 20,000 participants in Havana during the July festival, which will have IYC themes. Both the Dominican Republic and Haiti were also in the thick of preparations for the IYC despite the upcoming elections in Haiti.

23 Ibid., p. 8-9
24 Ibid., p. 5-6
Chapter III

Increasing the Tempo in the Scandinavian Countries and the United Kingdom
(5-23 March 1978)

Sweden

In the spring of 1978 the IYC Team’s destinations were the cold countries of northern Europe. Stockholm, Sweden was the first stop in its 18-day journey. Sweden (officially, Konungariket Sverige or Kingdom of Sweden) is a constitutional monarchy in northern Europe, occupying the eastern portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula. It is bordered on the north and west by Norway, on the north-east by Finland, on the east by the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea, and on the south-west by further bodies of water: the Öresund, the Kattegat, and the Skagerrak. Sweden includes the islands of Gotland and Öland in the Baltic Sea. It is the fourth largest country in Europe. Stockholm is the country’s capital and largest city. Historically, Sweden has had possibly the world’s most comprehensive social welfare system. Social welfare provisions include subsidies to families who are raising children, financial aid to newly married couples, maternity benefits, free holidays for mothers and children of low-income families, government-subsidized housing, and a new pension scheme.1

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Contacts with government officials in Sweden had been excellent. The meeting of the IYC Team with the Swedish IYC Commission got off to a good start on 05 March 1978, with the idea of organizing a world conference aimed at converting the Declaration of the Rights of the Child into a convention. This was an initiative promoted by the Women’s International Democratic Federation. The Commission, through Mr. Nils Thedin, Chair of the Swedish Committee for UNICEF, reiterated the UNICEF position that the scope and purpose of IYC had been defined by the UN General Assembly that the Declaration on the Rights of the Child remained the universally accepted statement of principles on the well-being of children, and that for a number of reasons the question of a convention, if agreed to, should be postponed until after 1979.2

One of the highlights of the visit was the idea of the Swedish IYC Commission to involve children in its discussions and preparations. A pamphlet, titled “By Children, for Children, and with Children,” was distributed to the public and local authorities, clubs, private organizations, and universities. A discussion on “Children in Swedish Society” was conducted in the communities, with decisionmakers, schools, and local associations as participants.

Parent education, at that time the subject of an experimental project in Sweden, was to be addressed in the IYC preparations, and a report on the theme was to be submitted by a governmental commission. Children with disabilities were to be spotlighted. Other priority themes included children and violence, child labor, mental retardation, breastfeeding, and support to the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which became the subject of a film that was to be produced by the Swedish school system for students. A fund-raising activity was launched, involving the sponsorship of schoolchildren in developing countries by schoolchildren in Sweden.

Another topic which drew increasing attention a decade later, but which had been previously presented by the Swedish Commission on the Status of Women, was the issue of female circumcision, or female genital mutilation, practiced in some societies with very negative effects. The Swedish government at that time was considering how and in what international forum the problem should be taken up. While the IYC Secretariat had not taken an official position on it, UNICEF was already studying the issue, taking a cautious approach in view of the political and cultural sensitivities surrounding the practice.

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An interesting sidelight of the mission was a visit to a Parent Education experimental project in the town of Västerås. A fascinating innovation involved open pre-schools for children aged 6 months to 3 years, which enabled the children to communicate with their parents. This helped break down the communication barrier between parents and children in a town that had a large number of Finnish immigrants.

Finland

On 08 March 1978, the IYC Team was off to Finland (in Finnish, Suomi). Officially called the Republic of Finland, it is located in northern Europe, bordered on the north by Norway, on the east by Russia, on the south by Russia and the Gulf of Finland, on the south-west by the Baltic Sea, and on the west by the Gulf of Bothnia and Sweden. Nearly one third of the country lies north of the Arctic Circle. Helsinki is the capital and largest city of Finland. Finland has an extensive social-welfare system providing unemployment, sickness, disability, and old-age insurance; family and child allowances; and war-invalid compensation. Medical coverage has often been dispensed through a person’s place of employment, but the National Health Act of 1972 provided for the establishment of health centers in all municipalities, and also provided for the elimination of doctor’s fees. Schooling is free and compulsory in Finland between the ages of seven and 16. There is virtually no illiteracy. In addition to normal primary and secondary schools, Finland has an extensive adult education system consisting of folk high schools, folk academies, and workers’ institutes. Adult education facilities are operated privately, or by municipalities or provinces, and receive state subsidies. Compulsory education consists of six years of primary schooling and three years of secondary schooling.³

The visit of the IYC Team coincided with the formal inauguration of the Finnish IYC Commission on 10 March 1978 at the Government Banquet Hall. The structure of the Finnish Commission parallels those of its Nordic counterparts, with high-level representation from government ministries or departments involved in child welfare, the Parliament, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).⁴ While the Finnish IYC Commission was formally established during the visit, its preparations were begun half a year earlier. The Chairperson, Mr. Erkki Aho, was the Director General of the Board of Education while its Executive Secretary, Ms. Riittasisko Jukkala-Benisch, represented the Office of the Prime Minister. These appointments ensured government support for IYC at the highest levels.

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No less than Prime Minister Kalevi Sorså in Helsinki received the Special IYC Envoy. Another highlight of the visit was the Finnish Government’s pledge of US$30,000 to the IYC Secretariat. The Minister of Development Cooperation, for his part, brought up the matter of financial contributions to the IYC Secretariat and further assistance to developing countries in a separate meeting. They were all aware of the “basic needs concept,” which was the focus of development aid at UNICEF at that time.

A visit to the town of Vaëstolitto underscored the country’s long tradition in social welfare. Located in the town were four institutions: a Population Research Institute, a Family Affairs Office, a Department of Medical Genetics, and a Homemakers Association. The visit enabled the IYC Team to learn about the government’s progressive and comprehensive approach to social security, child welfare, and mental health. The welfare of Finnish children is under the overall authority of the Central Union for Child Welfare.

**Norway**

Norway was the IYC Team’s third stop during the three-week Scandinavian tour. Officially called the Kingdom of Norway (*Kongeriket Norge* in Norwegian), Norway is a constitutional monarchy in northern Europe, occupying the western and northern portions of the Scandinavian Peninsula. It is bordered on the north by the Barents Sea, an arm of the Arctic Ocean, on the north-east by Finland and Russia, on the east by Sweden, on the south by the Skagerrak Strait and the North Sea, and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, which in Norway is also called the Norwegian Sea. Oslo is Norway’s capital and largest city.5

Compulsory education was established in Norway by the Primary School Act of 1827. Changes made since the 1960s have reduced regional disparities and increased access for all social groups to the educational system. Education is free and compulsory in all municipalities for children between the ages of 7 and 16. Norway has almost no illiteracy. Children attend a six-year lower school and a three-year upper school for their primary education, which is followed by three years of secondary school.

Health insurance is mandatory, with the state, the employer, and the individual all contributing to the health fund. All medical care is free. In recent years, Norway had one

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doctor for every 400 inhabitants. A compulsory National Pension Scheme that was put into effect in 1967 provides old-age, disability, rehabilitation, widow, widower, one-year paid maternity leave, universal child support, and other benefits.6

Norway had always been one of IYC’s most enthusiastic early supporters. This is reflected in its planning and priorities for the International Year of the Child. Norway’s priorities were development education and greater assistance for children in developing countries. IYC activities were both national and international in scope.7 These included the implementation on an experimental basis of “ambulant kindergartens” to address the logistical challenge posed by the pattern of sparse settlements in the countryside. They also began to integrate children with disabilities into the formal pre-school and primary school systems alongside disadvantaged children and children from migrant families. A system of “parent education”—channelled mainly through health clinics, kindergartens, and schools—was launched. Community participation and a network of social services were supported, again to reduce the isolation of scattered settlements.

These actions were ably supported by a well-organized system of child services divided between the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Consumer and Family Affairs. The former was charged with “normal people” and child protection legislation while the latter was concerned with disadvantaged children and “children with problems.”

It came as no surprise that the Norwegian IYC Commission presented interesting ideas to the Special IYC Envoy. These included the writing of a history of the child, and the eventual conversion of the IYC Commission into a multi-disciplinary child welfare council tasked to develop an overall structure concerned with children. These activities had the solid backing of at least 40 NGOs in Norway, according to Ms. Tove Pihl, Chair of the IYC Commission, a former Member of Parliament, and headmistress of a primary school. She impressed the IYC Team with her sympathetic approach to IYC and her broad knowledge of children’s problems.

6 Ibid.
The next destination of the IYC team was Denmark, a constitutional monarchy in north-western Europe and the southernmost of the Scandinavian countries. Officially called the Kingdom of Denmark (in Danish, Kongeriget Danmark), it is bordered on the north by the Skagerrak, an arm of the North Sea; on the east by the Kattegat (an extension of the Skagerrak) and the Øresund (in English, The Sound), a strait linking the Kattegat and the Baltic Sea; on the south by the Baltic Sea, the Fehmarn strait, and Schleswig-Holstein, Germany; and on the west by the North Sea. Denmark comprises most of the Jutland, or Jylland, peninsula (extending about 338 km/210 miles in a north and south direction), and more than 400 islands in the Baltic and North seas. The principal islands lie between Jutland and Sweden. Sjaelland (in English, Zealand) is the largest in size, followed by Fyn (in English, Funen), Lolland, Falster, Langeland and Mon. About 130 km (80 m.) to the east of Sjaelland, in the Baltic, is the Danish island of Bornholm.8

Denmark applies organized institutional education. All children ages 7 to 16 to attend school. Primary education lasts until age 13, when pupils transfer to a lower secondary school. All students have the option of a tenth year at school, and about three quarters go on to higher secondary schools to complete two- or three-year courses for university admission, or to vocational schools.9

Denmark introduced one of the world’s first welfare state systems in the 1930s. Their system remains among the most advanced. It provides health insurance, covers more than 95 per cent of the population, and offers free medical care, and hospitalization, and subsidized essential medicines and dental care.10

Compared with the previous visits to other countries, the IYC’s team’s trip to Denmark was low-key and informal. Discussions with government officials and officers of the Danish UNICEF Committee took place at social functions and not during formal calls. This notwithstanding, Denmark increased its UNICEF contribution by 2 million Danish krone (approximately US$ 290,000), an indication of the country’s commitment to children’s aid in developing countries. On top of this, the Government approved a 30 billion-krone social welfare budget, equivalent to about 40 percent of the national budget. Thirty million krone (or about US$ 4.3 million) was approved to finance programs for the mentally handicapped.

8 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
The Danish Government’s commitment to the IYC was equally awe-inspiring. Five ministries and over 50 nongovernmental organizations were involved in IYC. The ministries included those of social affairs, education, foreign affairs, cultural affairs, and Greenland. Daily planning for IYC was entrusted to a Coordinating IYC Working Committee composed of representatives from the ministries and selected NGOs. Mr. Arne Stinus, secretary of the UNICEF Committee and vice chair of the Danish IYC Committee, was credited for helping organize the Committee after successfully persuading the Danish Government to create and fund it.11

United Kingdom

From Denmark, the IYC Team proceeded to London on 20 March 1978. The United Kingdom, officially the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is an island nation and constitutional monarchy in north-western Europe, and a member of the European Union (EU) and Commonwealth of Nations. The United Kingdom lies entirely within and constitutes the greater part of the British Isles. Great Britain is the largest of the British Isles and so called to distinguish it from Brittany, or “Little Britain.” It comprises, together with numerous smaller islands—including the Isle of Wight, Anglesey, and the Scilly, Orkney, Shetland, and Hebridean archipelagos—the formerly separate realms of England and Scotland, and the principality of Wales. Northern Ireland, also known as Ulster, occupies the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland. The United Kingdom is bordered to the south by the English Channel, which separates it from continental Europe, to the east by the North Sea, and to the west by the Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean; the only land border is between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The capital and largest city is London.12

Historically, British education has derived much of its prestige overseas from the reputation of certain of its private or independent schools, called “public” schools in the UK, because many were originally founded in the Middle Ages as charitable institutions for the education of local, often poor, boys. However, schools like Eton College, Harrow School, and Rugby School ultimately became fee-paying institutions almost exclusively involved in the education of children from the wealthiest classes in Britain and abroad, although most retain scholarships for the education of gifted children from less affluent backgrounds. Yet, only about 6 percent of children in the United Kingdom are educated

12 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
in the independent sector; the rest go to schools funded by the state. The state system in England and Wales follows the same general structure, but is different in each country in its history and in the impact of local culture. Northern Ireland has a similar state system, but the educational system in Scotland differs considerably.¹³

Health care for the vast majority of British people is still provided through the National Health Service (NHS). Established in 1948, the NHS is financed through general taxation, with national insurance payments contributing some 10 percent of the total cost. It provides full, and in most cases, free or low-cost medical care. Hospital care, however, is still free of charge.¹⁴

The IYC Team’s visit to the UK was significant and timely since the government had just approved the necessary funds, amounting to £100,000, to establish a functioning IYC Commission. The UK Commission was organized along the lines of the Scandinavian countries, with two sub-committees working hand in hand. One dealt with the situation of children in developing countries and the other with children in the UK. The main ministries involved with IYC were Health, Education, Overseas Development, Home Office and the Foreign Ministry. The UNICEF Committee of UK together with the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, popularly known as OXFAM, led a major fund-raising effort for IYC.¹⁵

While UK Government intervention in the Commission was evident, its functions were mainly handled by NGOs. More than 300 British NGOs joined in the preparations for IYC. The NGOs formed a liaison group chaired by Dr. Mia Pringle, Director of the National Children’s Bureau, to maintain contact with the Government and to act as a coordinating body for NGOs. The Bureau handled the administrative day-to-day work of the Commission.¹⁶

At that point, a special benefit of IYC from the UK standpoint was that it provided British NGOs with an opportunity to work together as a group. Sir Bernard Braine, House of Commons Member of Parliament, voiced the hope that by bringing together a large number of NGOs, which usually “worked independently or on the basis of personal contacts,” IYC would lead to a more systematic coordination and liaison among NGOs in the field of social welfare, in response to the felt need for more structured cooperation among NGOs.

¹³ Ibid.
¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁶ Ibid., p. 26
Chapter IV

ONWARD TO EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE
(4-23 JUNE 1978)

Reporting on the Status of IYC

After the IYC Team’s visit to nine countries in Latin America and Scandinavia, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim proceeded to New York on 17 May 1978 to report on the status of the IYC Secretariat, which she headed, to the UNICEF Executive Board. By then, the IYC Secretariat had been in existence for ten months. Two offices had been set up, headed by James F. McDougall in Geneva and John Grun in New York. About 40 professional and support staff comprised the Secretariat in the two locations. Their main functions were to gather as much information as they could about the countries where the IYC missions took place, to prepare documentations, and to undertake coordination arrangements. Its composition is described below: 1

The IYC Secretariat was formally established in New York and Geneva on 1 July 1977 with a complement of six professional officers (four in New York and two in Geneva) and six general service staff. The Special Representative for the International Year of the Child assumed her duties on 1 October 1977.

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1 UNICEF e-file documents, IYC Budget Estimates for Operational Costs, 2003
The basic structure of the IYC Secretariat conforms to the original concept: under the overall direction of the Special Representative, there are two offices headed by a Director, one in New York (headquarters) and the other in Geneva (specifically for Europe), each centred around three principal functions, external relations, information, and technical.

As the other member of the IYC Team headed by Dr. Aldaba Lim, Laura Lopez was seconded as Executive Assistant to the Special Envoy, from the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York. Ms. Lopez’s tasks included writing trip reports and drafting speeches. She describes her experience thus:

> When I was selected for the post, the Philippine government seconded me to UNICEF for IYC for two years. I travelled with Dr Lim to her various assignments, wrote our trip reports and drafted some speeches. I consider myself lucky to have had a front seat in our once-in-a-lifetime mission travels, bearing witness to how IYC was unfolding around the world.²

### Mission Accomplished—Thus Far

At the UNICEF Executive Board meeting, Dr. Aldaba Lim expressed her gratitude for the support of UNICEF officials and staff, country delegations and the members of the Executive Board. She emphasized the value of the network that had been formed, particularly in monitoring, following up and reviewing the achievements of various countries in preparation for the IYC. She said:

> To carry out these tasks, as Special Representative, I spend roughly half of my time at Headquarters, and the other half in the field on country missions designed to stimulate initial preparations for IYC, where needed, or to strengthen ongoing preparations. Before the end of the Year, we expect to cover Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East and West Africa.

> We see our role in the Secretariat as one of mobilizing Governments, NGOs and the UN System in support of IYC objectives—giving impetus where it is needed, providing ideas and practical suggestions that might be helpful to IYC participation, clarifying the objectives of the Year for National Commissions seeking guidance and direction. In some cases, our country visits have been instrumental in accelerating the establishment of National IYC Commissions and helping determine priorities and targets for children.³

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² Laura Lopez, email message, May 03, 2005
³ Aldaba Lim, Estefania, “Statement by the Special Representative for the International Year of the Child,” UNICEF Executive Board, New York, 17 May 1978
By that time, of the 153 countries that the IYC Secretariat had invited to participate in IYC, 139 had responded positively. Of these, 72 had established their own National Commissions to plan and coordinate their plans for the IYC. Thirty-six were in the process of setting up their National Commissions by establishing focal points in their Government who would serve with local UNICEF offices and the IYC Secretariat.

Early on, the Special IYC Envoy noted that Governments at the ministerial level and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) had very actively cooperated with each other. Either heads of state or First Ladies took the initiative to chair their National Commissions. This proved to be auspicious since, towards the end of the campaign, these high officials themselves took the lead in bringing the IYC to a successful conclusion. Dr. Aldaba Lim recounts the following:

As many of you know, the National Commissions of many developed countries are concerned with the problems of children in developing countries as well as their own. In one West European country, national and international activities under the overall Chairmanship of the Minister of Social Affairs are being handled through separate sub-committees. National IYC activities are focused on action on behalf of handicapped children, parent education, and establishment of more day care centres and reduction of childhood accidents. In several West European countries, international aspects of IYC’s activities are focused on fund-raising for children in developing countries and development education—familiarizing children with problems of children in the developing countries.

In one developed country, in the Pacific region, the National Commission is under particularly strong auspices, having as joint patrons the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and their wives. Working committees are being created to study the condition of children and recommend specific actions to improve it, along such thematic lines as “The Child and the Family,” “The Child at Risk,” “The Child and Health,” “The Rights of the Child,” “The Child’s View of the World,” and “The Child and the Law.”

Aside from the countries concerned, the Special IYC Representative also sought cooperation from other members of the UN System, particularly specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization, UN High Commission for Refugees, and the World Food Programme. These organizations adopted IYC objectives according to their specific mandates. International and local NGOs likewise provided support and cooperation.

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4 Ibid., p. 6
One notable factor that generated such wide support for IYC was the information and marketing activities undertaken by the IYC Secretariat. National and regional events, publications, exhibits, art competitions and the inclusion of celebrities as special goodwill ambassadors all contributed towards increasing awareness and action for the IYC. Another factor was political will, evident from heads of state to the grassroots. As Dr. Aldaba Lim attests:

I saw this in my field trips to the pueblos jovenes of Peru, in the rebuilding of human settlements following an earthquake in Guatemala, in the ujamaa villages of Tanzania, and the urban slums in Asia. I saw this in the all girls’ Zimbabwe camp, which I visited on the outskirts of Lusaka, where, despite scarcity of resources and makeshift facilities, the girls were nevertheless assured of shelter, basic education, health care and adequate nutrition. I saw this in the UNICEF supported Village Technology Centre in East Africa. Most of the countries we visited are suffering grave economic setbacks due to circumstances beyond their control. Limitation of available resources is a constant constraint to increasing social expenditure. Yet in spite of this, human development remains a top priority. 5

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5 Ibid., p. 11
Debating the Significance of IYC

Following the Special IYC Representative’s report to the UNICEF Executive Board, 25 members participated in the debate, reflecting the importance that the country delegations had given to the IYC. Two of them already were already looking towards the ratification by the member states of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989.

In her reply to the issues raised, Dr. Aldaba Lim singled out the delegation from Morocco.

Turning now briefly to points raised in the debate, we have noted the worthy sentiments and concern which prompted the Moroccan delegation to propose that the Board appeal to UN member states to make IYC the occasion for providing ‘maximum security to the child in the context of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child.’ We certainly feel that such an aspiration could find appropriate expression in the conclusions and recommendations which may emerge from our debate. 6

Briefly, on a point that Sir Bernard Ledwidge and other Speakers have raised, we do share the view that IYC must leave a ‘legacy’ of a much higher level of commitment stretching far beyond 1979. Your reaffirmation of support and cooperation for the success of IYC makes us confident that we can count on your collaboration in ensuring that the long-term objectives and aspirations are progressively implemented in the years to come.7

USSR

Less than three weeks later, the IYC Special Envoy was off to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The USSR (Russian, Союз Сове́тских Социалисти́ческих Республи́к) is a former multinational federal state of European and Asian peoples, established as a result of the Russian Revolution of November 1917, on the territory of the former Russian Empire. The USSR was generally called the Soviet Union, but also, on occasion, Soviet Russia or Russia.8

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6 Aldaba Lim, Estefania, “Statement of Special Representative in Answer to Issues Raised during the Debate on Item 3,” UNICEF Executive Board, New York, 18 May 1978
7 Ibid., p. 3
8 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved
On December 21, 1991, the USSR formally ceased to exist, as 11 of the remaining 12 republics—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (renamed Belarus), Kazakhstan, Kirghiziya (renamed Kyrgyzstan), Moldavia (renamed Moldova), Russia, Tadzhikistan (renamed Tajikistan), Turkmenia (renamed Turkmenistan), Ukraine, and Uzbekistan—agreed to form the loosely defined Commonwealth of Independent States. Earlier Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania gained full independence.

The host of the IYC Team in the former USSR was the Soviet Red Cross (SRC). A series of meetings was arranged with Professor Danilov, Chair of the SRC, at their headquarters, with the Vice President of the Soviet Women’s Committee (SWC), the Chairperson of Komsomol, and the Deputy Chairperson of the Young Pioneers. The organizations named were actively involved in the preparation for IYC in the USSR. As Dr. Estefania Alaba Lim called on Mrs. Freda Brown, Secretary General of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in Russia to draw attention to the International Year of the Child.

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9 Ibid.
anticipated, the IYC Delegation was a low-key, unpublicized visit that served as a good opportunity to learn about Soviet plans for participation in IYC.

The highlight of the Team’s visit to the former USSR was the meeting of NGOs, sponsored by the Komsomol, on children’s rights. The meeting was held in Moscow on November 1979.

Professor Danilov, Chair of the Soviet Red Cross affirmed that the Soviet Union intended to establish a national committee for IYC in due course. In the meantime, preparations for the IYC were under way in the country, primarily at the level of the Soviet Women’s Committee, the Komsomol, and the Young Pioneers.

Soviet plans for IYC at the international level included the following:11

1. A film entitled “The Future of the Child,” showing the situation of children in Socialist countries, was produced in cooperation with other East European countries. It was translated and distributed in other countries while an English version was presented to the IYC Secretariat;
2. In addition to the Alma Ata (now Almaty, the largest city and former capital of Kazakhstan) Conference, a national seminar was held in Frunze (name of Bishkek, capital city of Kyrgyzstan from 1926 to 1991), in May 1979, on the topic of primary health care. Organized by the Soviet Red Cross, it focused on means of delivering primary health care and other services in developing countries;
3. Preparation of an IYC stamp;
4. Publication of posters for IYC by the Health and Education Department of the Soviet Red Cross;
5. A section of an issue of the newsletter of the Soviet Red Cross was devoted to IYC in 1979; Dr. Aldaba Lim was invited to contribute an article for this publication.

The IYC Delegation had a meeting with the Soviet Women’s Committee. In the absence of Mrs. Tereshkova, its President, the IYC Team instead met with Mrs. Proskurnikova Ksenia, the Vice-President; Mrs. Kisaeljeva, Chief of the External Relations Section; and Mrs. Shogaeva. At the meeting, the hosts stressed the importance they attached to the Declaration on the Rights of the Child. Mrs. Ksenia urged the IYC

11 Ibid., p. 8
Secretariat to actively promote the contents of the Declaration. To the surprise of those present during the meeting, especially the IYC Team, she also expressed disappointment that there was to be no international conference during the IYC in contrast to the International Women’s Year, which had one. She stuck to her view notwithstanding the explanation provided by the Team.

That meeting also enabled the IYC Secretariat to learn about the activities of the SWC benefiting children. These included programs for the eradication of illiteracy; training in hygiene; health education; and scholarships for Asian women involved in running kindergartens and delivering medical care. The SWC considered the continuation of this work and their participation in the Algiers Conference, planned by the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), as their main contribution to IYC. The delegation noted that 50 to 60 percent of the events planned by the SWC were targeted at children.

In a subsequent meeting with the IYC delegation, Mr. G. Yanaev, Chairperson of the Komsomol Committee, described the transforming the Declaration of the Rights of the Child into a convention as “a new qualitative step” in addressing children's issues in different countries. He said this entailed disarmament measures and the channelling of military expenditures towards health, education and other services for children. In this context, the Special IYC Envoy informed him of the message sent by the UNICEF Executive Board to the General Assembly Conference on Disarmament, on this very matter.

Mr. Yanaev also talked about Komsomol’s efforts to promote IYC among youth organizations in the Soviet Union. Dr. Aldaba Lim offered to put him in touch with other youth organizations, stressing the importance of the participation of children in the IYC. Mr. Yanaev said that at the national level, the problems involving children were being addressed within the framework of the national five-year development program. At the international level, the Commission for Youth Affairs of the Supreme Soviet had discussed international aspects of IYC.

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12 Ibid., p. 12
Poland

A five-day visit to Poland was next on the agenda of the IYC Delegation. Poland, officially called the Republic of Poland (in Polish, Rzeczpospolita Polska), is located in central Europe, bordered on the north by the Baltic Sea and Russia; on the east by Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine; on the south by the Czech Republic and Slovakia; and on the west by Germany. The name Polska (Poland), first applied in the early 11th century, comes from an ancient Slavic people known as the Polanie (“field or plains dwellers”), who settled in the lowlands between the rivers Oder (Odra) and Vistula (Wisla) in the early Middle Ages.13

Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 15. On completion of the mandatory eight-year elementary education, almost all children enter the secondary school system. About 20 per cent of these students attend general secondary schools that prepare them for college. Poland has a long history of higher education. The University of Kraków (Jagiellonian University), established in 1364, was the second university founded in central Europe.14

The visit to Poland was marked by the spontaneous warmth and hospitality extended by the hosts to the IYC delegation. The IYC Team met with Minister Janusz Wieczorek, Vice-President of the Polish Committee for IYC and President of the Social Committee for the Construction of the Children’s Health Centre.

The team observed that Polish participation in IYC was comprehensive, covering various sectors of society. The Polish IYC Committee seemed to have exerted great effort to promote IYC in Poland. National preparations were proceeding with apparent vigour and enthusiasm. This was evidenced by the inclusion in the IYC program of the opening of the Child’s Health Centre in Warsaw in June 1979. The official opening of the Centre on 4 June 1979 would be Poland’s major IYC event, to which thousands of people, including Mr. Henry Labouisse, UNICEF’s Executive Director, and Dr. Aldaba Lim, had been invited.

At the international level, Poland was pushing for the transformation of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child into a convention, preferably in 1979.15

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13 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
14 Ibid.
The IYC Team visited the hospital housed at the Centre. The 450-bed hospital was built with voluntary contributions. At the time of the visit it was already partly functional, serving 200 children daily in the outpatient department. Equipped with the most advanced facilities, the hospital, which also functioned as a research and training centre, was perceived as a tangible contribution to promoting the well-being of Polish children. One of its innovative features was the addition of a hotel facility for 250 double-rooms on the premises, where parents of the hospital-confined children could stay. This was intended to minimize the trauma of separation from the parents during the children's confinement.

During the meeting with Mr. Wieczorek, the Special IYC Envoy received a commemorative medal minted specially for the opening of the first part of the hospital. He had been instrumental in the successful construction of the Children’s Centre and was deeply admired for his dedication to the cause of children.

When the IYC Team met with Antoni Czarkowski, Director of the Division of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (who represented the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kulaga), the focus of their discussion was the Polish initiatives in the UN Human Rights Commission to push for the conversion of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child into a convention. Mr. Czarkowski expressed hope that the proposed convention would be adopted in 1979 and cited efforts to accelerate the process of consultation called for by the Human Rights Commission. He said the proposed convention would give the IYC greater global impact and help generate more resources for UNICEF’s programs for children in developing countries. According to Mr. Czarkowski, the idea of a convention enjoyed universal support, although some governments felt it would be premature to adopt a Convention in 1979. Referring to what he described as the “instrumental role” of the IYC Secretariat, he sought its support for the Polish initiative.

The Special IYC Representative reassured him of the Secretariat’s moral support, noting that a main IYC objective had been to encourage developing countries to review their national implementation of the Declaration. At the same time, she reminded him that poverty remained a major constraint to the implementation of many of the principles of the Declaration in developing countries, a fact that made it difficult for them to accept the idea of converting the Declaration into a Convention. Dr. Aldaba Lim cited the need to word the Convention in a way that would not seek strict and immediate compliance with its provisions, but make its eventual goals progressively easier to attain.

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16 Ibid. p. 22
A meeting with Polish President Henryk Jablonski gave the IYC delegation a positive impression of his leadership and assured them of his commitment to the cause of IYC as well as personal interest in the national activities for the Year. The strong support of the national leadership was reflected in the national priorities at that time. The visit also strengthened the Team’s confidence that under the leadership of President Jablonski, who was Patron of the Year in Poland at the time the country’s participation in IYC would continue to be among the most active in the world.17

France

From Poland, the IYC Team flew west to Paris, France for a four-day mission. France, known officially as the French Republic (in French, République Française), is a country in western Europe, bounded on the north by the English Channel, the Strait of Dover, and the North Sea (which separate it from Great Britain); on the north-east by Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany; on the east by Germany, Switzerland, and Italy; on the south-east by the Mediterranean Sea; on the south by Spain; and on the west by the Bay of Biscay (an arm of the Atlantic Ocean). The capital and largest city in this country is Paris.18

The modern educational system existing in France at the time was based on laws enacted between 1881 and 1886 under the influence of Jules Ferry, Minister of Education. These laws provided for free, compulsory public education entirely under government control. Among the later modifications were the establishment of free tuition in secondary and technical schools; the separation of Church and State in education in 1905; the legislation of aid to private schools, including those with religious affiliations, in 1951 and 1959; and, in 1959, the extension of compulsory school attendance to the age of 16.

French health insurance partially covers medical, pharmaceutical, and hospitalization costs in most cases, and the complete costs of such services for low-income groups, the unemployed, and children below ten years of age. Health and all other social insurance is under the jurisdiction of the Social Security Administration. Social insurance includes family allowances, workers’ compensation, maternity benefits, and disability and old-age insurance.19

17 Ibid. p. 27
18 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
19 Ibid.
At the time of the IYC visit, France was the only country with an autonomous NGO Committee for IYC. Thus it would have been easy to assume that there would be a strong NGO role in France’s IYC preparations. However, there were internal issues affecting the leadership and direction of IYC in France. Since the departure of Madame Misoff, who had been the focal point for IYC, Madame Simone Weil, Minister of Health and the Family, assumed a more direct responsibility for the French Preparatory Committee for IYC, which she was expected to chair once the committee was formally established.

Also, during the Team’s visit, no effort had been made to seek the patronage of the First Lady President, Madame Giscard d’Estaing, for the IYC, which would have meant that she would sponsor France’s participation in the IYC. France’s IYC program appeared to emphasize theoretical studies and concepts, and celebratory events. The IYC Team used the visit as an occasion to convey the hope that the French IYC program would lead to action-oriented programs that would benefit children.

The meeting between the IYC delegation and Madame Simone Weil permitted only a brief exchange of words on varying national priorities for the Year and on the importance of sensitizing public opinion in developed countries to the problems of the Third World. She opened the meeting with an introductory statement on the background, composition and objectives of the Committee. It was composed of representatives of the Ministry of Education, Health and the Family, Youth, the Interior, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, the caisse nationale des allocations familiales, the heads of the six working groups of the French NGO Committee for IYC, and representatives of the French UNESCO Commission and the French UNICEF Committees. The international aspects of the Year were to be the concern of the UNICEF Committee, while national ones were to be covered by the Preparatory Committee.

In a subsequent meeting with the French NGO Committee for IYC, presided by Madame Marise Goldsmith-Dansaert, the IYC Team was treated to a special incident. At the end of the meeting, a lady representing an NGO of Ukrainian refugees urged the IYC Secretariat to help them assist the children of political prisoners in Eastern Europe. While expressing sympathy with the plight of such children, Dr. Aldaba Lim pointed out that the Secretariat was not in a position to deal with political matters, and she suggested that the organization concerned bring the matter to the attention of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Red Cross, or Amnesty International.

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The IYC Team later on learned that the woman was very disappointed with the reply. The IYC Team, however, remained firm about its position.

**Meeting UNESCO Officials in France**

During the IYC Team’s call on the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Amadou Mahtar M’Bow, they received renewed assurances of UNESCO’s support and cooperation with the IYC Secretariat in new areas. Mr. M’Bow offered UNESCO’s assistance in its field of competence and responded positively to Dr. Aldaba Lim’s request for UNESCO’s assistance in setting up a feedback mechanism for IYC, thus making it possible to assess progress in national efforts to improve the situation of children in both developed and developing countries.

On the subject of pre-school education, Dr. Aldaba Lim expressed hope that UNESCO would give greater attention to this issue. Mr. M’Bow acknowledged the importance of pre-school education in developing countries, but cautioned against patterning after the formal institutions of the West instead of drawing upon existing cultural and local resources.22

UNESCO officers present during the meeting with Mr. Mahtar noted the difficulty of distinguishing between UNESCO’s regular activities and those directed to IYC, since many of UNESCO’s activities concerned children. However, the discussions with Mr. M’Bow and his colleagues responsible for IYC preparations yielded information on UNESCO projects developed specifically for IYC. The three main themes of UNESCO participation in IYC were children’s books, child development and education, and children at play. UNESCO said a book titled “Child’s Right to Education,” which was written from a sociological and psychological perspective, was due for publication before the end of 1978. Not too long before the meeting, an issue of the *UNESCO Courrier* had been devoted to children, while a special issue on the IYC was eventually published in its January 1979 edition. The succeeding biennial UNESCO Conference in 1979 would seek aid for children. In cooperation with UNICEF, UNESCO had prepared a mobile educational toy exhibit that was brought to developing countries.

21 Ibid., p. 42  
22 Ibid., p. 40
In addition, UNESCO offered to use its participation program funds for national activities. It also offered to support projects of national IYC commissions. Thirty IYC national commissions soon responded to UNESCO’s offer. Dr. Aldaba Lim asked to share this information with the IYC Secretariat for cross-reference. It was then decided that the commissions should be consulted to determine whether UNESCO or the commissions should contact the IYC Secretariat.

On June 13, 1978, during the Team’s visit to UNESCO, the Special IYC Envoy addressed the UNESCO Round Table sponsored by UNESCO and the Académie française in Paris. The theme of the meeting was “What Kind of World Are We Leaving to Our Children?” (Quel monde laissons-nous à nos enfants?) The Special IYC Envoy was well acquainted with UNESCO from her previous experience.

This event was an important contribution of UNESCO to IYC. The keynote themes of that year’s Annual Round Table, as set out in the opening statements of the Director-General of UNESCO and the Special Representative for IYC, were children in the context of the New International Economic Order, as well as children and disarmament. The participation of Princess Caroline of Monaco and the First Lady of Mexico, Carmen Lopez Portillo, added lustre to the meeting, at least from the media’s point of view.

Participating in the Round Table were distinguished personalities such as Sean Macbride, an Irish barrister and politician who was imprisoned many times for nationalist activities and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1974 and the International Lenin Peace Prize in 1977; Philip Noel Baker, a British educationist known for his role in the League of Nations and treatise on disarmament and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1959; Alvin Toffler, author of “Future Shock” and a well-known futuristic social thinker; Peter Ustinov, English actor, film maker and UNICEF Ambassador of Goodwill(1969); Daniel Oduber Quirós, immediate past President of the Republic of Costa Rica and ambassador to the United Nations and UNESCO; and Alfred Kastler, who received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1966 for his work in optics and magnetic resonance and member of distinguished academic organisations in France and elsewhere.

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Among the other eminent personalities present in the Round Table discussions were Shuyler Chapin, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Columbia University; Han Suyin, Doctor of Medicine; Paul Marc Henry, President of the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation; Mme. Hepzibah Menuhin Hauser, noted American musician; and Aurelio Peccei, Italian industrialist and economist.

In a summary of the Round Table, the Académie succinctly summarized the contributions of participants:

For the third time, a Round Table composed of adults distinguished in their own right, answerable to no delegation or government, have gathered (on this occasion) to discuss what kind of world we are leaving to our children. The conclusions of the two and a half days of exposition and debate are as follows:

The future of children is our responsibility, just as our own future is our responsibility, and is indivisible from the state of the world as we find it. Clearly the state of the world is not showing any improvement, despite the high hopes which are still invested in science as a solution to our problems.

The extent of armaments is unprecedented in the history of the world, and the contribution of the man in the street in the form of taxation going directly into armaments is, on an average, two weeks of his yearly salary. One quarter of the scientific work force are engaged in the manufacture of weapons. The demographic explosion is adding 75 – 80,000,000 births per annum in excess of recorded deaths. World energy, based on fossil fuels, is being rapidly exhausted, at a rate ten times its possibility of replacement per annum, and thus many predominantly agricultural countries are reduced to importing food stuffs owing to rising costs, since to maintain the present rate of vast expenditures, the great powers are exporting inflation.

The inequalities between the haves and have nots are ever increasing instead of diminishing, and an economic domination has succeeded what used to be military and colonial. In such a world, the future of children is automatically under a dark cloud of confusion, penury, malnutrition and the ever present menace of total annihilation.

Cities are growing at a rate which suggests that in the year 2000, half the world’s population will live in them. At the same time, it is projected that by the same year there will be one billion unemployed.

It is understandable that with these and other statistics at their disposal, many speakers warned of the extreme urgency of the present situation, in which children, who represent one-quarter of the world’s population, are already deprived of schools, hospitals and food by the extraordinary burden of the arms race, to say nothing of increasing instances of violence, for which the irresponsible use of the entertainment media must bear some blame.

UNESCO, Office of Public Information, “Table rond – Quel monde laissons-nous à nos enfants?,” op. cit.
A collapse of personal and public morality was regretted by many speakers, and some solutions were tentatively offered, ranging from a return to religion to the possibilities of engineering the human brain to positive and constructive ends, but the most general of practical proposals was an insistence on the need for a most urgent appeal to the public consciousness. Opinion must be informed if it is to be a force, as it has already become a force in defence of women’s rights and of nature.

Now it is the turn of the children to capture the public imagination. We all have 250,000,000 deprived children on our consciences, and in the future, the joy at the arrival of a new member of the family will be tinged with gathering anxiety and fear unless it is realized today that, whatever the race, religion and nationality of the particular family, the new baby is predominantly a member of the human race, and is the moral and physical responsibility of all.

The famed Peter Ustinov, one of the distinguished personalities in that conference, offered personal reflections about parenting 14 years later.  

God knows, there are enough unpredictable strains on a perfectly normal family, with rational parents and healthy children, to make its survival at times speculative. Misfortune has a tendency to harden the resolve to survive by opening hearts and minds to problems linking all mankind. Sharing is one of the greatest comforts and imparters of wisdom in existence. It is learned in the family for general application elsewhere.

Children learn by watching, and the gift of observation is often merciless toward unscrupulous or negligent parents, who may well be pious in what they preach yet careless in their practices. A sometimes painful yet essential moment in development is the discovery that parents are human, and even if children are children for the first and only time, they sometimes fail to realize (how could they?) that parents are as inexperienced in their roles as children are in theirs. I have said, and I believe it more and more, that one function of parents too rarely talked about is that they are the bones on which the puppies sharpen their teeth. This can be somewhat painful, yet it is absolutely vital.

Mothers carry a child for nine months of increasing discomfort, whereas fathers look on with evident pride in their achievement, and advance chains for mother and unborn child. This ritual ends immediately the child is born. Amid moments of concern and mutual consideration, the father’s sleep, so vital for his work, is interrupted by screaming, while mother seems to become more and more attached to her baby’s problems, sometimes at the expense of her husband’s.

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At the Round Table, the Special IYC Envoy decried the tendency to prioritize military expenditure over the welfare of women and children. She said:

We may well ask ourselves what human values will survive when our children are daily confronted with the priorities that too frequently govern the world of their parents – a world where gross social and economic inequities are tolerated or perpetuated; where more efforts and ingenuity are expended on man’s destruction than on his survival.

Such values seem particularly intolerable and outrageous when viewed against the actual situation of the vast majority of the world’s children. Because poverty is such a widespread and chronic phenomenon of third world countries, its impact on children has generally failed to arouse the kind of urgent global concern that would spur more effective and meaningful action to improve their lot. Yet the magnitude and seriousness of the situation of children in the developing world are dramatically underscored by the shocking statistics available to us. 27

The Académie describes in detail the significance of the Round Table:28

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With the UNESCO Director General Amadou Mahtar M’Bow and Académie française President Jean d’Armesson in attendance, Dr. Aldaba Lim pointed out the significance of the IYC to the Round Table participants:

Given such a world picture, the International Year of the Child may indeed be a proper occasion to re-examine our current priorities and preoccupations from the perspective of the future inheritors of this world – our children. Their immense unmet needs are a valid point of departure for reviewing the prevailing values and objectives in the management of the world community, from the standpoint of our common stake in the future of man, and in the continued nurturing of the highest human values that have marked great civilizations. 29

She then proceeded to explain one of the most important messages of IYC, which remains as relevant today as it was then. She said:

While monetary resources, whether generated by economic growth or released through disarmament, are important for the improvement of the situation of the child, they are not the only factor essential to social progress. We need not postpone meaningful action on behalf of children in the belief that a higher GNP (gross national product) must be attained before progress can be made in meeting their needs. A number of developing

29 Ibid., p. 3
countries with relatively low GNP's have managed to meet the needs of their children to a greater degree than is normally expected from low-income countries. There is evidence that improved infant and child health need not await the advent of higher incomes anticipated by growth oriented strategies. Sri Lanka, for example, has lowered its infant mortality to 47, despite an annual per capita income of only $200. The People's Republic of China, with a per capita income of only $410, has an infant mortality rate of 65. Guyana, Malaysia, Korea and Cuba are other examples that come to mind. Such evidence supports our conviction, reinforced by our visits to the disadvantaged countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America on behalf of IYC, that tangible, measurable progress in meeting children's needs can be achieved within the resources already available in developing countries.

Exploring IYC Visit to China

While in Paris, Dr. Aldaba Lim also had a discussion with Madame Sheng Yu, First Secretary of the People's Republic of China's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, about the possibility of the IYC Team visiting China as part of its mission, and, in the longer term, to stimulate China's interest in UNICEF. This meeting had been preceded by an exchange of letters indicating that Madame Huang Kan-Yin had been appointed as China's focal point for foreign relations involving activities seeking to promote children's welfare. Madame Huang Kan-Yin was also active in women's activities.

Dr. Aldaba Lim learned that China had a Chinese National Committee for the Defence of Children, founded in 1952. It was at the time headed by Madame Sun Yat-Sen, who was then the Vice-President of the National Assembly. Prior to the founding of this Committee, there was a China Welfare Committee that had been active and whose activities were well known to foreigners. Madame Sheng Yu quite candidly told Dr. Aldaba Lim that their receptiveness to her overtures in the area of children's well-being was based on their personal knowledge and appreciation of her work in UNESCO. Madame Sheng Yu responded quite positively to Dr. Aldaba Lim's suggestion that since other countries, especially in the developing world, had much to learn from China's successful experience in meeting the needs of children, China should share its knowledge and experience in this field with other countries, beginning with its neighbours in Asia.

30 (Gwatkin, Davidson & Grant, James, 'Using Targets to Help Improve Child Health') – Referenced from original report.
31 Ibid., p. 5-6
Madame Sheng Yu was then informed of Dr. Aldaba Lim’s efforts to encourage ESCAP to utilize its unspent Chinese contributions to finance the visit of an Asian team of child welfare specialists to China. By way of encouraging China to open its doors in this area, the Special IYC Envoy suggested that China consider accepting more foreign visitors working in the field of child welfare, and arrange visits of Chinese officials to other Asian countries, as part of an exchange of visits in country-to-country technical assistance programs. Dr. Aldaba Lim also suggested to Madame Sheng Yu that Madame Huang Kan-Yin attend or observe the regional consultation of ESCAP that was to be held in Manila in November 1978, to exchange information on activities for IYC. The timing of a possible visit by the Special IYC Envoy to China was then discussed. December 1978 seemed to be the most appropriate time. Madame Sheng Yu said that she would be directly contacted by Peking on the timing and details of the proposed visit.

Ms. Laura Lopez and Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim paid a courtesy call on Mrs. Sun Yat Sen at her Villa in Beijing to honor the widow of the “Father of China” during the International Year of the Child.
Belgium

On 19-20 June 1978, the IYC Team’s next stop was Belgium, located east of France. Belgium (in French, Belgique; in Dutch, België), officially called the Kingdom of Belgium, is a constitutional monarchy in north-western Europe, bounded on the north by the Netherlands and the North Sea, on the east by Germany and Luxembourg, and on the south and south-west by France. With the Netherlands and Luxembourg, Belgium forms the Low, or Benelux, Countries. The capital and largest city is Brussels, located in the centre of Belgium.33

Although educational freedom was provided by the constitution of 1831, the first law for public elementary education was not passed until 1842. In 1914 compulsory attendance was enacted for children between the ages of 6 and 14. Since 1959 the education system has included state secular schools and private Roman Catholic schools. Educational controversies involving language and religion that arose in Belgium in the 19th century have continued today. Education is full-time and compulsory from ages 6 to 16. It is then part-time until age 18. Since 1963 teaching has been carried out in the language of the region; in Brussels, however, it is in the pupil’s own tongue.34

Health and hospital services are the responsibility of public assistance commissions located in each town. The commissions pay for relief patients in private hospitals, administer public hospitals, and organize nursing services and clinics. Social security, based on a law passed in 1944, applies to all workers subject to employment contracts. The Central National Office of Social Security collects from employers and employees all contributions for family allowances, health insurance, old-age insurance, holidays, and unemployment insurance and distributes the funds to the respective administrative divisions. This comprehensive welfare system has resulted in great improvements in public health and brought economic stability to the populace, but has also exacerbated Belgium’s budget deficit.35

The schedule of the IYC Team in Belgium was full and complete, including meetings with both the Walloon and Flemish committees, representing the Government and nongovernmental organizations; a private audience with the King and Queen of Belgium; and a very enlightening exchange with officials of the European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union.

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33 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
Despite the cultural and linguistic differences, the two national IYC committees were eventually grouped under a coordinating committee at the ministerial level, with representatives from both IYC committees, under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A Patronage Committee, possibly headed by Their Majesties the King and Queen, was also envisaged. The IYC Team’s audience with King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola also left them confident that the Belgian royalty would announce royal patronage of the IYC in Belgium. The friendly rivalry between the two national IYC committees, if handled properly, would strengthen the national contribution to IYC as a whole.36

The highlight of the IYC Team’s visit to Brussels on 19-20 June 1978 was the private audience, lasting almost two hours, with the King and Queen of Belgium. The royal couple impressed the team with their genuine love of children, and their understanding and appreciation of the problems of children in the Third World. Their Majesties showed interest in the concept and expectations of the Year. The conversation ranged from the physical deprivation suffered by children in developing countries to the emotional problems suffered by children in developed countries; to the children of the Quart Monde (Fourth World); to family planning. As evidence of their concern for children, a fund, established from monetary contributions given to the King and Queen, had been set up to finance scholarships in the field of children’s mental health.37

During the royal audience, the Special IYC Representative took advantage of the occasion to express the hope that more assistance would be given to children in the Third World and that the IYC in Belgium would have the benefit of royal support. The King and Queen’s demonstrated interest in the Year and apparent concern for children gave the Team reason to hope that both Their Majesties would become patrons of the Year in Belgium.

Fifteen years later, in 1993, King Baudouin passed away and the event “triggered happy recollections of the Special IYC Envoy’s visit with Their Majesties at their official residence in Chateau de Laeken in Brussels.”38 Recalls Dr. Aldaba Lim:

Easily the highlight of my visit to Brussels was our private audience with King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola, who was the uniting force behind the two diverse groups.

37 Ibid., p. 57
38 Aldaba Lim, Estefania, “The Belgian King and his love for children,” The Philippine Star, 26 August 1993
Unlike during previous audiences with other members of royalty or even presidents and prime ministers, where for security reasons visitors like us passed through a series of waiting rooms and security checks, we were met at the hallway of their reception room and shown to our seats arranged informally around the sofa where their Highnesses sat together.

I was properly briefed about their being childless and must thereby exercise care in discussing such a sensitive subject. It did not take long, however, and the Queen herself was enthusiastically asking questions about what I thought about this UN Year of the Child. ‘Will it affect and change the future of deprived children in poor countries?’ she asked. She readily related to the seriousness of the problems and their needs which bespoke of her genuine concern and love for children. I could sense their deep understanding and appreciation of the problems of children in their own country, the children of Turkish and Greek migrant workers in Belgium and the need to improve day care for them. Their Majesties showed real interest in our concept and expectations of IYC. How will IYC solve the critical problems of the physical deprivation of children in Africa and Asia, and on the other hand, the equally growing numbers of emotionally deprived children? He [the King] noted the growing numbers of ‘latch key children’ in wealthy and industrialized countries, where both parents work and leave children at home to fend for themselves. The scope of their interest in the problems of neglected children truly impressed me. They knew of the battered children in prostitution and forced labour whose plight at that time, 1978, was hardly reported in the press. These were issues mentioned by the King and Queen, which are just now, in the nineties, catching the attention of the world. They were already concerned about population imbalance in Third World countries as well as the zero growth rate in many countries in Europe. What about family planning in Asia? they seemed to ask.

When they found out I was a psychologist with experiences in mental health problems, Queen Fabiola brightened up to share her special interest in children’s mental health in Belgium. She set up a fund to finance scholarships in the field of preventive mental health for children. Later on, I was informed that this fund came from monetary contributions given as wedding gifts to their Majesties.

This audience, which lasted more than two hours, way beyond the official schedule, was for me an extraordinary learning experience. It was also a humbling experience to see in these two committed souls manifestations of what Sri Chinmoy meant by his words: “When the power of love replaces the love of power, man will have a new name: God.

The IYC Team also met with officials of the EEC to explore possibilities of developing EEC action on behalf of children in Europe and children in the Third World, as well as expanding aid beyond the Lomé countries to Asia and Latin America, since the bulk of EEC aid had been going to Africa.

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39 Lomé in Togo, the site of the Convention ratified by African, Caribbean and Pacific island countries in 1975 under the auspices of the European Union that emphasised decentralised cooperation and development at the grassroots level.
The following represented areas of EEC Support for IYC:40

a) Cooperative action by EEC and NGOs in co-financing projects that could be better oriented to meeting children's needs;
b) Development of a more child-oriented policy in the context of projects financed under the Lomé Convention;
c) The expansion of present EEC activities in such sectors as education and social affairs that would be of more direct benefit to children;
d) Publicity and informational campaigns to highlight EEC's contribution to IYC;
e) Conduct of a public opinion poll (sondäge) on children that could be added to the next regular biennial poll planned by EEC in May 1979. The IYC Secretariat's technical assistance was requested in drawing up the questionnaire.

Austria

On 20 June 1978, the IYC Team arrived in Vienna for a three-day mission. Austria (in German, Österreich), officially Republic of Austria, is a republic in central Europe, bordered on the north by the Czech Republic; on the north-east by Slovakia; on the east by Hungary; on the south by Slovenia, Italy, and Switzerland; and on the west by Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Germany. Vienna is the country's capital and largest city.41

The basis of the Austrian educational system is the national law that requires school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 15. Austria's long tradition of free education dates from the Educational Reform Act of 1774, instituted by Empress Maria Theresa. This law, which was expanded in 1867 and again in 1962, largely accounts for the fact that 99 percent of the population is able to read and write. Although the foundations of Austria's present educational system were laid in the 18th century, its roots can be traced to the monastic schools of the Middle Ages. One such school, the Schottengymnasium in Vienna, has been in continuous operation by the order of Benedictines since 1155. Under German occupation from 1938 to 1945, the country's schools suffered severe restraints on their teaching programmes. Since World War II, various programmes have been inaugurated to expand and strengthen the educational system. Austria has received international recognition for the high quality of its medical training.42

41 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
42 Ibid.
The Austrian system of social insurance is comprehensive, including sickness, disability, accident, old-age, and unemployment benefits, allowances for families with children, and rent subsidy. The system is financed by compulsory employer and employee contributions. Health and other types of insurance are voluntary for those who are self-employed.\textsuperscript{43}

The IYC Secretariat learned that Austria had not set up a committee for IYC because there had been an existing body created in 1974 that was concerned with the welfare of children. Called the Advisory Council, it was composed of governmental and NGO representatives. Its role was to make proposals and recommendations for family policy.\textsuperscript{44}

Instead of establishing a commission for IYC, the Austrian Government issued a second report on the Austrian family situation, concentrating on children. In addition, the results of a study on the legal, economic, social health and housing situation of Austrian families were published.

The IYC Team was informed that in Austria, the Year would be inaugurated on 16 January 1979 with a festival, which Dr. Aldaba Lim was invited to attend. The opening of the festival would be addressed by the President and the Federal Chancellor of Austria. The Special IYC Representative requested copies of their statements so these could be included in a collection of IYC statements or messages by Heads of State or Prime Ministers.

The UNICEF Committee of Austria launched, for the first time, a programme for development education in Austria. In preparation for Children’s Day in September 1978, the Austrian Friends of the Child Association planned activities aimed at promoting better understanding of the Third World alongside fund-raising activities to construct a children’s home. The Catholic Family Action of Austria, which was concerned with the revitalization of family life, awarded a prize for the best journalistic presentation for children, and undertook action for fatherless children.

UNESCO Austria conducted a regional seminar in Vienna for other UNESCO clubs in German-speaking countries, on the theme of the Rights of the Child. It was hoped that the assessment undertaken at the seminar would lead to concrete measures on behalf of children.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{44} IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to Austria,” 21-23 June 1978
The IYC Team’s programme in Vienna included visits to the Stadt des Kindes (City of Children), a large home for children aged 3 to 16, somewhat similar to the reception centre that the Team visited in Finland. The Centre included 18 housing units for family groups of ten children each. The excellent facilities consisted of a large sports field, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, a theatre, room, a mini-zoo, and maid service in addition to educators (or housemothers) who live with the children. The Centre also included a dormitory-like facility for teenage girls serving as apprentices outside, while teenage boys were housed in family groups.\footnote{Ibid., p. 75}

A kindergarten for handicapped children was also in the IYC Team’s itinerary. That kindergarten had grouped children with physical and mental disabilities into separate classes, each group (such as the visually impaired) with its own facilities and teachers. A normal group of children was maintained in a separate class to serve as a control group for research. This excellent facility had been given by the Swiss Government to Austria, immediately after World War II.
Chapter V

**BACK TO ASIA, then to CANADA**

(7-23 August and 8 September 1978)

By this time of the mission, investment in IYC had been made at the highest levels, with the top officials of many of the states visited participating in the IYC Commissions.

According to a report titled “Using Targets to Help Improve Child Health,”:

Indicative of the high level of national commitment to IYC is the fact that many Heads of State or First Ladies are patrons or chairpersons of National IYC Commissions. We are delighted to note here the presence of two very distinguished chairpersons of their countries’ National Commission for IYC, Sra. Lopez Portillo of Mexico and Princess Caroline of Monaco.

Examples of countries where either their Prime Minister or President took the lead were Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Pakistan, Poland, Spain, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, the United Kingdom, the Philippines and Iran. In Mexico, Peru, Chile, Turkey, Botswana, Egypt, and Sri Lanka, the First Ladies serve as active patronesses of the National Commissions.1

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1 Gwatkin, Davidson & Grant, James, ‘Using Targets to Help Improve Child Health’ – Referenced from original report.
After a break of a little more than a month, the IYC Team next flew to Southeast Asia and Canada. The Special IYC Representative was in her home country, the Philippines, for a two-day stop (7 to 8 August 1978). The Philippines, officially called the Republic of the Philippines, lies in the western Pacific Ocean and forms part of the Malay Archipelago. Situated about 1,210 km (750 m) east of the coast of Vietnam, the Philippines is separated from Taiwan on the north by the Bashi Channel. The republic is bounded on the east by the Philippine Sea, on the south by the Celebes Sea, and on the west by the South China Sea. The country comprises about 7,100 islands, of which only about 460 are more than 2.6 sq km (1 sq mi) in area. Eleven islands have an area of more than 2,590 sq km (1,000 sq mi) each and contain the majority of the population. These islands are Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, Luzon, Masbate, Mindanao, Mindoro, Negros, Palawan, Panay, and Samar. Manila is the capital and largest city in the Philippines.

Education in the Philippines is free and compulsory for children of aged 7 to 12. Although Filipino as a language is taught and, in the lower grades, local dialects are also used, English is the main language of instruction. About 99 percent of the adult population is literate. Most cities of the Philippines have modern health facilities, which are usually lacking in rural areas. At the time of the visit, the country had been under martial rule for almost six years.

The mission was a relatively easy one for the IYC Team, with most of those involved in national IYC preparations having worked with Dr. Aldaba Lim in the Child Welfare Council (CWC) of the Philippines. The CWC is a government bureau concerned with early childhood development projects in the Philippines.

The preparations were going well, given the excellent cooperation between the UNICEF Area Office and the Philippine Government. The mission served mainly as an opportunity to encourage the CWC to focus its IYC efforts on a few priorities that would have real impact on the greatest number of children.

The Philippine program for IYC was just the first phase (1977-1979) of a ten-year plan of action for the Decade of the Filipino Child. The implementation of this plan, which had included a follow-up of the benefits derived from IYC, was coordinated by
the Council for the Welfare of Children. Within this broad framework, coordination of IYC activities, including those of business and industry, was carried out by the National Steering Committee for IYC, headed by Mrs. Imelda Marcos, the First Lady.

The activities for IYC were aimed at establishing systems and networks to deliver services to underserved areas and disadvantaged groups, as well as provide resources and funding for the projects of the Decade. The blueprint for IYC approved by the Council consequently included ten-year plans of agencies and organizations, eight comprehensive systems for delivery of services, and innovative projects in education, health and nutrition, justice, labour and social services. One of the plans envisaged for IYC was a study of the Filipino child, involving UNICEF, the National Economic Development Authority and the International Labour Organisation.4

In the area of nutrition, the Special IYC Envoy was informed of an intensified funding programme, involving expansion of day-care supplementary feeding centres, being planned for children in provinces where malnutrition was known to be severe. Apparently, encouraging progress was being made in the field of nutrition.

During a meeting with members of the Council, also attended by the Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF, the IYC Team was presented with the report of the National Program for IYC covering the years 1977 to 1979, which was part of Phase One. The Program provided a comprehensive strategy for addressing child welfare problems, covering many areas. In Dr. Aldaba Lim’s view, however, these did not merit equal priority, risking a dispersion of effort and diminishing net impact on children.

In that meeting, the IYC Team learned that immunization coverage was approximately 53 percent, with 85 percent targeted for the next few years. Dr. Aldaba Lim brought up the idea of establishing targets in nutrition, integrated child development centres and other basic services. The occasion also served as an opportunity to remind the Council about the potential represented by NGOs, which had already contributed substantially to programs for children in nutrition, health and education. She further invited the Council to promote child participation in the observance of IYC in the rural areas. The Council was thus asked to ensure adequate nationwide distribution of IYC materials to enhance awareness of children’s problems at grass roots level.

4 Ibid., p. 5
At a meeting with representatives of the United Nations agencies in Manila, chaired by Mr. B.R. Devarajan, the UNDP Resident Representative at the time, the IYC Team was briefed about their ongoing projects that were relevant to the IYC. The UNDP, for example, was assisting a Philippine project for vaccine production, while the World Health Organization was collecting information on child health needs and services in the provinces of the Philippines.

The Special IYC Representative raised the question of possibilities and opportunities for agency support for IYC in the form of concrete projects. For example, the local office of UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, based in Vienna, Austria) had suggested developing local industry for the production of toys. However, the discussion yielded little by way of concrete proposals for agency projects for IYC.5

A sidelight of the visit was the hosting in Manila of the Regional Consultation on the International Year of the Child for Asia and the Pacific from 25 November to 3 December 1978. The regional activity sponsored by the Bangkok-based Economic & SocialCommission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) provided a channel for the sharing of experiences, and activities in the region in preparation for the Year. The Consultation also sought inclusion of an item on IYC in the agenda of the 35th ESCAP session in 1979 and possibly 1980 for evaluation of IYC activities.

**Indonesia**

Soon after the short visit to the Philippines, the IYC Team flew south to Jakarta, Indonesia, for a three-day stop (9-11 August 1978). The Republic of Indonesia is an island republic and the largest country in Southeast Asia, constituting most of the Malay Archipelago and including all of the former Netherlands Indies. Indonesia comprises 13,677 islands straddling the equator, 6,000 of which are inhabited. The republic shares the island of Borneo with Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam; Indonesian Borneo, equivalent to about 75 percent of the island, is called Kalimantan. The capital and largest city is Jakarta.6

Before Indonesia attained its independence in 1945, access to primary and secondary education was limited; university-level education was almost non-existent. Since 1949,
successive governments have laid great emphasis on education. Today almost all children enter primary school, and approximately 98 percent of Indonesians aged 15 or older are literate. Indonesian law requires all children to attend at least six years of primary school. Primary education is followed by three years each of junior and senior secondary school.7

The Indonesian program for IYC was under the auspices of no less than the President and Vice-President, who served as patrons of the National IYC Committee, while Mrs. Tien Soeharto, the First Lady of Indonesia, was Special Adviser. The General Chairperson of the Committee also held the powerful position of Minister Co-ordinator for People’s Welfare.

IYC preparations in Indonesia had been delayed by political reshuffling that took place prior to the IYC Team’s visit. This development resulted in the replacement of the Vice-President by Dr. Adam Malik. The General Chairman of the National IYC Committee had also just changed hands at the time of the IYC Team’s visit. General Surono, the new appointee, had apparently been reluctant to seek preparatory funding for IYC. In the climate of uncertainty surrounding these changes, there was concern that not much progress in IYC preparations would be made before the end of September.8

Since two of the ranking officials on the National IYC Committee, the Vice-President of Indonesia and the General Chairman of the Committee, were newly appointed to their positions, the visit offered a timely opportunity to brief them about IYC priorities and what was expected from national participation in IYC. This was particularly important in the case of General Surono, whose approval was required for any national decision on IYC.9 The visit was expected to encourage strong commitment to IYC, and generate appropriate funding for IYC programs in Indonesia.

Dr. Aldaba Lim’s call on Mrs. Soeharto, followed by a large formal gathering of nongovernmental organizations at the Merdeka Palace, was a measure of the importance the Indonesian Government attached to the IYC. During the IYC Team’s call on Mrs. Soeharto, they commended the Karang balita as a good example of integrated child care, and conveyed the wish that it would be replicated elsewhere in the country as a tangible demonstration of support for IYC goals. At the meeting, Dr. Aldaba Lim also stressed the importance of the role of women as well as NGOs in IYC preparations.

7 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 11
Following is the speech of Mrs. Soeharto during the meeting with Dr. Aldaba Lim, where the leaders of the working group of the IYC and representatives of other social organizations were also present. Her statement provided the needed assurance of support for the IYC.  

Distinguished Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of us who are assembled here today are specially privileged to meet and to talk with Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim. I said it is a special privilege not only because she is a leading woman from a friendly country, namely, the Philippines, but also because she is a great social worker, wise mother and a noted educationalist.

Her visit to Indonesia—as well as to other countries—is in carrying out the special mission of the United Nations to observe the preparations conducted by member countries of the United Nations and to have exchanges of views with all of us in the framework of the International Year of the Child 1979. As we are all aware that sometime ago the General Assembly of the United Nations has adopted a resolution that declared the Year 1979 as the International Year of the Child. As far as we in Indonesia are concerned, the significance of this International Year of the Child is none other than an endeavour to intensify further all activities in promoting the welfare programme of the child, both in the Regional and National levels.

I believe that this International Year of the Child with such an objective is definitely congruent with the nature of development we are busily engaged at today, namely the development of an Indonesian being in his entirety and the development of an Indonesian society as a whole.

I am of the opinion that to build such a being in his entirety and to build such society as a whole constitute the greatest challenge not only to the Indonesian nation, but also to the entire human race during our present era. For this reason, all nations must develop their own societies in accordance with their own ways and their own aspirations. In addition, nations of the world must jointly build a world society which is more advanced, more prosperous, more peaceful and more equitable than the one we are enjoying at present. Because if we fail to answer this challenge, the human race will possibly face a terrifying disaster.

Furthermore, I believe that to build such an Indonesian being in entirety, we must begin as early as possible, namely, since childhood. Actually, the care and education for the child do not merely regard the character of the child itself, but it is also related to the growth of our society and nation towards the future.

In view of the life of nations, which are becoming more closely inter-related and inter-dependent, we must ensure the success of the forthcoming International Year of the Child.

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10 Soeharto, Madame Tien, “Address before the meeting between Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim with Leaders of the Working Group of the International Year of the Child 1979 and other Social Organizations,” State Palace, Jakarta, Indonesia, 10 August 1978
Child. All of us, as individuals or organizations which concentrate on social and educational problems, should be called upon to take part in the activities that provide better means and opportunities for the growth of our child and youth. To us women, this is an insuppressible motherly call.

Obviously, the problem of the child does not only become the responsibility of parents, but also of society, the responsibility of nation, in fact it is the responsibility of mankind.

In conclusion, I would like to express my highest appreciation for the kind indulgence of Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim in meeting with and talking to all of us today. I sincerely hope that this meeting and your presence amidst the Indonesian people during these few days, would contribute to the success of International Year of the Child 1979.

May God Almighty bless us in our common efforts of achieving commendable aims. Thank you.

During a subsequent meeting with Vice-President Adam Malik, the IYC Team emphasized the value of the substantive non-celebratory aspects of national participation in IYC. Commenting on the fact-finding orientation of the Indonesian IYC program, the Team pointed out that sufficient data apparently existed and hoped that the Vice-President would give priority to child welfare programs in Indonesia’s national welfare programme called Repelita III.

When Dr. Aldaba Lim mentioned the UNICEF/UNDP plan for study visits to China by Asian nationals to observe their comprehensive system of child care, Mr. Malik remarked that the compulsory character of the Chinese system, which has resulted in comprehensive coverage of children’s basic needs in the fields of health, nutrition, literacy, etc., might not work in more democratic societies.

Toward the end of the mission, Mrs. Soeharto personally escorted the IYC Team around her pet project, the US$20 million Children and Maternity Hospital, which was nearly finished and scheduled to be inaugurated on 11 March 1979. The hospital, which was subsidized by the government, was owned and operated by a private foundation established by Mrs. Soeharto. It was intended to begin operations on December 1978 to coincide with the IYC. The hospital had been conceived as a national centre for total child care in all its aspects, from conception to adolescence, including maternal care. The hospital was also envisioned to serve as a research and teaching institution.
Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim was acknowledged for her work during a meeting with leaders of the Working Group of IYC in Indonesia in August 1978.

Dr. Aldaba-Lim on her way to Karang Balita (Child Case Center) in Indonesia.
Bangladesh

From Indonesia, the IYC Team began its three-country hop to South Asia beginning with Bangladesh on 13-15 August 1978. The People’s Republic of Bangladesh is a republic of southern Asia, in the north-eastern portion of the Indian subcontinent, bordered on the west, north, and east by India, on the south-east by Myanmar (Burma), and on the south by the Bay of Bengal. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh is Dhaka. From the partition of India in 1947 until 1971 the region of Bangladesh was a province of Pakistan. As such, its official designation was changed from East Bengal to East Pakistan in 1955. On March 26, 1971, leaders of East Pakistan declared the region independent as Bangladesh (Bengali, “Bengal nation”), and its independence was assured on December 16, 1971, when Pakistani troops in the region surrendered to a joint force of Bangladeshi and Indian troops.\textsuperscript{11}

Bangladesh lacks sufficient numbers of schools and cultural institutions, even though facilities were increased substantially in the 1970s. Public education in Bangladesh generally follows the model established by the British prior to 1947. Primary school education is free, but at least one-third of all children are not enrolled in school. Poor school attendance is a major reason for a literacy rate of only 51.4 percent among Bangladeshi adults. Health and welfare services in Bangladesh are limited. Much of the welfare work in the country is administered by voluntary organizations, and Bangladesh is a major recipient of assistance from abroad.\textsuperscript{12}

Although Bangladesh was receiving a huge inflow of development aid, its capacity to absorb it was limited. Yet among the countries visited by the IYC Team, Bangladesh was among those where conditions of poverty and want were most severe, and where the need for a Year of the Child was greatest.\textsuperscript{13}

According to the briefing the IYC Team received from the UN area office, 90 percent of the population was spending 90 percent of its income on food. An estimated 80 percent of the population lived below the poverty line of $110 per capita income, and the cost of living was rising sharply. At least 60 percent of the children were malnourished. Participation of women in development was limited.

\textsuperscript{11} Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
A succession of caretaker governments had made it difficult to get IYC preparations off the ground. The responsibility for IYC preparations had been shifted from one ministry to another in five months. The third to inherit the task was the Lady Minister of Women’s Affairs, Dr. Amina Rahman. Adding to the confusion was the fact that the Ministers of Education, Health and Information, who were represented on the National IYC Committee, had also been replaced. There was a possibility that Ministers would be reshuffled again after Parliamentary elections on December 1978.

The prospects for IYC were further dimmed by the fact that some of the new key Ministers on the IYC Committee, such as the Minister of Education (who was a well-known trade unionist), did not possess the requisite professional background for their office. On the bright side, the then new chairman, Dr. Rahman had both experience and genuine interest in the welfare of children. The visit of the IYC Team to Bangladesh at a time when the Minister for Women’s Affairs had just assumed responsibility for IYC helped encourage and motivate Dr. Rahman to provide the leadership necessary to carry out a substantive IYC program.

A National Report on the Situation of Children in Bangladesh, which had just been issued at the time of the IYC Team’s visit, was the first comprehensive national survey of its kind that the Team had encountered. Incidentally, that situation report was coordinated by a distinguished professor and then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Shamsul Huq. Such a review represented a first step in national IYC preparations, and served as an excellent basis for Bangladesh’s IYC program.

The IYC Team’s call on the President, Major General Ziaur Rahman, lasted one hour. The visit elicited his assurance that children would be a continuing priority not only in 1979 but in all the years to come. The IYC Team was briefed about the President’s interest in children’s development and of how he had personally distributed awards to national winners of various competitions, including children from all over Bangladesh. Another positive result of the meeting was the President’s favorable response to the Team’s suggestion that the President’s wife be the patron of IYC in Bangladesh.

During the visit, Dr. Michael K. Irwin, UNICEF Representative in Dhaka, presented the President with a copy of the Report of the Situation of Children in Bangladesh, which the IYC Team commended. Discussion covered IYC objectives and priorities, both with respect to developed and developing countries. The President stressed the importance of the media, especially television, as an effective instrument for educating the child. He also spoke about the need to confront development problems by building
up the expertise within the country and the region, and about his efforts to promote the participation of women in development. This last commitment—to promote the participation of women in development—was crucial to IYC planning for child welfare in Bangladesh.

Before the end of the visit, Dr. Aldaba Lim met with the President of the Red Cross Society. That meeting produced interesting information on the refugee camps for some 250,000 refugees, consisting mostly of old people and children, in the border district of Chittagong. An estimated 6,000 to 8,000 of the refugees were children aged 0 to 5 years. Many children in the camp who suffered from second and third degree malnutrition were already beyond saving.14

The refugees fleeing political persecution were descendents of Arabs and pirates who settled in the Chittagong area over a thousand years ago. In 1958, this group was sent by the British to Burma as agricultural labourers. The Red Cross was assisting the camp with supplementary feeding, while UNICEF provided these camps with food rations, tube wells, and one doctor per camp.

With respect to possibilities for improving the situation of children in Bangladesh in the context of IYC, the IYC Team found the experienced representatives of the United Nations system in Dhaka full of goodwill but pessimistic about the prospects for real change and progress. At a meeting with the agencies, presided by the then UNDP Resident Representative, Ambassador Bernard Zagorin, the team sought to elicit ideas for IYC projects to be undertaken by the UN agencies based in Bangladesh. Although no concrete proposals for IYC projects were made, it was hoped that the discussions would provide a basis for UNICEF follow-up of the UN agencies’ participation in IYC.

The meeting with the agencies discussed the prospects for constructive participation by the NGOs in IYC. This was also the main topic of discussion at a subsequent meeting with UNICEF staff. The existence of 2,000 registered NGOs in Bangladesh represented a great reserve of health and technical resources for IYC activities. One major constraint to NGO participation was that most of the NGOs had limited resources and could only implement projects with external financial or material support. Many national NGOs such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee were receiving financial support from international NGOs. While the same can be said of many NGOs in developing countries generally, this issue was not raised in most of the other developing countries visited by the IYC team.

14 Ibid., p. 31
The IYC Team visited a UNICEF-assisted pilot project initiated on March 1978, called the Village Educational Research Centre (VERC). VERC was established to promote the development and application of improved, simplified village technology, and train extension workers. The Centre reminded Dr. Aldaba Lim of the Karen Village Technology Centre in Kenya. In the technology workshop were simple models of water pumps, solar dryers, tools, windmills and educational toys made from locally available materials. A main difference between VERC and the Karen Centre was that VERC placed greater emphasis on involvement of the villagers, who were encouraged to develop their own innovations and improvements in technology, such as less expensive and more efficient rickshaws. In the words of Mr. Jake Phophl from Save the Children (USA) and their guide at the Centre, confidence building through community participation, was a main aim of VERC. Visual materials such as posters developed by the villagers themselves were used to motivate skills learning and productive activity, by demonstrating how goals could be achieved through community organization. On the other hand, as Dr. Aldaba Lim pointed out, capital, whether from Government or other sources, was needed to enable such skills to be utilized.

Another interesting feature of VERC, which had 25 resident Asian trainers and technicians, was the training and employment of children as “junior polytechnics” at minimal pay. At the time of the visit, plans were made to establish 200 more such centres at an estimated cost of US$2.2 million to UNICEF. Such expansion seemed appropriate, given the impact of the centers.

India

The Indian sub-continent was next on the IYC Team’s list. A quick flight west to New Delhi from Dhaka was made on 15 August 1978 and the visit lasted until the 18th of the month. India (in Hindi, Bharat) is officially known as the Republic of India, a federal democracy in southern Asia and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, comprising, with Pakistan and Bangladesh, the subcontinent of India. India is the seventh-largest country in the world and the second most populous, after China. It geographically consists of the entire Indian peninsula and portions of the Asian mainland. India is bordered on the north by Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, China, and Bhutan; on the south by the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar, which separate it from Sri Lanka, and the Indian Ocean; on the west by the Arabian Sea and Pakistan; on the east by Myanmar (Burma), the Bay of Bengal and Bangladesh, which almost cuts off north-east India from the rest of the
country. The capital of India is New Delhi, and the country's largest city is Mumbai (formerly Bombay).  

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1947, India has sought to develop a modern, comprehensive school system; the reports of the All-Indian commissions of 1953 and 1964, advocating educational reform, provided impetus for improvement. The education of India's large and youthful population, with its social and religious complexities, has not been easy, however. Funds that might have been used for education have had to be utilized to combat poverty, food shortages, and overpopulation. The relics of the caste system, inadequate vocational placement, and religious diversity have contributed to the difficulty of educational reform. Nevertheless, sweeping structural changes have been undertaken and largely carried through, and the number of schools and of pupils has risen greatly since independence.

India has the second largest child population in the world. In 1971, the country's child population was 230 million (0-14 years), or about 42 percent of the total population. India's abiding interest in the welfare of children is thus an expression of the country's commitment to the welfare of its single most populous group. Although many countries have provisions regarding primary education and child labour, India is one of the few countries in the world that have enshrined these commitments in its constitution. Indeed, this commitment is defined in Articles 24, 39, and 45 of its Constitution. (See Annex 2)

The constitution of India was noteworthy in setting standards for educating children and protecting them against exploitation and abandonment. Even if reality fell short of the desired goal due to budgetary constraints and widespread poverty, the establishment of a goal or standard for the treatment of children in the constitution of a country represents an exemplary moral commitment on the part of government, and an implicit recognition of the importance of every child. The Government of India adopted on 22 August 1974 a National Policy for Children. At the time of the IYC Team's visit, India was one of the few countries to have a national policy for children, which provides a focus and a framework to evolve programmes and measures for children's welfare.

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15 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
16 Ibid.
Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim and Prime Minister Desai hold a joint press conference in India to discuss the importance of the International Year of the Child.

In a radio interview in India, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim emphasized India IYC Commission’s Mobile Creche, a novel program for the welfare of children.

Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim and Prime Minister Desai hold a joint press conference in India to discuss the importance of the International Year of the Child.
In India, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim praised the efforts of NGOs such as Inner Wheel (wives of Rotarians) and Zonta Clubs for putting up mobile creche for children of women workers.
India’s National Policy for Children declared the nation’s children as “a supremely important asset,” whose “nurture and solicitude are our responsibility.” The National Policy for Children also re-affirms India’s adherence to the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

In 1974, a national situation report on children led to the creation of a national policy for children and the establishment of a 23-member National Children’s Board headed by the Prime Minister. (The Board now includes Ministers of Finance and Planning as well as Education, Health and Social Welfare). To give top-level policy guidance to IYC, the Board was also designated as the National IYC Commission. Similar Children’s Boards established at the State level were also expected to function as State IYC Committees. This was the case in West Bengal.

In India, preparations for IYC had greatly benefited from the existence of a national policy for children and an operative National Children’s Board. These factors gave India a distinct advantage over other countries in terms of advocacy and policy orientation toward children. It also showed India’s IYC program was clearly focused on basic needs and responsive to IYC priorities. If fully implemented, the program had the potential to tangibly improve the situation of children in India.18

Because the basic needs and priorities were known, the points raised by the IYC Team during the mission in India had less to do with priorities than with active involvement of NGOs in the national IYC effort. The visit, instead, provided both recognition and encouragement of the efforts of Government and NGOs to participate meaningfully in IYC.

Coming in the midst of internal political difficulties that must have preoccupied Prime Minister Morarji Desai, the visit of the IYC Team with him went very well. In personally reviewing India’s national IYC programme, the Prime Minister had demonstrated how seriously he took IYC. Judging from his comments inspired by childhood memories, the IYC Team saw his commitment as stemming in part from the poverty he himself experienced as a child. This seemed to have given him a personal appreciation of the objectives of IYC that was not always found in leaders from more privileged backgrounds.
During the meeting Dr. Aldaba Lim raised the possibility of increasing budgetary allocations for children. The Prime Minister responded by saying that people should not depend only on governments but become involved themselves in promoting children’s welfare. He stressed the role of parents in securing children’s welfare and the need to reach the child by educating the parents. He also underscored the role of education in human development, noting that the child’s mental as well as physical needs must be met. Two of his priority pet programs were adult education and universalization of primary education. After so many international years on various topics, he was not overly optimistic about IYC. Nevertheless, he was committed to taking the first steps in the long-term implementation of IYC.

Mr. Szuszkiewicz, Director of the United Nations Information Center in New Delhi, convened a meeting of about 40, mostly local NGOs, on the subject of IYC. For the most part, the group was very motivated and willing to participate in IYC, but was not sure how to do so. Among them were university student groups and United Nations associations that did not ordinarily deal with children.

On the subject of coordination of NGO participation in national preparations for the Year, some NGOs were of the view that national-level coordination would not succeed. India was too vast and bureaucratic. A suggested approach to this issue was to motivate small groups of NGOs and let them carry out their IYC activities independently. In turn, the Special IYC Representative proposed that such groups be asked to register with the National IYC Committee so that their respective contributions could be tracked.

The IYC Team later visited two Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Centres in Old Delhi and Jama Masjid. Initiated in 1975, these UNICEF-assisted centers were at that time operational in 33 sites. In Delhi, the ICDS centres served more than 15,000 pre-school children. The intention was to expand the number by 67 additional centers in 1978 and 1979.

The concept behind ICDS was sound: delivery of an integrated package of services, including feeding, immunization and health care, through a single multi-purpose channel serving children below the age of six. Severely malnourished children received nutritional rehabilitation, the mothers received functional literacy and vocational training and services were provided free of charge. The Government paid the salaries of teachers as well as rent in urban areas. UNICEF investment in the ICDS, amounting to $1 million, was in the
form of non-recurring costs, such as vehicles, educational toys, weighing scales, and functional literacy materials. Food, initially provided by CARE, was eventually supplied by the Government.

Accompanied by Ms. Devika Singh, coordinator of the Mobile Creches, the IYC Team visited a Mobile Creche, which was one of 27 in Delhi and 80 all over India. It will be recalled that mobile creches were the subject of a paper presented to the Regional Meeting of the Situation of Children in Asia preceding the previous year’s Board meeting in Manila. Mobile Creches were set up on construction sites to serve children of construction workers and casual labourers. In Delhi construction work was carried out by both parents, who migrated from the rural areas with their children. In contrast to the ICDS centres, the creches served older children as well as pre-school children in an effort to assure continuity of their education. In the creche visited by the IYC Team, one room was reserved for pre-schoolers, and another for their older brothers and sisters.

The creches were 70 percent government-subsidized. The balance was funded by the Mobile Creches organization and the communities served. A characteristic feature of the creche is the use of leftover tools as toys, scraps and discarded material, such as postcards, newspapers and magazines, imaginatively converted into colourful decorations for the creche.

Pakistan

From India, the IYC team then moved westward again, to Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, the third country visited in South Asia, from 18 to 22 August 1978. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is situated in South Asia, bordered on the north and north-west by Afghanistan, on the north-east by Jammu and Kashmir, on the east and south-east by India, on the south by the Arabian Sea, and on the west by Iran. The status of Jammu and Kashmir is a matter of dispute between India and Pakistan. Pakistan became an independent state in 1947. Until December 1971 it included the province of East Pakistan (previously East Bengal), which, after its secession from Pakistan, assumed the name Bangladesh. The capital of Pakistan is Islamabad; Karachi is the largest city.

About 65 percent of adult Pakistanis are literate. The constitution prescribes free and compulsory primary education, and 81 per cent of eligible children are enrolled in school.

\[20\text{ Ibid., p. 53}\]
\[21\text{ Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.}\]
Five years has been established as the period of primary school attendance. Adult literacy programs play an important role in boosting literacy levels. Pakistan has 24 universities, mostly established in the late 19th century.22

At the time of the Special IYC Envoy’s visit to Pakistan, a draft outline of the national program for IYC had been finalized and committees for IYC were being set up at the provincial level. The timing of the visit enabled the team to provide direction and guidance to the National IYC Committee as well as the Sind Committee for IYC, with respect to priorities for the Year, which could possibly be focused on basic services. In response to requests, the IYC Team offered concrete suggestions for the improvement of the IYC program in Islamabad and Sind, thus facilitating the attainment of the IYC targets.

The visiting IYC Team observed that in Karachi, the province of Sind, and in Islamabad, the leaders involved in IYC preparations were for the most part professionals involved in social work, child welfare and related fields. This seemed to reflect a concept of child care as being mainly the concern of social workers. Hence, Dr. Aldaba Lim suggested that the Committees should not remain the exclusive preserve of those involved in child welfare and social work, but should also involve all sectors of government as well as NGOs. She felt the Child Welfare Council would benefit from a broadening of its representation to include other Government departments, such as planning, education, economics, and foreign affairs as well as nongovernmental organizations and trade unions.23

The importance of NGO participation in Pakistan’s preparations for IYC was recognized by Dr. Firoza Ahmed, Secretary of Health, Social Welfare and Population and concurrent Secretary General of the National IYC Coordination Committee. In her joint television interview with the Special IYC Envoy, Dr. Ahmed affirmed that the Year was the dual responsibility of the Government and the private sector.

One of the salient development issues in Pakistan that emerged during the visit was the low level of women’s participation in development. Based on the information provided by representatives of United Nations agencies in Islamabad, the literacy rate was only 5 percent for women, and 25 percent for men. Only 5 percent of the rural areas were provided with water, and 15 percent had adequate maternal and child health coverage. Population growth rates remained at the high level of 3.1 percent.

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22 Ibid.
The IYC team had the opportunity to meet with the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA), who was then the Chief Executive of Pakistan. Though not originally scheduled, the appointment with the Chief Martial Law Administrator was arranged through Mrs. T. Memet, UNICEF Representative in Islamabad, and the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan. The CLMA, Major General Mohamed Zia-ul-Huq, referred to children as “a subject more important than any other.” In response to the IYC Team’s request, he agreed to send to the Secretariat a statement on children for inclusion in the IYC Secretariat’s collection of presidential messages.24

Dr. Aldaba Lim’s conversation with the CLMA gave her the impression that his priorities were in line with UNICEF’s basic services. For example, Pakistan was aiming at the goal of universal primary education by 1987. The Government was also launching a comprehensive national health programme. In this context its plan to build a 200-bed hospital for children was discussed. When asked about his top priorities for Pakistan, the CLMA singled out the provision of drinking water to the entire population. This seemed an appropriate goal in a country where only 5 percent of the rural population had access to safe drinking water.

Pakistan President Fazal Elahi Chowdhury was Patron-in-Chief of the IYC. During the IYC Team’s call on the President, a number of subjects were discussed, including the value of village resource technology, the status of family planning programmes in Pakistan, and the delivery of integrated child care services. Some discussion was also devoted to the status of women in Pakistan, as well as the obstacles to their more active participation in development.

In a meeting with representatives of United Nations agencies, it was suggested that they raise consciousness among government officials by supplying facts and figures, such as those provided by the UNFPA Representative with respect to the high infant and maternal mortality rates.25 The Special IYC Envoy was told that, of 3.3 million children born annually, 85 thousand would die. She felt that such data could be provided to Government officials in a way that would inspire action.

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24 Ibid., p. 63
25 Ibid., p. 66
After a two-week respite, the IYC Team flew to Canada on 8 September 1978. Canada is a federated country of North America and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean; on the north-east by Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, which separate it from Greenland; on the east by the Atlantic Ocean; on the south by the United States; and on the west by the Pacific Ocean and the US state of Alaska. It was formerly known as the Dominion of Canada. Canada is the world’s second largest country, surpassed in size only by Russia. Ottawa, Ontario, the capital of Canada, and is a commercial and industrial city.

The educational system in Canada is derived from the British and American systems on the one hand, and French tradition on the other, particularly in the province of Quebec. English or French is the language of instruction, and some schools provide instruction in both official languages. Each of the ten provinces has responsibility for establishing and maintaining its own school system. Although Canada does not have a central ministry of education, the federal government provides schools for First Nations children, inmates of federal penitentiaries, and the children of military personnel in Europe. The various levels of government share the responsibility for social welfare in Canada. The federal government administers comprehensive income-maintenance measures, such as the Canada Pension Plan, Canada Assistance Plan, old-age security pensions, family allowances, youth allowances, and unemployment insurance, in which nationwide coordination is necessary.

The IYC Team’s mission to Canada came at a time when the country’s National IYC Commission had just been established and organizational meetings were being held in Ottawa. Though specific IYC activities had not yet been decided upon, the Canadian Commission had chosen to focus its IYC program exclusively on Canadian children. This was partly because recent economic belt-tightening had made domestic needs the top priority, and partly because the Commission was not sufficiently UN-oriented, in the view of the IYC Secretariat.

In that respect, the visit, though low-key, was important in drawing the Commission’s attention to the international aspects of IYC, and to the Commission’s responsibilities in this regard. While not ignoring the problems of Canadian children, the Special IYC

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26 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.

Representative sought, through a formal statement to members of the Commission and through informal discussions, to introduce another dimension to their IYC planning by reminding them of the immense unmet needs of children in the third world. She urged them, in effect, to open a window to children in developing countries. Dr. Aldaba Lim felt her call would not go unheeded.

The mission also served as an occasion to discuss the IYC informally with many key members of the Canadian Commission, especially with Judge Doris Ogilvie, as well as with interested participants, such as Mr. Paul Marcel Gelinas, a former colleague of Dr. Aldaba Lim from the Canadian \textit{Sante Mentale} (Mental Health), Miss Jean Kimberly of the National Council of Women in Canada, Mr. David Hahn of UNICEF, and Mrs. Holly Hill, the newly elected President of the International Playground Association.

The Special IYC Envoy discovered that UNICEF had been trying, with apparently little success, to promote greater awareness of the international dimension of IYC in Canada. During those years of economic austerity and budget cutbacks, Canada had considerably diminished public support for and receptiveness to foreign aid, and consequently the concept of increased assistance to children in the developing world. It was felt that an appeal along those lines would not have been well received.

Mr. David Hahn of UNICEF Canada informed the IYC team that the international aspects of the IYC were being downplayed in Canada because of cutbacks in foreign aid amounting to 13-14 percent, or $130 million. When Dr. Aldaba Lim inquired about possibilities for greater involvement of NGOs in development cooperation, she was informed that the NGOs in the Commission were mostly national in scope and outlook.29

The main issue raised by the Special IYC Envoy was Canada’s role in assisting children in developing countries. Citing the example of Iran’s US$7 million contribution \textit{for} children, Dr. Aldaba Lim expressed the hope that Canada would eventually increase its assistance to children in developing countries. Mr. Norbert Préfontaine, Assistant Deputy Minister for Health & Welfare, told her that while Canada was increasing its budget for UNICEF, further increases in its foreign aid were unlikely in the near future.30

\footnotesize{\bibliography{references}}
In a subsequent statement to Canada’s National IYC Commission, Dr. Aldaba Lim commended it for its concern for the situation of Canadian children while encouraging them to look beyond their borders to the fate of millions of children in the developing world. The Commission was reminded of Canada’s responsibility as a developed country.

During the visit, it was learned that the IYC was being used as a vehicle for giving development education a big boost in Canada. Canada’s biggest IYC project, involving ten provinces and the Federal Ministry of Education, was a televised film on development education, scheduled for airing on prime time on October 23, 1978. The theme of the film was similarities and differences among children around the world, and the goal was to encourage classroom discussion of the topic by teachers and students in class the following day.

UNICEF Canada was promoting the eventual integration of development education into the school system, and the IYC film project was regarded as a seed programme. The Canadian IYC Commission issued the following statements in support of the Year.31

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31 Ibid., p. 15
CANADIAN IYC COMMISSION STATEMENT

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION – 1979 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

Promote the observance in Canada of 1979 as International Year of the Child through the encouragement of the widespread involvement of individuals, communities and organizations in activities in the context of their families and society.

SPECIFIC AIMS FOR THE YEAR OF THE CHILD IN CANADA

a. To stimulate families, communities, societal institutions, organizations, governments and all persons concerned to review the quality of childhood in their respective purviews;
b. To encourage all concerned to work together to establish long and short term plans, programs and services aimed at strengthening the forces that enhance optimal child development and parenting;
c. To encourage the celebration of the joy of childhood and the very special place that children have in society and to create a milieu in which children's activities, creativity, imagination, ideas and thinking can be widely portrayed and demonstrated;
d. To recognize and enhance the role of parents and the art of parenting, and to find ways and means to support parenthood and the family in the Canadian society; and
e. To enhance in children the concept of their personal identity and worth as individuals belonging to a given cultural, linguistic, religious, social or ethnic group, and to the Canadian and world communities.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CANADIAN COMMISSION AND ITS SUPPORT SECRETARIAT

a. Facilitate communications among national, provincial and local groups;
b. Promote public awareness through the provision of information and ideas for action;
c. Encourage ideas from, and the participation of, children in the Year's activities and celebrations;
d. Act as a resource centre for individuals and organizations;
e. Provide a focal point for international liaison;
f. Raise and administer public and private funds to support the Year's activities;
g. To initiate, encourage and support activities which are national in scope; and
h. To prepare a Report on the activities of the Commission at the conclusion of the Year.
The sojourn to seven countries in West Africa had mixed results with respect to meetings with government officials, media coverage, participation by NGOs, and the content of IYC programs. While heads of state were usually included in the itinerary, Special IYC Envoy Dr. Aldaba Lim and her Special Assistant would have welcomed the opportunity to speak with more ministers, especially those concerned with health, education, and social welfare. However, such encounters were not always on the agenda.

Media exposure was an important aspect of the advocacy function of the IYC. The country visits of the IYC Team and interviews with Dr. Aldaba Lim received adequate to excellent coverage from the local media, thanks to the support of the UN Information Offices around the world and UNICEF field offices. Of course, press coverage of the visits accounted for only a portion of media attention to the full range of events and activities associated with the IYC at community, national, and international levels. However, the visits often served as a stimulus for media interest.

NGOs seemed to be inadequately represented in the Francophone countries compared with those in the Anglophone countries. This was partly due to historic and cultural differences in the evolution of the nongovernmental sector. The IYC Secretariat believed that NGOs should play a major role in promoting the long-term interests of children.
In some of the countries visited, many IYC programs “were heavily celebratory in character . . .” 1 The West African Special IYC Envoy requested those countries to modify their programs to more realistic levels and focus on the basic needs of young children, who constituted the majority of the most vulnerable and deprived children in the world.

The visits to West Africa, however yielded two encouraging results. One involved plans for a consultative meeting between IYC commissions to exchange ideas and views on the IYC. The other was for the heads of state or senior government official to contribute a collection of their thoughts for children. This collection would be compiled by the IYC Secretariat and be published in a pamphlet for the IYC. It was also during this visit that indigenous peoples were explicitly acknowledged in the context of IYC, since many tribal chiefs in Ghana, Zaire and Nigeria held high positions of authority and considerable influence. It was recognized that the tribal chiefs could be effective in promoting IYC objectives and activities at the grass roots.

**Senegal**

Senegal was the first country visited during this seven-country swing. A republic in western Africa, Senegal is bordered on the north by Mauritania, on the east by Mali, on the south by Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The Gambia, a small, narrow country, forms an enclave in southern Senegal, extending inland along the River Gambia. A former French colony, Senegal gained full independence on June 20, 1960. Its capital is Dakar. 2

One of the issues that the IYC delegation presented to the government of Senegal at the outset was female circumcision, or what is now popularly known as female genital mutilation (FGM). Madam Maimouna Kane, the Secretary of State to the Prime Minister in charge of the Status of Women, expressed her personal disapproval of the practice, saying that it violates the human rights of women. However, she declined to express public opposition to, or condemnation of, FGM, referring instead to the need for more public education. She felt this would be sufficient to eliminate the practice since it was not common in Senegal.

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1 IYC Team, “Report on Special Representative's IYC Mission to West Africa (18 September – 09 October 1978),” 27 October 1978

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Dr. Aldaba Lim, a former social welfare and development minister in her own country, took time out to visit a slum area called Pikine, where an upgrading program was under way. “Pikine is a fine example of successful slum upgrading,” she observed in her Mission Report, where she also described the area.

A bush country area only ten years ago, Pikine started out as a bidonville, or shantytown, whose tin shacks have for the most part been converted into decent concrete homes. Residents, most of whom are employed in Dakar, are actively encouraged by the government to concretize and improve their homes through government loans. Though water is still scarce, wells have improved access to water, which was once trucked in. The community, with its well-paved roads, schools, clinics, police station, sports fields, and fire stations, is for the most part self-sustaining. The abundance of shops and vendors indicates a spirit of enterprise and self-reliance, and aspirations for a better life for its residents. ³

One of the more significant accomplishments of the Government of Senegal with regard to the IYC was the establishment of a 40-member commission, where half of the members were from the Government and half from NGOs. The commission was headed by Madame Caroline Diop, Minister of Social Action and Chairperson of the National IYC Commission. Its work had focused on two activities. One involved research on: (1) tradition, formation and development; (2) action by local collectivities on behalf of children; (3) children with disabilities; (4) maladjusted children; (5) nomad children; and (6) children's legal rights. A review of legislation relating to children had already been completed. The second activity focused on the nomad child. The numbers of nomad children had increased dramatically due to the drought, which was affecting the patterns of nomadic life in Senegal. This latter activity was funded by UNICEF. The IYC team had hoped that such research would be replicated in other North African countries with nomadic populations.

Liberia

Liberia was the IYC Team’s second stop on 21 September 1978. Liberia, a country set up by former American slaves, owes its establishment to the American Colonization Society, founded in 1816 to enable freed American slaves to resettle in Africa. Six years later, native rulers granted a tract of land on Cape Mesurado, at the mouth of the St Paul River, to US representatives. The first Americo-Liberians, led by Jehudi Ashmun, ⁴

established a settlement in 1822, near where Monrovia now stands. In 1824, an American agent for the society, Ralph Randolph Gurley, named the new colony Liberia and the Cape Mesurado settlement Monrovia, after the then US president, James Monroe.4

In contrast to Senegal, Liberia presented another way of addressing issues affecting children. The mission report described it this way:

Liberia represents an unusual combination of sophisticated planning and poor infrastructure. In spite of the inadequately developed system of communications, Liberia is making a serious effort toward decentralization of decision-making and local control over the budgets. This was seen as a factor that would enhance rural development, which is the main thrust of Liberia’s national development policy. There appears to be genuine political will—a commitment to rural improvement—which should benefit rural children, who constitute the great majority of Liberia’s child population. The political will underscored by the UNDP Resident Representative, the openness and candour with which problems were acknowledged and confronted, and the cadre of highly trained professionals in Liberia are bright spots on the national horizon. 5

Liberia had excellent preparations for the IYC under the theme “Our Children, Our Nation, Our Future.” A long-term program had been devised by the national authorities to address the needs of children and parents through more comprehensive, integrated and improved programs covering health care, education and social welfare. The Government was also reviewing and updating its legislation for children, introducing a child-to-child program, and piloting rural projects that would provide family planning, child care, sanitation and education services, using the traditional “bush schools.” Bush schools refer to pre-colonial ways in which local cultures in parts of Africa sought to instill in their young the ethics, values, religion and traditions of their tribe.

The country’s IYC Committee, with then President William R. Tolbert, Jr. as the Grand Patron, had embarked on several celebratory activities, including participation in the Frankfurt Book Fair with UNESCO; a writing contest for children; and the expansion of maternal and child health services under the concept of integrated child care. Dr. Wilhelmina Holder, daughter of President Tolbert and World Health Organization representative in Monrovia, had launched an integrated health service in the villages, which relied on local resources as well as traditional midwives and village health workers. The visit was capped by a tour of the special day care centre in Monrovia—a residential school for the visually handicapped. Though beset by a scarcity of educational materials, the school maintained a high standard of education for visually impaired children.

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It is significant to note that since the Year of the Child, the fabric of the country has been rent by years of violence, armed conflict, and displacement. Under the circumstances, the situation of children, far from progressing, has worsened. Liberia is beginning the long, slow process of national recovery, the rebuilding of institutions and civil society, and the re-creation of a nation capable of nurturing its children.

Côte d’Ivoire

Côte d’Ivoire, a nation that lies to the East of Liberia, was the next stop of the Special IYC Envoy. “Côte d’Ivoire’s educated and commercial elite has been greatly influenced by French culture, with a penchant for French wine, cuisine, and couture. Abidjan is considered to be among the most sophisticated and elegant of sub-Saharan African capitals. The indigenous culture of the country remains strong, however, and is noted for works of art and sculpture, especially the carved wooden masks of the northern Senoufo. The French language is almost universally used in the written literature of Côte d’Ivoire, to the exclusion of the African languages.” 6

Children were among the top national concerns in Côte d’Ivoire, Dr. Aldaba Lim noted. The government had allocated 40 percent of the budget allocation for education. Other priorities included greater attention to physically disabled and abandoned children; family planning via the educational system; improvement in the quality of pre-school education; and increasing the role of women in high-impact projects. The latter, the IYC Envoy underscored, meant that women would not be limited to seminars or theoretical exercises in their roles for IYC and beyond.

Though the National IYC Committee had been established just three months earlier, on 30 May 1978, it had drawn up an impressive program under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Committee envisioned direct action on the following concerns: (1) social protection of children in schools (2) social protection of children with disabilities; and (3) establishment of social centres in the interior of the country. The celebratory aspect of the program did not escape the IYC Team’s attention because it was directed toward consciousness-raising. The activities lined up were parades and similar activities; sales, expositions and galas; summer camps for disadvantaged children; planning and legislation for children, with special emphasis on children with disabilities and abandoned children.

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The IYC Team was impressed by the participation of the local representative of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in IYC. ILO appeared deeply concerned about the widespread involvement of young children in the agricultural labor force. It indicated that it would address the issue of the exploitation of child labor in that sector.

Toward the end of the visit, the IYC Team visited an SOS Village, a project of the Vienna-based Kinderdorf International. As Dr. Aldaba Lim recalled,

The level of facilities provided in the village was of a standard comparable to that found in developed countries, including a separate bedroom for each child—a definite departure from African custom. It seemed that a number of SOS villages in developing countries were too closely patterned after SOS villages in developed countries such that the maintenance of costly facilities made the institution too dependent on continued external funding. The comments made with respect to the cost of maintenance apply equally to the (other) orphanage(s) that were visited. There the… impersonal institutional approach, involving large dormitories, still prevails. 7

Ghana

From Côte d'Ivoire, the IYC Team headed to Ghana. Ghana, a republic in western Africa, is bordered on the north and north-west by Burkina Faso, on the east by Togo, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by Côte d'Ivoire. Formerly a British colony known as the Gold Coast, Ghana was the first majority-ruled nation in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence, in 1957. The country is named after the ancient inland empire of Ghana, from which the ancestors of the inhabitants of the present country are thought to have migrated.8

One of the main features of IYC in the fourth country visited by the IYC Team was the strong participation by the nongovernmental community. According to the Mission Report:

The NGOs in Ghana represent a potent force for the improvement of the situation of children. Those we met in Ghana, namely, the officers of the ZONTA Club, the members of the Ghana National Assembly of Women, and the semi-governmental National Council of Women and Development, which is helping women in the rural areas, displayed

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an activity and dynamism that can be exploited for the benefit of IYC. Our visit has distinctly strengthened NGO motivation to participate in IYC. The Ghana Assembly of Women, an umbrella association of 26 women's organizations, plans to contribute to IYC by sponsoring school feeding programmes. Although not a member of the Committee, the Assembly was assured that their cooperation in the national IYC preparations would be most welcome. The Zonta Club is sponsoring a day care centre in the rural areas. We suggested to these various organizations that they consider sponsoring specific projects of the National IYC Committee, particularly for the benefit of children under five.  

The visit of the IYC Team to Ghana coincided with a political transition from military to civilian rule. This was reflected in the removal of the Commissioners of Health and Education just hours after the Team met with them. In spite of the political uncertainty, the IYC team found hope in the government's plan to establish a ministerial level-IYC Commission that would give priority to children’s programs in the long term. The IYC theme in Ghana was “The Child—A Vital Asset in Nation Building.” At that time Ghana was one of the more advanced countries in West Africa, with a network of 500 day care centers all over the country. Lt. General Frederick W. Akuffo, the head of state at the time of the visit, accepted the patronage of IYC. Long-term projects envisaged under the IYC program included the establishment of a permanent National Committee on Children; revision and codification of legislation regarding children; studies on child nutrition; special immunization campaigns; inclusion of health and nutrition education in basic school curricula; formation of school health policies and community diagnosis of malnutrition in children below the age of five using middle-school pupils; and establishment of children's diagnostic centers, crèches and day care centers.

The visit of the IYC Team in Ghana ended with a trip to the National Day Care Training Centres in Medias. This was part of a joint project in rural family health sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Zonta in Kpone, a rural village where the tribal chief had offered his home to house the health center. The IYC Team noted the successful integration of national rural family health programs in a tribal setting.

Zaire

Zaïre, as it was known then, was the fifth country visited by the IYC Team. Previously known as the Belgian Congo, the country became the Republic of the Congo on attaining independence in 1960. In 1964 it became the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its name was changed in 1971 to Zaïre by then President Mobuto Sese Seko. The country reverted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in May 1997, when Mobuto was overthrown by forces led by Laurent Kabila. To distinguish it from its neighbour, the Republic of the Congo, the countries are popularly known as Congo-Kinshasa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Congo-Brazzaville (the Republic of the Congo).\(^\text{10}\)

The Republic of the Congo in west-central Africa is bordered on the north by Cameroon and the Central African Republic, on the east and south by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaïre), on the south-west by Angola (Cabinda enclave) and the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by Gabon. It was known as the People's Republic of the Congo (République Populaire du Congo) between 1970 and 1991. Brazzaville is the capital and largest city; the Republic of the Congo is popularly known as Congo-Brazzaville, to distinguish it from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa).\(^\text{11}\)

In Zaïre the non-government sector did not appear to play a significant role in public affairs. As Dr. Aldaba Lim noted:

Our visit vividly demonstrated possibilities for constructive and substantial NGO participation in Zaïre's IYC programme. At present, representation in the IYC Commission is limited to governmental agencies and semi-public organizations, such as the Committee for the Protection of Children or the Youth Movement of the Party. We had been cautioned by our UNICEF colleague to be careful about discussing NGOs, apparently because the role of NGOs in colonial days made them suspect in the eyes of the government. The institutionalization of NGO involvement, we were told, would require proper timing and strategy.

Subsequent meetings with government officials resulted in more positive outcomes. Citoyenne Nimy, chairperson of the Zaïre IYC Commission, expressed interest in NGO participation and seemed personally receptive to collaboration with NGOs as long as their work was known to the government. The Prime Minister appeared to be equally

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\(^\text{11}\) Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
open minded about NGO participation, as long as it was in the spirit of international solidarity. In short, IYC seemed to be the right time to encourage more active collaboration between government and NGOs for the benefit of children.12

A major long-term priority of the government was the attainment of universal primary education. Thirty-five percent, comprising the largest share of the national budget, was spent on education. Two of the areas benefited were pre-school education and the expansion of technical training for women. Preparations made by the IYC Commission had not gotten off the ground since the activities had not been included in the national budget. However, after the IYC Team made concrete suggestions, Citoyenne Nimy showed much interest in laying the groundwork for establishing a Permanent Council for Children as well encouraging all government institutions to focus more strongly on the child.

At the conclusion of the visit, the IYC Team visited two institutions providing children’s services. One was a poorly equipped paediatric center at Lingwala and, the other, a school constructed by the community in Ngabe. The latter was a fine example of self-reliance and community participation. It was obviously a source of pride to the community despite the lack of facilities and teaching materials. Dr. Aldaba Lim proposed that UNICEF assist the school with equipment while NGOs could support the paediatric facility. Afterwards, the Special IYC Envoy, together with Citoyenne Nimy, were interviewed on IYC and Zaïre’s plans for its participation in a 20-minute radio program, “La Voix de Zaïre.”

Among the West African countries visited by the IYC Team, the République Populaire du Congo stood out in terms of contact with key government officials. Although the program for the IYC Team did not include a meeting with NGOs, the Special IYC Envoy and her group met the President, the First Lady, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Culture, Arts and Sports; the President of the Revolutionary Union of Congolese Women, a political arm of the ruling Labour Party; and representatives of United Nations organizations in Brazzaville.

The First Lady, Marie Noelle Yhomby-Opango, was the Honorary President of the IYC Committee. The theme adopted by the Committee was “Reflections on the Problems of Mothers and Children in our Country,” and the emphasis of its working groups was on families in rural areas. The national priorities for IYC were improvement of educational infrastructure and equipment, re-orientation of education, development

12 Ibid.
of infrastructure for recreation, prevention of children's diseases through information campaigns, rural sanitation, training of midwives, and provision of equipment for health centres. 13

The UN agencies based in Brazzaville were supportive of the country’s IYC preparations, the Special IYC Envoy learned. The World Health Organization was carrying out a regional Expanded Programme of Immunization in West Africa, and its theme for the World Health Day in 1979 was, “A Healthy Child, A Secure Future.” The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was funding a project executed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities to improve family welfare, as well as projects to reduce infant mortality in rural areas, and to provide family planning education. UNDP was also supporting a project of the ILO to promote the role of women in rural development. UNESCO was planning a pilot project on educational reform. The World Food Programme was implementing a $10-million three-year food program targeting mothers and children.

The new President of the National Committee in the Republic of the Congo, placed a scarf on a pioneer at the Revolution Stadium on 3 June 1979 as part of the IYC activities.

As with the previous visits to other countries, the schedule of the IYC Team included a visit to a maternal and child health center (Centre de Puericulture) and a paediatric clinic in the General Hospital of Brazzaville. Dr. Aldaba Lim observed that these were huge institutions inherited from the colonial era. The hospital was a costly and impractical anachronism—ill suited to the needs and conditions of a developing country. She suggested that the hospital send one doctor to the London Institute of Child Health so that the République Populaire du Congo could benefit from its child-to-child programme. In terms of media exposure, the mission to this country rated was considered one of the best in terms of local media coverage of the meetings with ranking government officials, including the President and the First Lady.

**Nigeria**

The seventh and last country in the West African missions was Nigeria. Officially known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is bounded on the north by Niger, on the east by Chad and Cameroon, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by Benin. It is the most populous country in Africa. Its name is derived from that of its major river, the Niger. Abuja is the capital and Lagos is the largest city. Initially composed of a number of ethnically based kingdoms and states, the area of modern Nigeria was brought under British rule by 1906. It became an independent state and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations on October 1, 1960.  

The IYC Team arrived in Nigeria at a tumultuous time in its history. The country was facing political instability, a planned return to civilian rule, and a political economy—all of which cast an uncertain shadow over its participation in IYC. In spite of these difficulties, the President accepted the patronage of the IYC, and sub-committees were set up to coordinate IYC-related activities in evaluation and research, fund-raising, programme and publicity. These comprised an action committee, a finance committee, and a standing committee composed of the chairpersons and members of the main groups. Typical of other countries, the activities were heavily dependent on the availability of resources. What surprised the IYC Team was the low level of government representation in the committees themselves.

Dr. Aldaba Lim took pains to persuade the government to set up a ministerial-level Commission, adequately funded to implement the various planned activities. She

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explained that the activities would not be carried out only for the IYC in 1979, but would be part of government actions for children in the long term. She also proposed that local businesspeople and the UN agencies be approached for funds to jumpstart the IYC programs. Noting that nongovernmental contacts in Nigeria were extensive compared to other countries, the IYC Team found national NGOs ready to participate in and provide assistance to the preparatory activities. As the Team said in its Mission Report:

We met NGOs represented in the National Council for Women's Societies, and others (such as ZONTA, National Paedriatic Society, The Girl Guides, and the Children's Literary Association) who reported on their plans for participation in IYC at a special meeting. Given the active involvement of Nigerian NGOs in social development and committees, we can expect (them) to make a significant contribution to Nigeria’s IYC programme, both at the federal and state level. 15

As in Côte d'Ivoire, the IYC Team had the chance to visit an SOS Village and other institutions for children, such as the Centre for the Education of the Handicapped; a school for the Blind and the Deaf; the Red Cross Home for Babies; and a village clinic for integrated child care and family life education for mothers. The visit was widely covered by the local media.

From Nigeria, the IYC Team headed back to New York to review its accomplishments and prepare for the succeeding missions.

Chapter VII

ADVANCING CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PACIFIC
(20 NOVEMBER–9 DECEMBER 1978)

Weeks before the end of the 1978, Dr. Aldaba Lim knew that Christmas and New Year would be working holidays for her and the IYC Secretariat. Those times were too close to the Year that they had been preparing for. But before going back to her missions, she appeared before the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York City on 6 November 1978. This was her second time to address the Committee, and she felt confident about her achievements to date. Within one year member states had established some 110 fully operational National Commissions for IYC, and 148 countries had expressed their commitment to participate in the upcoming IYC.

Dr. Aldaba Lim reiterated the various factors that had contributed to the success of the IYC mission.

Because IYC was conceived as an enterprise to be shaped by the specific needs, priorities and actions of each country, my role as Special Representative has been to assist and encourage the participation of those on whom the success of IYC depends: key government ministries, decision makers, national IYC commissions, representatives of the United Nations family, non-governmental organizations and the media. My duties have taken me to 36 countries, and here I must add a word of praise and appreciation for the excellent support of the UNICEF Executive Director, Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, and...
UNICEF’s field staff in preparing the groundwork for all the visits and supporting Governments in implementing their national objectives for the Year.

IYC has already heightened public awareness of the situation of children. It has brought to light facts about the problems of particular groups of disadvantaged children, whose needs have been relatively unrecognized or neglected. I refer to the children of the developed world: the battered child, the effects of violence in the media, drugs, pornography, migrant children, refugee children, children who die needlessly of preventable accidents.

IYC is also helping to impress upon the public and decision makers the magnitude and urgency of the situation of children in the developing world, where the appalling rate of infant mortality, and the prevalence of malnutrition, disease and illiteracy endanger not only the physical and mental health of children, but their very survival.

The Year has inspired aspirations and hopes that visible and sustained progress will be made in reaching this most vulnerable group of children – which by definition refers to the great majority of these children living in conditions of extreme poverty, in danger of dying before the age of five.  

After a year of campaigning for the IYC, it had become apparent to the IYC Team that the countries must have the political will to transcend limited resources. Developing countries in particular had to demonstrate and sustain the gains they had made beyond the celebration of the IYC. Time and again, Dr. Aldaba Lim impressed upon governments the need to make children a higher national priority. The political will to do so must be reflected, she said, in the allocation of a larger share of the national budget for services and programs benefitting children. Greater investment in child nutrition, education and health care were needed.

Amid limited resources and low prioritization of children in national programs, many countries were hard pressed to maintain even the existing and already inadequate level of services for increasing numbers of children. As Dr. Aldaba Lim stated:

The primary material constraint faced by these countries in their efforts to meet the basic needs of their children has been aggravated in many cases by a recent deterioration in their economic situation, often coupled with political instability. This disturbing situation has, inevitably, distressing consequences for their children whose well-being is most directly and deeply affected by such economic difficulties.  

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1 Aldaba Lim, Estefania, “Statement by Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim - Special Representative for the International Year of the Child,” Second Committee of the General Assembly, United Nations, New York, 06 November 1978
2 Ibid., p. 3
Thus, it had been crucial that for these countries to succeed, their commitment to IYC required increased efforts at self-help and self-reliance in meeting the needs of their children. According to Dr. Aldaba Lim, in a number of Asian and Latin American countries that the IYC had visited, integrated child development services centers had been set up to provide a package of services such as supplementary feeding, mental stimulation, immunization, and growth surveillance for children under five years old. Another example of these initiatives was a rural village in Ghana, where the home of the tribal chief served as a center for integrated maternal and child care, family planning and nutrition education. The combined support of the Ghanaian Government and the private sector to this centre illustrates how effective such co-operation can be in reaching greater numbers of children.

While these modest actions had started the ball rolling for IYC, expenditures for children for the most part were regarded as a luxury, an unnecessary drain on limited government funds, rather than as a major investment in the future. In this regard, the Special IYC Representative had consistently directed attention to the fact that children were vehicles of their countries own development—they were an end in themselves and no other justification was needed to promote children’s welfare.

The Second Committee of the General Assembly was impressed with the work of Dr. Aldaba Lim. In its resolution 33/83 on the International Year of the Child, it noted with satisfaction the progress made in the preparation for the International Year of the Child at the national, regional, and international levels; and it was convinced that the IYC provided a unique opportunity for all countries to undertake an in-depth review and evaluation of their policies for children and to establish programmes of action to be undertaken, and for the world community to renew and reaffirm its determination to meet children’s needs and to secure their fundamental rights.

**Stamp of Approval**

The Second Committee concurred with the work done by UNICEF with regard to the IYC and urged it to continue and sustain the efforts. The following details of their statements attest to this.

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4 Ibid.
The Second Committee of the General Assembly:

Expresses its appreciation to the United Nations Children’s Fund for the manner in which it has discharged the responsibilities entrusted to it as lead agency by the General Assembly in resolution 31/169;

Reaffirms that the major focus of the International Year of the Child is at the national level and, in this regard, urges countries to intensify their preparations for the Year and to determine priorities for action and set appropriate targets as the basis for short term, medium term and long term planning and programming benefiting children;

Notes with appreciation the active participation of organizations of the United Nations system and of non governmental organizations to ensure the success of the International Year of the Child, and also the valuable co-ordination being achieved through the Interagency Advisory Group for the International Year of the Child;

Reaffirms that the International Year of the Child, in accordance with its objectives, should provide an impetus to be followed by a rising level of resources for services benefiting children, through the United Nations Children’s Fund and other channels, in order to enable developing countries to extend, strengthen and implement their programmes for children;

Expresses its gratitude to those Governments that have contributed to the costs of the Secretariat of the International Year of the Child and urges all Governments to contribute to its full financing;

Requests the United Nations Children’s Fund to prepare a comprehensive, action oriented report on the basis of information received from Governments and from specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies concerned on their respective projects and programmes initiated in connexion with the International Year of the Child and on the follow up activities foreseen for the years ahead, and furthermore requests that the report be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty fourth session and that a preliminary version of that report be considered by the Executive Board of the Fund at its 1979 session and by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1979;

Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty fourth session an item entitled ‘International Year of the Child: plans and action to improve the situation of children in the world, particularly in the developing countries’, and recommends, in view of its importance, that this item be considered by the General Assembly in plenary meeting, in observance of the year. 5

5 Ibid.
On with the Missions

Australia

Two weeks later, the Special IYC Representative and her staff flew south to Australia, the smallest continent and one of the largest countries in the world. Australia, an island continent located between the Indian and South Pacific oceans south-east of Asia and forming, with the nearby island of Tasmania, the Commonwealth of Australia, is a self-governing member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The continent is bounded on the north by the Timor Sea, the Arafura Sea, and the Torres Strait; on the east by the Coral Sea and the Tasman Sea; on the south by the Bass Strait and the Indian Ocean; and on the west by the Indian Ocean. Canberra is the capital of Australia.6

Education is primarily the responsibility of the six states and the Northern Territory. In each the training and recruitment of teachers are centralized under an education department. The federal government is responsible for the provision of education in Australia’s external territories, and for the funding of universities and colleges of advanced education. It also has special responsibility for student assistance, and education programs for the Aboriginal community as well as for children from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15 in all except Tasmania, where the upper age limit is 16. Most children, however, start school at five. State schools provide free secular education; students may attend religious classes provided by the clergy of various denominations. Special arrangements are made for children living in the remote outback, or otherwise isolated from the school system, including extension learning schemes, and radio tuition through the Schools of the Air.7

The federal and state governments of Australia have played an important role in advancing social services. There are benefits for people who are sick, aged, widowed, orphaned, disabled, or unemployed. A means-tested maternity allowance is paid to mothers and there are other similarly tested payments to assist with the costs of raising children, including those up to the age of 24 who are in their parents’ care and who are full-time students.8

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6 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
The IYC Team visited four cities: Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Canberra, from 20 to 25 November 1978. The visit was coordinated by Ms. Libby Lucas, Director of the IYC Unit at the Department of Social Security. Extending its visit beyond the capitals, the IYC Team was able to meet a broader spectrum of government representatives and NGOs involved in IYC. This enabled the Team to conduct useful discussions with the Chairpersons and Coordinators of the State IYC Committees of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. This was most appropriate as IYC priorities and programs were shaped by each state.

During conversations with their hosts and the various IYC committees, the IYC Team impressed upon the State Ministers for IYC and other participants the need for long-term, substantive action to address problems affecting Australian children, particularly the most disadvantaged among them, such as aboriginal, migrant and refugee children. In that sense, the visit helped counter-balance the focus on celebratory events, however commendable in themselves. In addition, the IYC Team was able to be supportive of the NGO role in IYC preparations, in view of challenges in coordinating Government and NGO activity. 9

A positive feature of Australian planning for the Year, the IYC Team discovered, was the participation of children. In Adelaide, at a picnic in the park, the Team met with the South Australia’s Children’s Committee for IYC, consisting of eleven-year-olds elected by their schools. The Committee was expected to draft letters to state officials and Senator Margaret Guilfoyle, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Ministers Committee for IYC and State Ministers Committee for IYC, about their views and aspirations for the Year. 10

Australia sought to promote the participation of the business sector and trade unions in IYC. The potential for support of the business community was great.

The main concern of the IYC Team, however, was that in their view, Australia’s program was not sufficiently substantive, an apprehension shared by some NGOs. Much emphasis was being given to extensive publicity and promotional activities on the theme “Care.” This had to do with a national conference held on March 1979 on major child issues. In terms of long-range action, a green paper on child welfare which was expected to result in better child legislation was debated in the New South Wales Parliament before the end of 1978.

10 Ibid.
While IYC priorities differed from state to state, battered children, aboriginal children, children of migrants and refugees, parent education, and expansion of pre-school education were common themes. The IYC Team's visits to a school in Adelaide and the Murawina Pre-School for aboriginal children in Sydney shed light on some of these issues. Much still remained to be done to overcome inequity and discrimination in the treatment of aboriginal children, who until then were disadvantaged vis-à-vis white children in education and basic services. Rising concern with ethnic identity and integration of migrant children had prompted the institution of bilingual education in English, Italian, and Greek in predominantly migrant communities.

**New Zealand**

On 26 November, the IYC Team arrived in New Zealand and stayed there until 1 December 1978. New Zealand (in Maori, Aotearoa, “Land of the Long White Cloud”) is an independent island country in the South Pacific Ocean, and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, situated about 1,600 km (1,000 mi) south-east of Australia. It comprises two large islands—the North and South islands—separated by the narrow Cook Strait and numerous smaller islands, including Stewart Island to the south of the South Island. The capital of the country is Wellington, the largest city Auckland; both are located on the North Island.

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16 years, but children may enter school at 5 and continue until they are 19. State-funded education is free from the ages of 5 to 19. In most areas there are pre-school facilities for children between three and five years of age. The primary course consists of two infant years followed by six annual grades designated standards 1, 2, 3, and 4, and forms I and II.

New Zealand was the first country in the world to introduce a full welfare state system, in 1936. Until 1990 the benefits provided were among the most comprehensive anywhere, including free medical and hospital care, pensions, and unemployment, family, disability, and sickness benefits.11

Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington, and Auckland were the areas visited by the IYC Team from 27 November to 01 December 1978 following the Australian pattern of one-day stopovers in each city. This scheduling enabled the Special IYC Envoy to meet as

11 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
many IYC participants as possible at grass-roots level. The Team soon found itself addressing groups as large as 100 and 200 at meetings with the Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury regional committees for IYC.

There was one drawback in the timing of the visit: the team had arrived in the midst of election. The Ministers of Education and Social Welfare whom the Team were scheduled to meet had just lost their seats in Parliament and their replacements had not yet been named. So the Team was unable to meet with these officials.12

However, the visit was a useful occasion to voice concern with the government’s limited participation in the IYC, and to point out the value of a more visible government role, to effect meaningful improvement in the lives of New Zealand children. To the New Zealanders who questioned the need for a children’s year in a country where children enjoyed such high living standards, Dr Aldaba Lim underlined the importance of identifying areas of vulnerability and publicizing unresolved problems affecting children. The mission also pointed out the international aspects of IYC—the need for development education—and suggested concrete ways in which NGOs could intensify aid to children in developing countries.

Reflecting New Zealand’s emphasis on regional and local action for IYC, the National Commission was strongly regionalized, with 65 local IYC committees. The 101-member National IYC Commission was 95 percent NGO and only 5 percent Government. The predominance of NGOs in the Commission fostered strong community involvement and grassroots participation in the Year. The NGO role was also in keeping with New Zealand’s tradition of community self-reliance. On the other hand, the Government’s low profile in IYC could prove to be counter-productive. For this reason, the absence of meetings with the Ministers of Education and Social Welfare was rather unfortunate.13

Some members of the regional IYC committees suggested there were no real children’s problems worthy of a special year since children in New Zealand were well provided for. Some even believed that the IYC focus should be entirely on children in the Third World. But the IYC team suggested there was a need to examine problems that had not been addressed, and to step up advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged children, such as children of the Maori and Polynesian communities, and children at risk, such as “disco kids” (unsupervised 11- and 12-year-olds who spent their nights in disco clubs and

13 Ibid., p.2
who were turning to crime as a means of self-support). IYC could provide a timely opportunity to acknowledge the special needs of these children and take remedial action.

Indeed, at a subsequent visit to facilities for youth, the IYC Team learned more about problem areas addressed in New Zealand’s IYC program, such as “solo parents” (one-parent families); delinquency among Maori youth; the lack of pre-school facilities; child abuse; inadequate immunization; and the need for nutrition education to stem consumption of junk food among children.

Arohanui, a half-way house serving mainly Maori delinquent youth, offered insights to the IYC Team on the problems of Maori youth. Pre-school facilities, such as those visited at the Barnado’s Family Care Centre, were not available in sufficient number to meet demand in New Zealand. The Centre also provided temporary shelter for “solo” (divorced or unwed) mothers and their children. The cost of supporting these mothers, who received welfare until they could find work, appeared to be high. Dr. Aldaba Lim suggested examining alternative solutions that could reach a larger number of mothers more cost-effectively. She viewed the system then in place as capable of promoting dependence on the part of solo mothers.14

A strong foundation for long-term government action based on a national policy had been laid by comprehensive studies and recommendations relating to New Zealand children that had recently been completed. A notable example was the 1976 Christchurch Bill of Rights for Children, which had yet to be debated in Parliament. The Special IYC Representative suggested that the adoption of such a bill would be a sound achievement for IYC in New Zealand. A comprehensive review of the situation of children in New Zealand had recently been made. At the time of the visit, it was anticipated that IYC would lead to the establishment of a permanent national commission for children in New Zealand, and this could well turn out to be the most significant result of IYC in New Zealand.

14 Ibid., p.4
Japan

In contrast to the long missions in the South Pacific, the IYC Team spent a quick two days in Japan on 04-05 December 1978.

Japan, a constitutional monarchy in East Asia, comprises four large islands, as well as the Ryukyu Islands and more than 1,000 lesser adjacent islands. It is bounded on the north by the Sea of Okhotsk, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, on the south by the Pacific Ocean and the East China Sea, and on the west by the Korea Strait and the Sea of Japan (East Sea). In Japanese the country’s name is Dai (“great”) Nihon or Nippon (“origin of the Sun”), hence, Land of the Rising Sun. The Japanese islands extend in an irregular crescent from the island of Sakhalin (Russia) to the island of Taiwan (Formosa). Japan proper consists of the four large islands of Hokkaido, the northernmost; Honshu, the largest, called the mainland; Shikoku; and Kyushu, the southernmost. Tokyo is Japan’s capital and largest city.15

The educational system of Japan is highly developed. The literacy rate, consequently, is 99 percent for the entire nation. English, as a chief language for foreign contacts, is a required course of study in secondary schools. Education in Japan is centralized under the Ministry of Education. Its school system operates under the Fundamental Law of Education of 1947 and subsequent legislation, and enables all students to compete for admission to institutions of higher education. One of the continuing problems facing Japanese educators is the teaching of the complex Japanese language, which combines several scripts.

A medical insurance system has been in effect in Japan since 1927. Self-employed individuals and employees in the private and public sectors are included under the medical plan. Social welfare services have greatly expanded since World War II; legislation enacted or amended in the post-war years includes the Livelihood Security Law for Needy Persons, the Law for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, the National Health Insurance Law, the Welfare Pension Insurance Law, Old Age Welfare Law, and the Maternal and Child Welfare Law. The entire population is covered by various insurance systems. Most working people retire at the age of 55 and receive retirement pensions amounting to about 40 per cent of their salary. Health conditions are generally excellent.16

15 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
16 Ibid.
On 4 December 1978, the Special IYC Representative met with Mr. Taijimo Matsura, Director of Youth Welfare, representatives from the Prime Minister's Office and the Director-General of the IYC Secretariat. Present at the meeting were Mr. Eiichi Kato, Miss Mizue Nakajima, and Miss Hiroko Ohizumi, officials of the Japan IYC National Commission for the Promotion of IYC activities, from the Prime Minister's Office. They had just returned from the ESCAP Regional Consultations on IYC held in Manila, the Philippines. At her meeting with the Japanese officials responsible for IYC, Dr. Aldaba Lim suggested ways to strengthen the Commission's IYC programs, particularly in the direction of long-term planning for children.

Japan's IYC program was strong on advocacy, with much emphasis on celebratory aspects, publicity and media promotion. The needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children had not been spelled out in their programme. It had been left to each Ministry to ensure that the broad programmes of concern for children's needs would filter down to the bureaucracy. The IYC Team stressed the importance of identifying neglected groups of children whose needs were not being fully addressed, and designing remedial action.17

Children's participation was a prominent and commendable feature of Japan's IYC program. The main IYC event had been an exhibition in Nagoya entitled “Children of the World and Japan.” Contrary to earlier information, this did not involve a children's conference but rather exhibitions of children's art, lectures, reports and discussions by child overseas correspondents. However, the IYC Team found there had been no substantive attempt to ascertain the views and aspirations of Japanese children regarding the Year.

The IYC Team was told that some “1,000 NGOs and business corporations” were involved in IYC. However, there was no central coordination of their activities, as many were already attached to a Ministry that coordinated their activities. The Special IYC Representative suggested that a mechanism be created to coordinate NGOs unattached to Ministries, such as Jaycees, Rotaries, which have their own international programme for IYC.

Japan's proposed budget for IYC was relatively high. A total of 42 billion yen (at that time $210 million) had been requested by the National IYC Commission from the April 1979 budget from the participating ministries. This figure included the cost of the Nagoya Exhibition.18

18 Ibid., p. 2
The Commission had established guidelines for the participation of the business sector in fund-raising for IYC. Fund-raising had been an important part of the IYC programme. Large corporations that were supporting IYC were said to be motivated by self-interest and profit.19

Korea

From Japan, the IYC Team proceeded to complete another two-day mission this time to South Korea on 08-09 December 1978.

South Korea, officially called the Republic of Korea (in Korean, Taehan Min’guk), is a country in north-eastern Asia that occupies the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula. South Korea is bounded on the north by North Korea; on the east by the Sea of Japan (known in Korea as the East Sea); on the south-east and south by the Korea Strait, which separates it from Japan; and on the west by the Yellow Sea. In Korean the country’s name is Dachan (“Great Han”), “Han” being another traditional name for Korea. The state of South Korea was established in 1948 following the post-World War II partitioning of the peninsula between the occupying forces of the United States in the south and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the north. The capital and largest city of South Korea is Seoul.

Primary education is free and compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 12. Further education consists of three years of middle school and three years of high school. The government sponsors no comprehensive social insurance programme. A programme with a limited number of subscribers, however, provides retirement pensions and workers’ compensation. There is no unemployment benefit.20

Despite the brevity of the visit, Mr. Alain McBain, UNICEF Representative in Seoul, and his staff organized an excellent, well-planned schedule in Korea. It provided the Special Representative for IYC with maximum exposure to the media and opportunity for dialogue with the key ministers whose support of IYC was crucial, namely, the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Finance and Education, the Minister of the Economic Planning Board, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Welfare, and the National IYC Commission. The visit gave a strong boost to IYC preparations in Korea, especially in

19 Ibid.
20 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
arousing great interest in IYC on the part of the media. With respect to the national programme for IYC, Dr. Aldaba Lim conveyed two basic messages to the national IYC commission. She impressed upon them the need to conduct an in-depth review of the situation of the nation’s children that could serve as the basis for a substantive action-oriented program. She further advocated greater domestic investment in children.21

Since the IYC Team arrived in the country at election time, they were unable to meet with the Chairperson of the National IYC Commission. However, they were received by the Vice-Chairman, Dr. Seung Hahm Park, who was also Vice-Minister for Health and Social Welfare. The Team found a climate of openness and receptivity to progressive action on behalf of children. The Finance Minister and the Minister of the Economic Planning Board acknowledged that much remained to be done for social development.22

IYC objectives were undoubtedly promoted on a continuing basis by the new permanent Committee on Youth and Children, an inter-ministerial body headed by the Prime Minister. According to him, the Committee was originally concerned only with juvenile delinquency, but its terms of reference had been expanded to include review and coordination of all programmes and legislation affecting children.

As a rapidly developing country at that time, Korea faced both basic development problems such as inadequate primary health care, as well as social problems associated with industrialization: over-crowded housing and juvenile delinquency. However, while Korea’s economic growth could amply fuel social change, military and economic investments absorbed most of the national budget. Only 1 percent of the budget went to social welfare, and 27 percent budget of the budget was allocated to “social development,” which included road and housing infrastructure as well as health and education. Mr. McBain and the Special IYC Envoy believed that IYC could help change government policy and convince the authorities to make children a higher national priority.

During her meeting with the National IYC Commission, the Special IYC Envoy urged a review of the situation of Korea’s children, to identify problems and provide a basis for setting targets and designing projects that would promote children’s welfare. As a corollary to that review, the 1977 situation report on children in Korea, sponsored by UNICEF, could be helpful. As a second step, it was suggested that each Ministry present its own plans of action for children. In direct response to Dr. Aldaba Lim’s examples and

21 IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to the Korea,” 08-09 December 1978
22 Ibid., p. 2
suggestions concerning children’s participation in IYC, the Korean IYC Commission gave assurances that a children’s committee for IYC would be established.

Korea’s 98 percent literacy rate suggested that while basic needs in education had been largely met, further improvement in health care was needed. The Special IYC Envoy pointed out to various ministers the need to increase immunization coverage of children.23

23 Ibid., p. 3
Chapter VIII

REACHING OUT TO ISLAMIC COUNTRIES IN WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA
(2-26 January 1979)

Soon after the winter trips to West Asia and North Africa, and more than a year after the IYC campaign was launched, the IYC team met with the Asian ambassadors and representatives to the United Nations. During that meeting, held on 27 March 1979, Dr. Aldaba Lim mentioned her visits in August 1978 to the most populous countries in Asia, namely, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines, where the vast majority of children lived, including those most deprived and needy. She reported on the positive global response to the IYC, which had exceeded all expectations.

The IYC Secretariat, working from two headquarters Secretariats in New York and Geneva, was overwhelmed and delighted by the range of consciousness-raising activities and action programs launched during the past several months. National IYC Commissions had been established in 138 countries. IYC continued to inspire a great number of seminars, research, reviews of legislation and policy relating to children, fund-raising campaigns, and concrete action programs to improve the well-being of children, notably in the fields of health, education, and nutrition.

1 Statement of the Special Representative for the International Year of the Child before the Meeting of the Asia Group of Ambassadors and Representatives to the United Nations, 27 March 1979.
At the time of the meeting, the Rights of the Child had emerged as a main theme in national priorities and long-term action for IYC. In industrialized countries, the major concerns highlighted by IYC included child abuse and neglect, and the situation of special categories of children: the children of refugees and migrant workers; the “children of the fourth world” living in the slums of London, Paris and New York in conditions as bleak as those confronting children in the developing countries; children subjected to drug or violence in the media, exploited by pornography, or victimized by preventable accidents; and the incidence of suicide among.2

During the meeting Dr. Aldaba Lim also explained that in contrast to previous international years, no global conference was planned for IYC. Its objectives, she said, would be achieved by action at the country level. The Secretariat had therefore embarked on a campaign to encourage governments to establish National Commissions for IYC, and to review and assess the situation of children. The IYC Secretariat, headed by the Special Representative, had thus engaged in advocacy to enjoin and assist heads of state, key government ministers and other decision makers, National IYC Commission members, representatives of the UN family, NGOs and the media—on whom the success of the IYC depended—in working toward the goals of the IYC.

The IYC Team had visited 50 countries thus far, and had observed a high level of commitment to the Year—with heads of state and prime ministers, or their wives, becoming actively involved as patrons of the Year or chairpersons of the National IYC Commissions. The commissions themselves had been constituted at the ministerial or cabinet level, with line ministers or department secretaries working hand in hand with senior nongovernmental officials concerned with the welfare of children, as well as local and national media, and representatives of the UN family.

The UN agencies had taken a proactive role to assure the success of the IYC, with staff of various agencies at headquarters and field offices contributing considerable resources and collaborating with governments. Dr. Aldaba Lim cited the following examples:

The World Health Organization had launched extended programmes to immunize children against the major diseases by 1990. The United Nations Development Programme was co-sponsoring a $20-million research and training programme to combat six tropical diseases that afflicted millions of children in developing countries every year. The Food and Agriculture Organisation was focusing on the needs of children in the context of rural development, with special emphasis on child nutrition. The International Labour

2 Ibid, p. 2
Organisation was doing research on the conditions of working children. UNESCO was sponsoring children’s art competitions and book exhibitions. The World Food Council was sponsoring consultations with the goal of eradicating vitamin A deficiency and goitre as part of the IYC activities worldwide. The World Bank had published an atlas on children with statistics on the economic and social conditions of children around the world.3

Time and again, the Special IYC Envoy, together with her team, would pursue two objectives in each of their missions: (1) to persuade governments to exercise the political will to prioritize children; and (2) to increase the flow of development assistance to disadvantaged children. The attainment of IYC goals required one thing, as expressed by the then UNICEF Executive Director Henry R. Labouisse during the forum for Asian ambassadors and representatives:

IYC will have reached its goal if it spreads the knowledge not only that the problems of children are urgent and immense, but that the wisdom and the wealth to solve them are at our command. The task is manageable in both scope and time. The question is: Do we have the will?

The IYC was seen at that time as the vehicle that would generate the political will needed to increase national investment in child nutrition, education, and health—and spur governments to devote a larger share of the national budget to programs and services benefiting children. At the same time, it was also recognized that the vast needs of children in the developing world were beyond the limited means of their governments, at least for the foreseeable future. Hence the second goal of the IYC: to increase the flow of assistance to the world’s poorest children by increasing awareness of their needs. It was assumed that if the IYC succeeded in achieving a significant increase in the external assistance directly benefiting children in the developing world, this could very well be the most direct, immediate and measurable result of the Year.4

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3 Ibid, p. 6-7
4 Ibid. p. 8
Turkey

In early January 1979, the IYC Team journeyed to the Islamic World. The first stop was Turkey. Turkey, officially referred to as the Republic of Turkey (in Turkish, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti), is located in south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia, bordered on the north-west by Bulgaria and Greece; on the north by the Black Sea; on the north-east by Georgia and Armenia; on the east by Iran; on the south by Iraq, Syria, and the Mediterranean Sea; and on the west by the Aegean Sea. The capital of Turkey is Ankara.

The modern Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk from a portion of the Ottoman Empire, following the empire’s collapse as a result of World War I. Turkey became a secular state in 1928, and a multi-party system was established in 1946. Apart from a brief period of government by a military junta in 1960 and 1961, Turkey remained under civilian rule until 1980, when, during a time of political instability, inflation, and acts of terrorism, the army again took control. At the birth of the republic more than 90 percent of the people were illiterate. Atatürk’s major reforms included a far-reaching educational program, and the first constitution stated that “primary education is obligatory for all Turks and shall be gratuitous in government schools.” Health care in Turkey is financed by the government for many of those who cannot afford to pay.5

The IYC Team arrived in Ankara shortly after the declaration of martial law in Turkey. Civilian rule prevailed throughout most of 1979, but in 1980 the army took control at a time of political instability. The nation reverted to civilian government in 1983. These events, however, had no adverse effect on the visit of the IYC Team to Turkey whose trip produced two notable results. The first was the clarification of the role of the IYC Commission, which was headed by Prof. İhsan Doğramacı, a representative of the NGO community. The second achievement was the government’s increased interest in participating in IYC, expressed by the First Lady Emel Koruturk. At that time, tensions were created by recommendations to close the UNICEF Office in Ankara.” 6

While there was no meeting with the Turkish IYC commission, the Special IYC Envoy met with the officer in charge of the UNICEF office in Ankara office and clarified the Secretariat’s expectations of the Commission and its role in implementing the planned programmes. It was pointed out that both the country representative of UNICEF and

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6 IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to the Turkey,” 02-06 January 1979
the Chairperson of the Commission must work hand in hand, not only during the IYC but in continuing the initiatives launched in IYC.

Dr. Aldaba Lim addressed the participants in a five-day national seminar on children, which was sponsored by the Turkish IYC Commission. The First Lady, who was at the seminar, spoke of her intention to support the establishment of a National Children's Centre at the end of 1979 and to institutionalize efforts for children on a permanent basis.

In her address to the participants in the seminar, the Special IYC Envoy zeroed in on the role of governments and decision makers in IYC:

> The high level of national commitment to the Year is reflected in the fact that in many countries of the world, heads of state, prime ministers, first ladies and royalty have given their patronage to the Year. In many cases, national IYC Commissions are constituted at the ministerial level. Their membership often includes not only government officials but nongovernmental organizations concerned with the welfare of children including trade unions, the media and representatives of the UN family.

> Because IYC was conceived as an enterprise to be shaped by specific needs, priorities and actions of each country, my role as special representative has been to assist and encourage the participation of those on whom the success of IYC depends: key government ministers, decision makers, national IYC commissions, representatives of the UN family, non governmental organizations and the media. My duties have thus far taken me to 40 countries.7

**United Arab Emirates**

A quick two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), from 7 to 9 January 1979, was dominated by the UAE’s First Lady, Sheika Fatima, who headed the Union of Women’s Associations and was an active leader of women’s emancipation in the Arab world. The IYC Team believed that her support to IYC was essential to improve the well-being of children in her country.

The UAE is a federation of seven independent states lying along the east-central coast of the Arabian Peninsula, formerly called the Trucial States (from the Perpetual Maritime Truce signed with Great Britain in 1853), and constituting, with Bahrain,

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Kuwait, and Qatar, the Persian Gulf States. The states making up the UAE are: Abu Dhabi, ‘Ajman, Dubai, Al Fujayrah, Ra’s al Khaymah, Sharjah (or Ash Shariqah), and Umm al-Qaiwain. The states, occupying a vaguely defined area formerly known as the Pirate Coast, as well as 80 km (50 mi) of coast on the Gulf of Oman, are bordered on the north by Qatar and the Persian Gulf, on the east by the Gulf of Oman, and on the south and west by Saudi Arabia. Primary education in the UAE is free and compulsory; secondary education is optional. Higher education is provided by the University of the United Arab Emirates (1977), and the government provides funds for UAE overseas students.  

The UAE does not share the severe resource constraints experienced by many countries. The IYC Team observed the high standard of infrastructure and facilities available for pre-schools and primary schools for girls. The traditional nomads, called Bedouins, were provided with homes equipped with refrigerators, television sets and Land-Rovers, and their children were provided with free education and primary health care. Despite these advances, their social services were still being developed and outreach services were not readily available. This is because the UAE was a newly established country, just seven years old at the time. One aspect of their work that was the IYC Team found very encouraging was their effort to promote women’s participation in development. In fact, the Minister of Planning, H.E. Mr. Saeed Ghobash, had strongly supported the view that women should be more involved in the preparations for IYC.

Bahrain

Third on the list of the IYC Team's list of Islamic countries to visit was Bahrain (9 to 12 January 1979). Bahrain, or Bahrein, is an independent state in the Middle East, comprising an archipelago of 33 islands in the southern Persian Gulf, between the Qatar Peninsula on the east and the coast of Saudi Arabia on the west, one of the Persian Gulf states. The principal islands include Bahrain, by far the largest island; Al Muharraq; Umm an Na’san; Sitrah; Jiddah; and the Hawar group. Manama is Bahrain's capital and largest city. Bahrain was under British control from 1861 to 1971, when it gained its independence.  

In Bahrain education is both free and compulsory from ages 6 to 17. Bahrain offers free medical care of a very high standard to all citizens, including expatriates. The

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10 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
significance of the emirate greatly increased when oil was discovered there in the 1930s. Bahrain joined the neighbouring Trucial States and Qatar in the Federation of Arab Emirates, but when the Trucial States became the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain elected to remain independent. On December 6, 1973, Bahrain became an independent constitutional monarchy, and it has since become increasingly prosperous on the income from its oil exports.

Bahrain, at the time of the IYC Team’s visit, was governed by the Al-Khalifa royal family. This fact made it easier to organize the IYC program. The IYC activities were attended by all government officials, including the Emir himself, His Highness Sheik Isa Bin Sulman Al-Khalifa; the Prime Minister, H.E. Sheik Khalifa bin Sulman Al-Khalifa; the Foreign Minister and the Ministers of Education, Health, Industry, and the Secretary General of the High Council for Youth and Sports. The Education Minister was the patron of IYC. The small population, estimated at 300,000, made it easier to serve the children. Most of the crèches, kindergartens and primary schools were made of high-quality materials, and their personnel were highly trained. This was partly attributed to the large number of expatriates in the labour force.11

One noteworthy aspect of the country observed by the IYC Team was the degree of emancipation achieved by Bahraini women. The Minister of Industry and Planning encouraged the increasing participation of women in the labour force to free men for construction and other activities that women cannot undertake. Literacy classes for women and social centres for training women as community level workers were evidence of the government’s commitment to promote women’s participation in development, especially at lower and middle levels.12

The IYC Team was struck by the seriousness of the Royal Family’s commitment to IYC. This was reflected, for instance, in the choice of IYC activities, which included the following: compilation of a database that would be used to prioritize and target action programs; a comprehensive study of the needs of children, to be undertaken by the High Council for Youth and Sports; a fund-raising campaign called “Child Fund in Bahrain in Favour of Children Nationally and Internationally”; exploration of the feasibility of setting up a new permanent coordinating body for children; establishment of a children’s park and theatre courtesy of the Crown Prince; introduction of improvements in kindergartens; and the adoption of pre-school education as a national priority. Commitment to these

12 Ibid.
activities was assured by Dr. Akbar Mohsin Mohammed, Chairperson of the National Commission, and Sheika Lolwa Mohamed Al-Khalifa, who was then the head of the Child and Mother’s Welfare Society and a prominent member of the Royal clan.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

As part of Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim’s role as International Year of the Child Special Envoy, she visited Bahrain to observe the day care activities provided to children in the country.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
Iraq

On 13 January to 16 1979, the IYC Team visited Iraq, officially called the Republic of Iraq (or also Irak). It is a republic in the Middle East, bordered on the north by Turkey; on the east by Iran; on the south by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf; and on the west by Jordan and Syria. Iraq shares a Neutral Zone, an area with no permanent inhabitants lying between Iraq and Saudi Arabia that is jointly administered by the two governments, and through which nomads can move freely. Some of the world’s greatest ancient civilizations flourished in the area that comprises modern Iraq: Assyria, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, and Sumer. Baghdad is the country’s capital and largest city.14

Education in Iraq is free. Six years of primary education are compulsory, but many children in rural areas do not attend school because facilities are not available. Instruction is mostly in Arabic, although Kurdish is used in schools in some northern districts. About 74 percent of Iraqis aged 15 or older are literate.15

The IYC Team’s visit to Iraq was not part of the official missions for the Year of the Child. Dr. Aldaba Lim happened to be the guest of the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), and keynote speaker in the five-day regional symposium in Basrah on the theme, “Building the Future of the Arab Child is Building the Future of the Arab World.” The Basrah seminar provided an excellent occasion to highlight the IYC objectives, not only for the participants in the seminar, but also for the mass media of the Gulf countries, since the meeting attracted regional television and press coverage.16 Basra is Iraq’s principal port, lying on the west bank of the Shatt Al Arab waterway, formed by the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; it is close to the Persian Gulf and to Iraq’s borders with Kuwait and Iran. It is an industrial city, refining and exporting oil and chemicals, and the centre of an agricultural area producing wool, grain, and dates.17

The GFIW and the University of Basrah convened experts from the Gulf region, and during the seminar reviewed all aspects of the situation of the Gulf Child—legislation, education, health, social and cultural, producing a total of 106 research papers contributed by participants from at least 20 countries. The Special IYC Envoy’s keynote speech linked the seminar with the global enterprise for IYC, and underlined the importance of investment in children as an investment in development. The IYC Team was later a guest of Manal Younis, President of the GFIW in Baghdad. The Federation had been deeply

14 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
15 Ibid.
17 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
involved in social development and it was seen at that time to be an important stimulus as well as an implementor of programmes and services for children.

Mr. Bakr Mahmoud Rasoul, the Iraqi Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, established the National IYC Committee in Iraq. The Committee’s contributions to the Year included a comprehensive review of legislation for children; expansion of day care centres and pre-schools from 18 to 50; construction of additional health centers; assessment of maternal and child health services; and organization of conferences, seminars and meetings related to child issues.

Sudan

On 16 to 20 January, 1979, the IYC Team was off to the north-eastern part of Africa in Khartoum, Sudan. Sudan, officially referred to as Republic of Sudan, is a republic in north-eastern Africa, the largest country of the African continent. It is bordered on the north by Egypt; on the east by the Red Sea, Eritrea, and Ethiopia; on the south by Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and on the west by the Central African Republic, Chad, and Libya. Khartoum is the capital and largest city. Education is free but not compulsory in Sudan. Limited health services are badly underfunded and virtually non-existent in rural areas. Malaria is endemic in most areas, and malnutrition is common.18

The IYC Team noted the extraordinary reception accorded them in Sudan. The IYC Team was enthusiastically met by the President, Gaafar Mohamed Nimeiri, and the First Lady, Buthena Nimeiri, as well as cabinet ministers involved with social affairs. Posters about the visit in many parts of Khartoum were plastered everywhere, and the Special IYC Envoy was treated to a program review and parade of a thousand children in the Youth Palace. The UNICEF Representative in Sudan, Mr. Uffe Konig, enjoyed government support and it was felt that this was translated in closer ministerial cooperation for child-oriented projects. The Chairperson of the National IYC Commission, Dr. Fatima Abdel Mahmoud, also enjoyed excellent relations with the Cabinet ministers. These helped to ensure implementation of the country's IYC program.

A UNICEF-supported Survey on the Needs of Young Children and Mothers had been completed earlier that year, enabling the Government to zero in on priority problems affecting children. These included high infant mortality (estimated at 141 per thousand

18 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
live births), the prevalence of malnutrition, and the high dropout rate, indicating that accessibility to basic services in the rural areas was very limited. The issue of female circumcision was also raised in a meeting of the Special IYC Envoy with the NGO Sudanese Women’s Union (SWU). While the SWU had proclaimed opposition to the practice, FG, to this day, remains a deeply entrenched tradition, practiced even among the educated elite.

The Government’s linkage of child welfare services with its development programs had provided an impetus for the President to carry out various undertakings that were closely tied with the IYC. These included efforts to combat endemic diseases affecting children; control and prohibition of child labor; and the establishment of kindergartens, children’s libraries, children’s gardens and centers for children with disabilities, and facilities for juvenile delinquents below the age of 13. 10

Prior to their departure, the IYC Team made a trip to Al Kareiba, a village two and half hours’ drive from Khartoum. There they observed the efforts to set up a multi-purpose center that offered a variety of services for a community of 200 families. It was a model institution that was to be replicated widely in Gezira province, under the leadership of Dr. Hafez El Zhazali, a member of the IYC Commission and a committed community worker with a degree in paediatrics from the London Institute of Child Health.

Tunisia

From the north-east, the IYC Team made a cross-continental trip to the north-west side of the African continent, with Tunisia as their next stop, between 21 and 26 January 1979. Tunisia, a republic in northern Africa, is bordered on the north and east by the Mediterranean Sea, on the south by Libya, and on the west by Algeria. Its capital city is Tunis. Education in Tunisia is free, and virtually all eligible children attend primary school. Instruction is conducted mainly in Arabic although French is also used, especially at the college and university levels. A system of social security, instituted in 1950, provides maternity, health, and old-age benefits.20

Several drawbacks were experienced by the IYC Team during their visit. They discovered that the government had no substantive contact with UN representatives, so there was no opportunity to discuss specific possibilities of support for IYC from any UN agency. It did not help that UNICEF had no country office in Tunisia. Aside from the Union of Women, no other nongovernmental organization met with the Team, nor was there a meeting with the National IYC Commission. In effect, it appeared that many things had been left undone.

However, top government officials were on hand to provide assurances that IYC and the welfare of children were not being neglected. Among the officials who offered a more positive view of the future were the First Lady Ouasila Bourguiba; the President of the National Assembly, M. Sadok Mokadem; and the cabinet ministers of public health, social affairs, information, education, youth and sports, and the chief cabinet minister.

Madame Bourgiba’s assumption of the position of Patron of IYC encouraged Tunisians to support the Year because of the popularity of the President and the First Lady. The government was credited with creating economic and social progress, in terms of increased literacy; women’s emancipation and child care, through jardins d’enfants, clubs d’enfants and villages d’enfants. The IYC Commission, with its three sub-commissions on research, external relations, and festivities, had embarked on a massive campaign aimed at mobilizing public opinion in favor of the IYC and promoting the participation of children.21

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Chapter IX

**NGO-IYC MEETINGS AND THE SECOND CAMPAIGN IN LATIN AMERICA**

**(23 April-9 May 1979)**

In the spring of 1979, the Special IYC Representative presented to the NGO/IYC Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, the overall positive response to the IYC, which had been supported in many countries by nongovernmental organizations working hand in hand with national IYC commissions. The NGO/IYC Committee was made up of European and US based NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations. It was an NGO representative, Canon Joseph Moerman, Secretary General of the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB) in Geneva, who was responsible for advocating the celebration of the IYC.

Mr. Moerman recalls the role of the NGO in coming up with the idea for a year of the child:

The first thing I had to do, of course, was to convince my own council of International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB). The President agreed, but what about the Board? You know the famous words utilized by Cicero, when he said, “The senators are fine people but the senate is an ugly animal.” It is the same with all bodies of that type. Individually, the members are all very nice but when they are together they are often very difficult. Three or four months later I had the green light from my own Council. They gave their consent but were more or less convinced that IYC would never succeed. How could the small NGO of ICCB succeed in mobilizing the world for such a project. How did we start? We began by first establishing contacts with important NGOs which were friendly and which, I presumed, would support the idea. One such organization was the International Union for Child Welfare. They gave their support, although during the
Year they did not do much, probably due to the fact that they were having problems of their own. Then came the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), and I am still grateful to those two organisations because they were very, very strongly motivated and also to The World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP). One of the reasons for the fine support of WCOTP was that my ICCB assistant at that time, Mrs. Pat Smyke, was the wife of the WCOTP Deputy Secretary General. Once they were convinced, I had the support of this powerful organisation. We had our first meeting, five or six NGOs, at the Headquarters of the YMCA.¹

Two of the members of the IYC Secretariat, serving on a voluntary basis, were from the NGO sector. They were helping to support and coordinate IYC efforts throughout the world.² In her presentation to the NGO/IYC Committee, on 5 April 1979, Dr. Aldaba Lim described how NGOs in many countries had pioneered innovations that reflected their concern for the child.³ These were demonstrated through the following:

1. In countries which had no tradition of NGO participation in social development, IYC was beginning to change attitudes and involve the private sector more substantially, and in some cases for the first time, in activities benefiting children.
2. Preparations for IYC had promoted collaboration between NGOs and national IYC commissions even in countries where such cooperation was not customary.
3. In some countries, NGOs had taken the commanding lead in national preparations for the Year.
4. In other cases, NGOs were participating very effectively in IYC through separate committees of their own, which they chaired and coordinated.
5. Other benefits of collaboration included sharing of ideas; cost-effectiveness resulting from coordinated use of human and material resources and training; opportunity for comparative analysis in project evaluation; and above all, mutual support and encouragement.
6. IYC was building a strong foundation for permanent cooperation between governments and NGOs in the field of child care beyond 1979.

The IYC Team reported that in many developing countries, women’s organizations, such as the market women’s association in Ghana, were actively promoting or sponsoring

² Laura Lopez, draft review, New York, 2005.
³ Aldaba Lim, Estefania, “Statement by the Special Representative for the International Year of the Child to the NGO/IYC Committee,” Geneva, Switzerland, 05 April 1979.
programs and services for children, notably in the field of day care. In Bahrain, a local voluntary women’s organization, headed by Princess Lulwa Al Khalifa, was operating kindergartens and day-care centers with very high standards in facilities and personnel. The government was planning to expand this pioneering effort as part of their national activity for IYC.

IYC had inspired some outstanding, though rare, individual initiatives. For instance, the IYC team learned about two taxi drivers from Toronto, Canada, who quit their jobs and pooled their savings after watching programs about the IYC. They then drove miles in their old Volkswagen to see for themselves the conditions in Canadian and American Indian reservations. To their surprise, they found that many homes in the reservations where average temperatures dropped below zero degrees Celsius were unheated and filled with freezing children. The authorities soon found out about this, thanks to the concerned taxi drivers.

**NGOs’ Participation in IYC**

One of the more active NGOs involved with IYC, which had been a member of the Committee, was the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

Here are excerpts from the October-December issue of WAGGGS’s publication:

> For WAGGGS, every year is the year of the child. After the foundation of the World Association Dame Katharine Furse, first Director of the World Bureau, wrote of the development of the World Movement for the benefit of the children . . . the girls who are the raison d’être of our adult existence as Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

> It is, and has always been, the child who is the prime concern of the World Association. The UN International Year of the Child is welcomed by WAGGGS, and to mark it the World Committee has issued a statement. The 23rd World Conference took as its theme ‘Lighting a Flame for Youth’ (centred on the child); and National Organisations are planning their activities for 1979 to relate to IYC.

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The following describes the extent of WAGGGS’s involvement in IYC in various parts of the world:

**NEW YORK**

- On 30 March 1978 several members of the WAGGGS Team accompanied Lady Price, World Committee Chairman, to a meeting with Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim. Dr. Aldaba-Lim was herself an active member of the Girl Scouts, being the past President of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines. The discussion was on ways in which WAGGGS could participate in IYC events. Shortly after this visit, Dr. Aldaba-Lim accepted an invitation to join the WAGGGS Team as an Honourary member and provide guidance on Team activities for both IYC and other UN-related projects.

- WAGGGS Team members attended the 1978 UNICEF Executive Board session, including the discussions on IYC.

- In addition to these specific meetings, the Team regularly represented WAGGGS at the New York sessions of the Non-Governmental Organisations/IYC Committee, the group of some 100 NGOs who complemented the work of the UN in support of IYC. The Head of the Team also attended the New York meetings of the eight-member Coordinating Group, which organized the work of this NGO/IYC Committee.

- Team member, Ms. Marilee Reiner, editorial consultant for UNICEF, wrote the joint Jaycees International/UNICEF pamphlet, *Jaycees Joining Hands With UNICEF For IYC.*
Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim discusses advocacy activities for the International Year of the Child with Mr. Jim McDougall, IYC - New York Assistant Executive Director and Peter Ustinov, UNICEF Ambassador of Goodwill.

A luncheon was hosted by the UN, for all the First Ladies who addressed the UN Summit for the 1979 IYC who were invited as special guests. Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim was awarded the UN Medal of Honor for her achievement as UN IYC Special Envoy by U.S. Ambassador Kellogg, Chairman of the IYC Medals Committee.
Dr. Estefania Aldaha Lim, IYC Special Envoy, Professor B. Kozusnik, Vice-Chairman of the UNICEF Executive Board and Henry R. Labouisse, UNICEF Executive Director formally accept “The Child” a sculpture by the eminent Polish artist Zofia Wolska at a brief unveiling ceremony at the UNICEF Headquarters as one of the opening highlights of the International Year of the Child celebration.
As part of the fund raising activity for the International Year of the Child, artist Shri Chinmoy presented a painting to Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim during the fundraising at the UN HQ NY.
UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim awards the UN Peace Medal to Dr. E. Aldaba Lim for her IYC Achievements 1977-1979 in December 1979. UNICEF Executive Director, Henry R. Labouisse witnessed the occasion.

Dr. Aldaba Lim offers a “Copa de Champaña” to honor the First Ladies who addressed the UN General Assembly on IYC at the UN, December 1979. US Junior Girl Scouts gave each of the First Ladies a long-stemmed red rose. Among the First Ladies present were Lady Soames of the United Kingdom; Liudmila Zhibkova of Bulgaria; Nydia Quintos de Turbay of Colombia; Carmen R. de Lopez Portillo of Mexico; Renee Klang de Guzman of the Dominican Republic; Estrella Zeledon de Carazo of Costa Rica; Betty Campins of Venezuela; Cissy Waldheim, wife of UN Secretary General; Eve Curie Labouisse, wife of UNICEF Exec. Director; Imelda Marcos of the Philippines; Betb Day Romulo and Mrs. Eduardo Romualdez.
First Lady Betty Herrera Gampins of Venezuela was one of the First Ladies who addressed the UN body.
GENEVA

- The WAGGGS Team at Geneva was among the first representatives of organizations consulted by Canon Moerman of the International Catholic Child Bureau, now Chairman of the NGO/IYC Committee, on the prospects for an International Year of the Child.

- WAGGGS joined the NGO/IYC Committee formed in New York in June 1977. This Plenary appointed a small Co-ordinating Group and asked the Geneva Informal Meeting and the UN Headquarters Youth Caucus to nominate organizations responsible for liaison. In September the WAGGGS, jointly with the World Scout Bureau was asked to sit on the Co-ordinating Group in this capacity. This they had done for several meetings, formal and informal.

- Team members in Geneva were following the setting up of working groups on special subjects such as the child rights, education, and handicapped children. As these and others developed, they would be able to refer plans to the World Bureau to pass on to member organizations for their information and cooperation. Similarly they were expected to pass on information received at the World Bureau from national organizations.

- At the NGO/IYC Secretariat, which was hard pressed correlating and circulating information on the developing projects, one Team member helped with translation. WAGGGS was working on the Fund Raising Committee to raise money for the running of this vital Secretariat.

PARIS

For the WAGGGS Team of representatives at UNESCO, 1978 was a year of preparation for 1979, IYC, on two levels:

- Participation at various meetings planned by NGOs, one of which would be especially devoted to the child (his environment and development; the attitude of adults, the family and society toward him, etc.).
• They would also try to emphasize the child in meetings planned on human rights, apartheid, communications and drugs.

• On a practical level, they were working on a project involving leadership training in a selected African country in cooperation with another NGO, the International Federation for Family Economics. The project would involve advanced instruction in hygiene, nutrition and mother and child care, with the aim of enabling participants to play an active role in their families and communities, with a view to helping development and improving the quality of life. The first stage of the project will be followed, six months later, by a second, intended to assess, consolidate and eventually extend the participants’ acquired knowledge.

• A third, very important, part of their continuing work was to keep UNESCO informed of WAGGGS National Organizations’ activities planned for IYC.

DENMARK

The Danish Guide and Scout Association was fortunate in having the Youth Representative of Denmark to the United Nations appointed from among their members. (Only three countries nominated a Youth Representative—Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark.) She is Miss Kirsten Damgaard, aged 24, a teacher. She stayed in New York for the General Assembly as a member of the Danish delegation to the UN and took part in the daily work.

During her stay at the General Assembly Ms. Damgaard met with fellow Girl Scout, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim. They discussed the importance of emphasizing the International Year of the Child in each country, and how the youth, particularly Girl Guides/Girl Scouts, could be involved in the work.

Despite the year-long accomplishments associated with IYC, Dr. Aldaba Lim said many things still needed to be done. The primary concern was to ensure the sustainability of the Year. She said:

IYC would be a total failure were it to end in 1979. For IYC is concerned with the objective of bringing about long-term progressive improvement in the situation of
children. And indeed, the rethinking of priorities and policies concerning children, and the long-term programmes for children engendered by IYC, have implications for follow-up reaching into the future.  

Back to Latin America

Dominican Republic

Less than a month after the NGO/IYC meeting, the Special IYC Envoy and her team returned to Latin America on 18 April 1979. The Dominican Republic was the first stop. The Dominican Republic (in Spanish, República Dominicana), is an independent republic occupying the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with Haiti, and is bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean; on the east by the Mona Passage, which separates it from Puerto Rico; on the south by the Caribbean Sea; and on the west by Haiti. Santo Domingo is the capital of the Dominican Republic as well as its largest city. The Dominican Republic provides free, compulsory education to children between the ages of 7 and 14. About 91 percent of the population aged 15 or older is literate.

In the mid-1970s a sharp decline in world sugar prices adversely affected the Dominican economy, and President Joaquín Balaguer’s support began to dwindle; in the 1978 elections he was turned out of office, defeated by the Partido Revolucionario Dominicana (PRD) candidate, Silvestre Antonio Guzmán. After foiling a plot by right-wing military men to prevent him from taking office, Guzmán purged the armed forces of many Balaguer supporters, released some 200 political prisoners of the previous regime, and eased press censorship. The economy remained troubled by low sugar prices and was further damaged by two hurricanes in 1979 that left more than 200,000 people homeless and caused $1 billion worth of damage.

In the Dominican Republic, the IYC Team encountered two positive factors favoring IYC. One was the active support of the First Lady, Doña Renée Klang de Guzman, and the other was the enthusiasm shown by an emerging NGO community. Doña Renée was the President of both the national IYC commission (Comisión Nacional del Año

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5 Ibid., p. 7
6 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
7 Ibid.
Internacional del Niño) and the National Council of Children (Consejo Nacional del Niño). The fact that both titles were held by the most influential woman in the country was seen as a distinct advantage. In fact, the mission of the Special IYC Envoy was treated like a state visit, with the First Lady present throughout the entire IYC mission. This showed the importance the government attached to the visit.

As head of the Council for Child Welfare and the National IYC Commission, Doña Renée was a popular First Lady, perceived to be knowledgeable and concerned about the situation of children in her country, and conscious of IYC’s implications for substantive and long-term actions for children.\(^8\) From the outset the Commission had shown much promise, and proved effective in its advocacy for the Year. The work program had sought the maximum participation of children in activities built around monthly themes, such as painting, art crafts, sports, and dance, to name a few. The participation of children was the outstanding feature of the national IYC program. Dr. Aldaba Lim participated in the inauguration of an Exhibition of Children’s Art, featuring the best entries from the country’s first national art competition for children, and a ceremony for the awarding of prizes at the National Lottery in connexion with IYC. The commission gave extensive publicity to the Children’s Art Exhibition, and sponsored a book fair featuring works for children.

Toward the end of the visit, the First Lady hosted a cocktail where the Special IYC Envoy met with a large number of NGOs. At the time of the visit, the NGOs had not yet defined their contributions to IYC, yet they had shown tremendous potential to extend the outreach of services for children. The visit of the IYC Team was seen as an opportune time to further develop greater cooperation between NGOs and the government in the efforts to promote child welfare.

The First Lady accompanied the IYC Team to a privately run rehabilitation center, which was, at the time, one of the most progressive of its kind in the developing world. It offered out-patient diagnostic services and therapy for children with disabilities, as well as vocational training (carpentry, metalwork, dress making, doll making, gem cutting) and education for the mentally challenged. In addition, the IYC Team visited an orphanage for boys, where agriculture was the main activity, and a community school run by a religious order in a deprived area.

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Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim witnessed the work done by the Dominican Republic at Muede Agugura (Home for Handicapped) during her visit in the country. With the Special Envoy is the First Lady of the Dominican Republic, Mrs. Renee Klang de Guzman.
Mrs. Renee Klang de Guzman, First Lady of Dominican Republic, formally welcomed Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim as IYC Special Envoy during the latter’s visit there in 1979.

Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim with the First Lady of the Dominican Republic, Renee Klang De Guzman, June 1979, met with several young children during the visit.
Colombia

On 25 April 1979, the IYC Team was off to Colombia. Officially called the Republic of Colombia, the country is situated in north-western South America, bordered on the north by Panama and the Caribbean Sea, on the east by Venezuela and Brazil, on the south by Peru and Ecuador, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Colombia is the only South American country with coasts on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The capital and largest city is Bogotá. Elementary education is free but not compulsory for five years. Much effort has been devoted to eliminating illiteracy, and around 97 percent of adults can read and write. Courses in Roman Catholicism are compulsory in all public schools, most of which are controlled by the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant Churches maintain a number of schools, chiefly in Bogotá. The national government finances secondary- and university-level schools and maintains primary schools in municipalities and departments that cannot afford to do so.

The mission to Colombia was unplanned, since the IYC Team was originally scheduled to go to La Paz, Bolivia, where Dr. Aldaba Lim was supposed to address the 18th session of the Economic Council of Latin America (ECLA). However, the cancellation of a connecting flight to La Paz diverted them to Bogotá. The ensuing visit to Colombia turned out to be productive and rewarding. A visit to Colombia had actually been planned a year earlier, but was eventually postponed. Thanks to UNICEF Representative James Mayrides, their program turned out fruitful.

The impromptu three-day visit was much welcomed by the people involved in IYC preparations, headed by the country’s First Lady, Doña Nydia Quintero de Turbay, who was also the President of the National IYC Commission. Doña Nydia and Señora Isabel Ospina de Mallarina, Coordinator of the National IYC Commission and Director General of the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, were at the forefront of IYC preparations and were pleased to meet the Special IYC Representative. Here is how the Mission Report described the event:

The conversations with the First Lady and Señora Isabel and meetings with members of the national commission and the NGOs, helped give direction to their programme for IYC. We underlined the need to ensure that their substantive plans for children will

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materialize in the days to come. The SR’s Special IYC Representative’s visit also served as a
stimulus for the NGOs’ participation in IYC. 11

Seven sub-committees had been set up by the National IYC Commission in the
areas of health, education and recreation, children’s work and social status, uprooted and
abandoned children, welfare and social protection, voluntary activity, and information
and communication. The importance given by the Colombian government to IYC
undertakings was shown through the appointment of the wives of the Ministers of Health
and Education to head the sub-committees.

At the time of the IYC Team’s visit, the problem of street children (gamines) was
not yet seen as too serious a problem. Their visibility, however, had made them a political
issue. The government rehabilitation center for gamines, Bosconia, seemed to be achieving
some success in treating the problem albeit at a relatively high cost. Another problem was
the number of children working in the coffee industry —as workers in plantations,
factories, handicrafts. The number of child laborers was estimated at three million,
including children as young as three years old. Given this statistic, the national IYC
commission had established a sub-committee on child labor with a view to regulating
children’s involvement in an adult industry. While recognizing the impossibility of
eliminating child labor, the sub-committee was encouraging the review of national
legislation pertaining to that issue. It helped a lot that the chair of the sub-committee on
child labor was the active and articulate wife of the Minister of Labour, Señora Ana
Cecilia de Marin Bernal.

Despite the highly organized planning for IYC, the Special IYC Envoy noticed that
the recommendations of the sub-committees did not have a corresponding budget item.
She recommended that the government provide adequate financial support so that the
sub-committees could have a meaningful role.

The IYC also seemed to have jumpstarted the NGOs, particularly the voluntary
sector national umbrella organization, ACOVOL (Comite Operativo del Voluntariado).
Señora Olga de Pizano, head of ACOVOL and chair of the sub-committee on voluntary
activities, showed enthusiasm in planning activities designed to support projects in
immunization, nutrition and pre-school education. Other areas to be covered were
reduction of child accidents, reforestation, ecological conservation, and rural education.

Panama

On 25 April 1979, the IYC Team’s third stop was Panama. The team would spend four days in a country made famous by the canal that shortened shipping passage time from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Republic of Panama is situated on the isthmus linking South America with Central and North America. The country, which is bisected by the Panama Canal, is bounded on the north by the Caribbean Sea, on the east by Colombia, on the south by the Pacific Ocean, and on the west by Costa Rica. After the Second World War, Panama was plagued by inflation, debt, and unemployment, problems intensified by a rapid increase in population. The year 1979 was when Panama became engaged in negotiating treaties with the United States over the control of the Panama Canal and this had precipitated wide discontent among its people.

Panama was a special revelation to the IYC Team. While it is classified as a developing country, Panama had a higher per capita income and had sought to redress the inequities prevailing in the conditions of children in the rural sector. One of its initiatives was to establish provincial IYC commissions directly under the management of the National IYC Commission. The commissions’ main function was to multiply the COIFs (Centros de Orientacion Infantil y Familial), which were pre-school centers set up with the participation of the community, NGOs, churches and the Government. The eagerness of the Government to expand the COIFs helped assure the success of the pilot phase.

One of the main goals of the National Commission was to convert kindergartens into COIFs and to make nutrition its major component. The Commission sought to make young children a national priority, with the COIFs serving as the main channel for reaching the children. Further, through these centres, sustained benefits could be delivered to the children in the countryside in addition to organized family planning and mother’s education programs.

To support the centers for infants and the family, the local NGOs had embarked on concrete child welfare activities that reflected their commitment to the IYC. For example, the Lions Club (Leones) financed the building of the Hospital del Niño and the Club Deportivo, a large sports center for children in deprived areas. They had also built recreation parks, children’s homes, kindergartens, a school for the blind and a vocational school for pre-delinquent youth. The Guías Muchachas (Girl Guides) had

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sent a large delegation to the meeting with the Special IYC Envoy, promising its support to the programs and services initiated by other NGOs.

As proof of its commitment to the IYC, the Government of Panama, in the absence of its President (Aristides Royo) and the First Lady, sent Don Fabrega Zarak, acting President and Chief of Cabinet; Señor Juan Manuel Castulovich, acting Foreign Minister; and Professor Rosaria Perurena, the representative of the First Lady, to meet with the IYC Team. One of the highlights of the IYC Team’s visit to Panama was their meeting with the Coordinators of Executive Secretariats in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico. UNICEF had sponsored this meeting from 23-26 April 1979 in preparation for the Third Session of the Directors of Child Welfare Institutes in Central America, scheduled in November 1979. Prior to leaving for Venezuela, the IYC Team attended the inauguration of a school for languages for children sponsored by the Escuela de Idiomas del Instituto para la Formación y Aprovechamiento de Recursos Humanos (Institute for Formation and Use of Human Resources), headed by Doña Berta Torrijos Arosemena.

Venezuela

On 2 May 1979, the IYC Team proceeded south to Caracas, Venezuela. Venezuela, officially called the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is bordered on the north by the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, on the east by Guyana, on the south by Brazil, and on the south-west and west by Colombia. The region west of the Essequibo river in Guyana is claimed by Venezuela. Venezuela is rich in mineral resources, notably oil, natural gas, bauxite, gold, iron ore, copper, zinc, lead, and diamonds. Forests, too, are an important resource, covering about 39 per cent of the land. Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, is the country’s commercial and industrial centre. Oil refining is one of the chief industries. Since the 1950s, the construction of many new high-rise offices and flats has changed the quiet, colonial city into one of Latin America’s most modern urban areas.

Upon arrival in Venezuela, the IYC Team received the good news that 85 million bolívares, then equivalent to US$12 million, had been approved for Venezuela’s IYC programme. Another good news was that part of this fund was channelled to the IYC Secretariat, as discussed with Dr. Teresa Albanez Barnola, the then newly appointed UNICEF Representative in the Bogota (Colombia) Area Office; Dr. Carmen Teresa

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Rodriguez de A’Arago, the National IYC Coordinator; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Another positive event was the appointment of Dr. Pablo Herrera Campíns as the President of the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, which had been tasked with overseeing the work of the National IYC Commission. Dr. Campíns was the elder brother of the country’s newly elected President, Luis Herrera Campíns.

Despite a per capita income of US$2,000, the basic problem affecting Venezuela’s children, at the time of the mission, was malnutrition—48 out of every 100 children, in varying degrees. Add to this the limited coverage of health services, particularly immunization against smallpox and polio. Immediately, the Government representatives showed solidarity with the IYC Team by discussing the activities they planned to mark the Year. These included: (1) revision of child legislation, with a view to facilitate adoption; (2) establishment of a special children’s fund from proceeds of a 2 percent levy of all public, private and business institutions; and (3) commitment to a more detailed program on health, education, nutrition, culture and sports. Such programs consisted of the establishment of kindergartens, homes for pre-school children, maternal and child health centers, and sports centers. The IYC Team was encouraged to learn that the Government was giving education top priority, with the aim of expanding the coverage of pre-school education facilities to children aged 3 and 4.

Two child welfare institutions stood out during the visit of the IYC Team. The first was the Fundación del Niño, which began as a cultural event organized and managed by the First Lady. The Fundación was at the time involved in more substantive child welfare activities such as parent education, development education, and crèches. With respect to their interest in children’s villages patterned using the SOS approach, the Fundación’s Director General, Dr. María Josefina de Sañanes, opted to explore less costly alternatives, as suggested by the Special IYC Envoy.

The second notable child welfare institution was called AVEPAN (Asociacion Venezolana de Padres y Amigos de Niños Excepcionales), a private organization concerned with the rehabilitation of physically challenged children. As its contribution to regional IYC activities, AVEPAN, at the time of the IYC visit, was planning on hosting the Latin American Symposium on Mental Retardation scheduled for October 1979, to coincide with its 15th anniversary. AVEPAN was actively pursuing its main priority in the field of preventive mental health through education, setting its sights on establishing itself as a regional organization supported by its comprehensive and progressive services.

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15 IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to Venezuela,” 02 05 May 1979, p. 34
Toward the end of the visit, the Team visited more child welfare institutions, including a reception center that provided shelter and vocational training to delinquent youths, a community facility offering vocational training services in a low-income area, and a maternity center, which prepared mothers for the experience of childbirth.15

Cuba

Between 6 and 9 May 1979, the IYC Team was in Cuba, an independent republic located in the Caribbean Sea, some 145 km (90 mi) south of Florida in the United States. It consists of two main islands, Cuba and Juventud Island (Isla de la Juventud, formerly Isle of Pines), and more than 1,600 small coral cays and islets. Cuba commands the two entrances to the Gulf of Mexico to the west: the Straits of Florida and the Yucatán Channel. Havana (in Spanish, La Habana), on the north-western coast, is the capital, largest city, and chief port of Cuba.

Like health, education has been a government priority since the revolution of 1959. It is based on communist principles, combining study with manual work. It is free at all levels and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 14, although pupils can continue in school until they are 17. With assistance from the former Soviet Union, Cuba developed better housing, health, and education than any other country in Latin America and the Caribbean, and now has a lower infant mortality rate than many industrialized countries. There are more doctors per head (1 doctor for every 289 people) than nearly anywhere else in the world, and in education Cuba has a lower student to teacher ratio than France, Germany, the United Kingdom, or the United States.16

The mission to Cuba was marked by two important events. One was the meeting between the Special IYC Envoy and Comandante Fidel Castro, the President, who agreed to contribute to the IYC Secretariat’s collection of messages of heads of state about IYC.17 The other was the validation of Cuba’s high national priority for children as part of its socialist ideology. The IYC coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Cuban revolution and, naturally, the occasion served as an opportunity for Cuba to highlight its substantial progress in improving the well-being of Cuban children.

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The IYC Team noted that the previous 20 years had seen the eradication of polio, malaria, and diphtheria, and a drastic reduction in infant mortality to 22—the lowest in Latin America. Health had emerged as a top priority, with the government aiming to make health care more accessible to its citizens. Free services and medicines were widely available in health care facilities, with prevention as the main strategy. Maternal health was observed to be fairly advanced and comprehensive. In education, Cuba had attained a 96 percent literacy rate following the massive campaign to mobilize the citizenry during the early days of the revolution. At the time of the visit, one of the country’s goals was to make pre-school education accessible to all.

In Cuba, the IYC Team visited the Circulo Infantil in Havana. It was a model pre-school institution with excellent facilities and well-trained staff for children of working parents. The ‘Pioneers’ Palace Jose Martí served as a summer camp for up to 20,000 children, with a recreation center offering children all kinds of sports and facilities for after-school hours and a theatre for musical performance. The Team noted that Isla de la Juventud (Isle of Youth) was the site of an interesting experiment in education. The island’s 2,000 km² had 57 integrated secondary schools with dormitory facilities for some 25,000 children all over Cuba. Ten of these schools served 6,000 African students from Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique.

It also helped that the Government of Cuba had excellent relations with UNICEF, which gave hope of enhanced cooperation and offered Cuba potential to showcase its child care know-how to other countries in the region.

Cuban IYC activities, however, had a distinctly political dimension. At that time, the Cuban government was expressing solidarity with oppressed children in other parts of the world, particularly those from Vietnam, Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia. A “Red Sunday” for Vietnamese children had been celebrated earlier in the year, offering them material support. A month earlier, the head of the Cuban National IYC Committee, Señora Vilma Espín de Castro, cabled the IYC Secretariat, requesting it to invite all national IYC commissions to extend support to suffering Vietnamese children. It should be recalled that the Vietnam conflict had ended only four years earlier, with the socialists gaining the upper hand. Many Vietnamese had embarked on an exodus to neighbouring countries as “boat people,” with a consequent toll on the children who were part of these voyages.
Mrs. Vilma Espín de Castro, sister-in-law of Fidel Castro, Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim and Fidel Castro, were together on field visits in Cuba to observe activities implemented for children as part of the International Year of the Child.
Chapter X

**Back to Central and Western Europe**
*(1–13 June and 8–11 September 1979)*

**Hungary**

In the summer of 1979, the Special IYC Representative went on a mission to Hungary for two reasons. One was to make a report on the IYC for the Budapest International Forum and the other, to be updated on Hungary’s preparations for IYC.

Hungary (in Hungarian, *Magyarország*) is a republic in central Europe, bordered on the north by Slovakia; on the north-east by Ukraine; on the east by Romania; on the south by Serbia (part of the federation of Serbia and Montenegro), Croatia, and Slovenia; and on the west by Austria. The capital and largest city is Budapest.¹

Education is compulsory for children in Hungary between the ages of 6 and 16. About 99.8 percent of the population of Hungary is literate. Primary education is free, and the government pays the bulk of the cost of secondary and advanced schooling. The educational system consists of general, or primary, schools, which comprise the first eight grades; secondary grammar schools for academic work; technical schools; and institutions of higher learning. Emphasis is placed on vocational training and on education in technical subjects. The ministry of health administers state health services through

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county and district hospital regions. The state also provides free professional guidance and assistance for pregnant women and new mothers, maternity leaves and grants, compensation for unemployment, old age, and disability, allowances for children, and aid for funeral expenses.2

The Budapest International Forum attracted participants from over 60 countries and the United Nations System who were experts on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Participants included then UNESCO Director General Amadou Mahtar M’Bow. The Forum provided an opportunity for the Special IYC Representative to highlight progress in coordinating national efforts to make the IYC a success. In her statement, Dr. Aldaba Lim reported the following:3

The global response to IYC has far exceeded our expectations. The impressive number of seminars and conferences, the research and projects of all kinds, the celebratory activities undertaken by governments and NGOs, represent only a part of the total picture. Already, the Year has highlighted needs that are not now encompassed by UNICEF’s traditional assistance program or fully addressed by national policies programmes.

IYC has aroused concern and intensified actions with respect to children of refugees and children of immigrants; children exploited in the labour force; children of the fourth world who live in severe poverty and exclusion in the urban slums of industrialized countries; children victimized by drug and alcoholic addiction and prostitution; children in delinquency; abandoned children; physically and mentally handicapped children; and abused children.

The greatest achievement expected of the Year will be the extent to which it promotes greater and wider implementation of children’s rights. In this respect, it is our hope that a strong foundation has been laid for permanent and sustained action after 1979 by the national commissions established for IYC.

The contribution of the NGO community and the United Nations system to IYC has been outstanding. For example, the United Nations Division of Human Rights is investigating the manner and extent to which principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (DRC) are being applied.

The Division is preparing an inventory of the provisions of resolutions, covenants and international instruments bearing on the protection of the rights of the child. It also has under consideration the question of converting the Declaration of the Rights of the Child into a Convention.

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2 Ibid. see p. 155
Poland

A short side trip to Poland by the IYC Team followed on 3-4 June 1979. The visit of the IYC Team was made to inaugurate the Monument-Child Health Centre outside Warsaw, which coincided with the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland. The Pope, a native of Poland, was formerly Karol Cardinal Wojtyla of Kraków before his election to the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. The tour of the hospital provided a glimpse of sophisticated technological equipment installed in the therapeutic and surgical wards. In Poland, as in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, which they visited later, the IYC Team realized there was potential to use the momentum of goodwill engendered by IYC to divert a portion of disarmament expenditures for children. Dr. Aldaba Lim believed that since this was an issue transcending ideology or wealth, IYC could be an occasion for some heads of state to make an appropriate gesture, such as Romania’s decision to allocate US$62 million from its military budget for children. Of the three countries mentioned, however, it was President Jablonski of Poland who provided the most positive and unequivocal response.

According to the Mission Report on Poland: “He [President Jablonski] clearly felt that such a goal was not a mere illusion but a genuine possibility worth pursuing. He expressed readiness to support any positive steps in this direction.”4 Poland’s initiative with respect to the conversion of the DRC into a convention was discussed by the IYC Team with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although Poland had hoped the convention could be adopted during the Year, they accepted the reality that more time was needed to study and modify the text. The Minister reported that there were no objections of substance to the proposed convention.5

East Germany

The former East Germany, or German Democratic Republic, was the third country on the IYC Team’s schedule (5-6 June 1979). East Germany, a common name for a former republic of central Europe, is bordered on the north by the Baltic Sea, on the east by Poland, on the south by the Czech Republic, and on the south and west by the former West Germany. It was established officially as the German Democratic Republic (GDR;

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5 Ibid.
German, Deutsche Demokratische Republik) on October 7, 1949, as one of two successor states—West Germany (officially, the Federal Republic of Germany, or the FRG) being the other—to the country of Germany after its defeat in World War II. East Germany ceased to exist when it was reunified with West Germany on October 6, 1990.6

The IYC Team’s report describes the results of the mission.7

As the principal issue raised during this visit, the partial diversion of military expenditures to children touched a sensitive chord in the GDR, which is acutely aware of its role in the last two World Wars. However, Mr. Neugebauer, the Deputy Foreign Minister, was relatively open to the idea of launching new initiatives linking disarmament and children, and he suggested that following the IYC debate in the General Assembly, the government could issue an appeal linking disarmament with aid to children. On the other hand, he observed that disarmament is an old problem whose practical solution has remained elusive, in spite of excellent intentions and persistent efforts.

The views of the Chairperson of the National IYC Commission and Minister of Education, Dr. Margot Honecker, on this issue, were couched in more ideological terms, including reference to the need for more goodwill on the part of the western powers. She felt that IYC should adopt a stronger position against disarmament, but at the same time thought that a unilateral action (e.g., diversion of the cost of a battleship to children’s programmes), would be an insignificant gesture that would leave the main problems untouched.

Situation of children in the GDR. An extended briefing on children in the GDR provided by Mrs. Ilse Thiele, Chairwoman of the Democratic Women’s League of Germany and Deputy Chairwoman of the National IYC Commission, underlined the great progress made in improving the situation of children. The GDR’s infant mortality rate had been reduced to 28 per thousand. Because of the large percentage of working women, more emphasis was being given to expanding the number of pre-school institutions, with a target of pre-school coverage of 100 percent by 1985. At the time, an estimated 69 percent of pre-school age children were in pre-school institutions. A strongly pro-natal policy was being pursued through family allowance incentives to raise the birth rate. In recent years, there had been a trend towards larger families among younger couples.

Field visits. The progressive aspects of child care in the GDR were concretely demonstrated in the crèche and kindergarten visited by the SR [Special IYC Representative].

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7 IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to the German Democratic Republic,” 05-06 June 1979

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On the other hand, judging from the children's clinic at Berlin-Friedrichshain, the SR believed more attention should be devoted to the mental health aspects in the treatment of hospitalized children in the GDR, considering the absence of parents during the critical period of hospitalization.

**Pioneers’ Participation in IYC.** Frau Helga Labs, Chairwoman of the Ernst Thaelmann Pioneers Organization and Deputy Chairwoman of the National IYC Commission, briefed the SR on the participation of the Pioneers in IYC, including an international children’s seminar on the DRC at the Pioneers’ summer camp. The planned highlight of their IYC activities was the projected completion of the new Pioneers Palace in October 1979. The Pioneers had raised 1.5 million marks (about US$3 million) for the Solidarity Fund, which was made up of contributions from trade unions and other organizations and from funds raised privately, notably by the Pioneers. As a further activity for IYC, the SR suggested sending some of the simple toys made by the Pioneers to children in developing countries. To support their activities to promote development education (educating people about poverty in developing countries), she suggested including development education material in children’s magazines. Prior to our visit, a national youth festival had been held.

**Contribution of Solidarity Committee to IYC.** Aid to children in developing countries was a strong component of the GDR’s IYC program. Dr. Aldaba Lim’s discussions with Mr. Krueger, Secretary-General of the Solidarity Committee, revealed interesting facts about the Solidarity Fund. The scope of its assistance was impressive. During the previous year it had reached a total of 200 million marks (about $100 million), of which half was sent to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. In addition to sending clothes and foodstuff, the Solidarity Committee also produced school books for use in assisted countries.

Dr. Grimm, Executive Secretary of the National Commission, expressed some unhappiness that UNICEF had not given greater recognition and publicity to such contributions. The SR reminded him, however, that this was because the funds raised by the Solidarity Committee were not contributed directly to UNICEF.

As its contribution to IYC, the Committee produced materials for a do-it-yourself exhibit for distribution in developing countries, illustrating the assistance provided to children in Vietnam, Africa, and Latin America through the Solidarity Fund. The exhibit, entitled “Solidarity of Children for Children”, was viewed by the SR and was sent to the IYC Secretariat.
Meeting with WIDF President. The IYC Team's visit provided an opportunity to hear the latest news on preparations for the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) Komsomol Conference in Moscow in September from the WIDF President, Freda Brown; the Executive Secretary, Mrs. Balakhovsky; and their colleagues. The preparations appeared to be going well. Dr. Aldaba Lim was handed a set of documents containing a draft appeal to be issued by the conference and draft working papers prepared for three of the Conference's four working Commissions. Mrs. Brown referred to the great difficulties involved in working out a compromise on the working paper for Commission 3—on protection of solidarity for children living in extremely unfavourable social and political conditions (e.g., armed conflicts, racist and oppressive regimes, and others). However, it was apparent that she made real effort to avoid excessive politicization of the conference. Mrs. Brown also reiterated WIDF's invitation to the SR to attend the Conference.

West Germany

After the two-day mission to the former East Germany, the IYC Team proceeded to Bonn, the capital of the former West Germany, or the Federal Republic of Germany. West Germany, common name for a former republic of central Europe, bordered on the north by the North Sea, Denmark, and the Baltic Sea; on the east by the former East Germany and the Czech Republic; on the south by Austria and Switzerland; and on the west by France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands. It was established officially as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG; German, Bundesrepublik Deutschland) on May 23, 1949, as one of two successor states, East Germany being the other, to the nation of Germany after its defeat in World War II. West Germany ceased to exist in 1990 when it merged with East Germany into a single nation known as Germany (officially the Federal Republic of Germany).  

As with East Germany, the idea of diverting military expenditures to the needs of children met with little enthusiasm. The Foreign Office said that such a proposal would lead to time-consuming debate of a military nature that would not divert a penny for children. In short, the Foreign Office regarded the idea as unrealistic and impractical, and failed to see how the IYC could make any headway where years of disarmament discussions had failed.

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Although the issue on diversion was “diverted,” the FRG had given priority to the events planned for the IYC. These included a celebration of the Week of the Handicapped Child (which coincided with the IYC Team’s visit); a Congress for artistic and cultural child education; a Congress on the Third World in School Education and in Out-of-School Training; and a Congress on the problems of children of foreign workers in the FRG.

The last item was a pressing concern in the FRG, given its substantial number of migrant workers. Twenty-five percent of the population in the city of Cologne, for example, was non-German. An estimated one million children of migrants from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy, and Spain were living in the former West Germany. Among the problems encountered by migrant families were the conflicting values between the country of origin and the host country, creating stress in the children; the isolation of migrant women due to language and cultural barriers; and inadequate education of migrant youth, whose lack of fluency in German and their native language made them unemployable. The National IYC Commission organized two programs to address these concerns. The first was to establish more kindergartens for children of migrant families. The second was to create alternative forms of pre-school education that incorporated parent education, with the goal of helping them assimilate to German society while retaining their ethnic identities to the extent possible.

Spain

Madrid, Spain, was the IYC Team’s next stop in Western Europe. The visit on 12 and 13 June coincided with the celebration of Philippine Independence Day. Spain (in Spanish, España), officially called Kingdom of Spain, is a constitutional monarchy in south-west Europe, occupying the greater part of the Iberian Peninsula, and bordered on the north by the Bay of Biscay, France, and Andorra; on the east by the Mediterranean Sea; on the south by the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean; and on the west by Portugal and the Atlantic Ocean. Madrid is the capital and largest city.

Education in Spain is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16. The school system consists of pre-primary schools (for children 3 to 5 years old), primary (6 to 11), and secondary (ages 12 to 16, in two-year cycles). Students may then take either a vocational training course for one or two years, or the two-year Bachillerato.

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course in preparation for university entrance. The university system has three cycles. The first, leading to the degree of Diplomatura, lasts for three years. The second cycle lasts for two or three years and leads to the degree of Licenciatura. Students earning the degree of Doctor must complete the two-year third cycle and write a thesis.11

The Law of Family Subsidy, enacted in 1939, provides Spain’s workers with monthly allowances proportionate to the number of children in the family. The necessary funding is collected from employers and employees. A system of old-age pensions and health and maternity benefits has been in effect since 1949. A fund derived from public collections provides for the support of the poor, nursery schools, and health clinics.12

The IYC Team observed that the local arrangements for their visit were less organized, and attributed this to the newly installed democracy and the preoccupation with internal political matters. A change of government had just occurred at the time of the visit, and the new cabinet ministers and heads of bureaus were not ready to discuss IYC in detail. The Directorate General of Community Development, a division of the Ministry of Culture, was the main government institution involved in IYC. This division was responsible for family welfare, the status of women, pre-school education and youth.13 Some of the activities undertaken by the Ministry in relation to the IYC were the conduct of a sociological study on marginalized children; the institution of a special system of postal communication to facilitate correspondence between Spanish and overseas children (volume estimated at 100,000); and the holding of foros infantiles roundtable discussions organized to facilitate discussions among children about their needs and problems.

New members had been appointed to the National IYC Commission, and the IYC Team adopted a different role during the mission. That role basically consisted of orientation and advocacy. No field visits or meetings with NGOs were scheduled. A positive note for the Commission was the appointment of the Infanta Margarita de Borbon as its honorary president. The Infanta Margarita, who was blind, was very articulate and knowledgeable about children’s issues, and was actively advocating support for children with disabilities, with a view to changing the attitudes toward them and improving facilities intended for them.

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
Since not much had been done on the ground for the IYC, a review of the planned programs was undertaken. At the time, six sub-committees had been set up, focusing on education, health, family and society, socio-judicial, media, economy, and finance. While not much had been accomplished with the reorganization, the national IYC commission had embarked on two notable activities for the IYC. One was the production of a document titled “The Statute of Minors,” which was designed to protect the rights of the child (i.e., abolishing illegitimacy and improving the treatment of juvenile offenders). At the time of the IYC’s visit to Spain, the Statute had not yet been debated in the Spanish Parliament. The other was a databank on child legislation. This activity gained special attention since the Spanish branch of the International Federation of Women Jurists was supporting reform of child legislation.

**WIDF Komsomol Conference in Moscow**

After a two-month break from the country missions, and prior to the visit to Romania in September, the Special IYC Envoy participated in the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF) Komsomol Conference in Moscow. The WIDF President, Freda Brown, had discussed the participation of the Special IYC Envoy during the Team’s mission to the German Democratic Republic on 04-06 June 1979. The theme of the Conference was “For a Secure and Peaceful Future for All Children.” It was an IYC-inspired meeting, which drew representatives from 135 international organizations. The inaugural session was held at the Columns Hall of the Palace of Unions. Aside from the Special IYC Envoy, H.E. Nicolai Tiklonov, First Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers of the former USSR, and Dr. Amadou Mahtar M’Bow, Director General of UNESCO, addressed the gathering. Dr. Aldaba Lim observed a most touching part of the opening ceremony:

> ...hundreds of young boys and girls (Pioneers) marched into the hall singing, and offered flowers to the people seated at the Presidium. Then a group of five speakers, singly or in chorus, spoke about their hopes and aspirations for peace and security for all children of the world.

*Komsomol* is the Russian abbreviation for *Vsesoyuzny Leninsky Kommunistichesky Soyuz Molodyozi* (VLKSM), or the “All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth.” It was an organization for young people aged 14 to 28 that was primarily a political organ for spreading Communist teachings and preparing future members of the Communist

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14 Ibid.
Party. 15 Closely associated with this organization were the Pioneers (All-Union Lenin Pioneer Organization, established in 1922), for children ages 9 to 14; and the Little Octobrists (or Oktyabryonok [singular] or Oktyabryata [plural] in Russian), members of a Communist organization for children aged nine and under, closely associated with the Komsomol (q.v.) for youth aged 14 to 28.16

In her address to the conference, the Special IYC Envoy once again underscored the need to re-channel defence spending into more productive venues such as children's welfare. She said,

In light of these appalling realities, the hundreds of billions of dollars squandered on armaments can only be viewed as a tragic and incomprehensible distortion of human priorities. Consider for a moment the facts cited in the ‘World Military and Social Expenditures- 1978:’ - while modern technology has made it possible to deliver a bomb across the world in minutes, women in rural areas of Africa still walk several hours a day to fetch water. Donor nations have spent a yearly average of $5 per capita since 1960 for development assistance, and $95 per capita for their own military forces. For the estimated cost of a [new] mobile intercontinental ballistic missile (the MX), 50 million malnourished children in developing countries could be adequately fed; 65,000 health care centres and 340,000 primary schools build. Imagine what dramatic and substantial improvement in the well-being of children could be achieved by diverting even only a fraction of the world’s $400 billion annual arms bill to the needs of children.17

The relevant information shared with the Conference was the distinction between IYC priorities in the developing and those in developed countries:

Under the impetus of IYC, many countries have initiated national surveys on the situation of children, as a basis for long-term planning. The IYC programmes of developing countries are for the most part focused on basic services—health, nutrition, education and welfare services. In India, for example, the IYC programme is aimed at ‘reaching the deprived child’ by focusing on the most vulnerable age group, children below the age of 6; children of primary school age; and nursing or expectant mothers. A programme providing a basic package of health, nutrition, education is being expanded five fold during the Year. A special immunization campaign aimed at reaching 10 million children is under way, coverage of health sub-centres is being doubled, and 90,000 community health workers are being trained to work in their own villages. In Zambia and Bangladesh, extensive efforts have been launched to prevent child blindness caused by Vitamin A deficiency, and many countries are actively promoting breast feeding.

15 Encyclopaedia Britannica On-Line, 2005
16 http://www.iremember.ru/nagrady/komsomol.htm
17 Aldaba Lim, Estefania, “Statement by the Special Representative for the International Year of the Child,” WIDF-KOMSOMOL Conference, Moscow, USSR, 01 September 1979
Child labour has emerged as a major preoccupation in Latin America and in some Asian countries, where efforts are under way to protect the interests of millions of working children, through legislation, welfare measures, training and other facilities to benefit such children.

On the other side, the developed countries priorities "relate mainly, though not exclusively, to the mental well-being of children. In industrialized societies, high divorce rates and the psychological stresses associated with urbanization have heightened public concern with their effects on children. Research and action programmes have been undertaken on drug and alcohol addiction among youth; children in conflict with the law; street children and runaways; child abandonment; child accidents; physically and mentally handicapped children; and child abuse.

Parent education programmes are receiving greater attention. The social problems facing children of migrant workers, refugees, and minorities, have emerged as an important issue in a number of European countries. IYC has also encouraged measures aimed at promoting the creative aspects of child development. But concern with the child's survival needs is not confined to developing countries, nor are the non-physical problems relating to child welfare restricted to developed countries. IYC is demonstrating that child problems in developed and developing countries overlap to a greater extent than previously imagined, underlining the basic universality of children's needs. 18

At the WIDF-Komsomol Conference, a group that called itself "Democratic Women of Chile" asked to meet with the Dr. Aldaba Lim. The group was seeking her assistance on behalf of as Chilean children who, at that time, were seeking asylum in the Danish Embassy in Santiago, and had gone on a hunger strike to protest the disappearance or imprisonment of parents, relatives, and other family members. At her meeting with the group, the Special IYC Envoy recalled that during the meeting of the Executive Board of UNICEF in Mexico, a similar group comprising Latin American observers had requested a meeting on the same issue—violation of human rights. Dr. Aldaba Lim explained to both of the groups that the IYC Secretariat could not help them directly or condemn violations of the Declaration of the Rights of Children in their countries. The Secretariat, however, could help them bring their case to Amnesty International and the UN Division on Human Rights. 19

18 Ibid., pp.6-7
19 Aldaba Lim, Estefania, "Note for the Record: WIDF Conference," Moscow, USSR, 06-07 September 1979
Romania

The IYC Team then proceeded to Romania on 08-11 September 1979. Romania, a republic in south-eastern Europe, is bordered on the north by Ukraine; on the east by Moldova; on the south-east by the Black Sea; on the south by Bulgaria; on the south-west by Serbia (part of the federation of Serbia and Montenegro); and on the west by Hungary. Bucharest is the capital and largest city.20

Primary education in Romania is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 14. The literacy rate is 99.6 per cent. The educational system heavily emphasizes practical and technical studies. Contraception and abortion, which had been outlawed by the Ceausescu regime in an effort to increase the nation’s birth rate and had left a legacy of unwanted and neglected children, were made legal after the December 1989 uprising. Efforts were made to close down the worst orphanages and mental institutions and to integrate their inmates into a more humanitarian environment.21

Romania made children a high national priority. This child-centred policy was reflected, at that time, in the 97 percent coverage of pre-school education. Teacher training for pre-school personnel required the equivalent of a high school diploma with special focus on child psychology. The requirement was the same for those teaching in the primary school.22

In a rare gesture, and in keeping with the IYC spirit, the government allocated 500 million lei from its military budget to increase the State allowance for children. This took effect even before the visit, on March 1979. And as if that were not enough, the President, as part of the national programme for IYC, approved a US$400 million Cultural and Educational Centre for Pioneers. Other activities lined up in Romania for IYC included the establishment of an institution for rehabilitation of handicapped children in Bucharest, and increasing the paediatric and obstetric departments of hospitals increased to 1,000 beds. During the Year, a cultural and artistic festival called “Children of the World Want Peace” was organized, with participants from 35 countries. Art exhibits, drawing competitions, and new films and books for children were part of the festival.

The IYC Team was accorded excellent hospitality and briefings by Mr. Constantin Bostina, Chairperson of Romania’s National IYC Commission, who was also the President

20 Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved
21 Ibid.
22 IYC Team, “Mission Report of Visit to Romania,” 08-10 September 1979
of the Romanian Committee for UNICEF and the National Council of Pioneers. During its short visit, the Team was given a tour a number of recreational facilities. Among these were the _Terrain de Sports Titanii_—a sports park and lake for children and youth situated in the fourth district of Bucharest; and the _Ville des Enfants_ in the third district of Bucharest, which was one of the largest amusement parks at that time. The planned Cultural and Educational Centre for Pioneers was set up adjacent to this amusement park.
Chapter XI

CLOSING IYC CAMPAIGN IN MEXICO
(24-28 November 1979)

By November 1979, almost a year since the IYC campaign started, the outlook in the countries was very positive: the events and actions marking the Year had pointed toward defining and establishing the rights of the child and “making the world fit for children.”

The Special IYC Envoy had met with His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Recounting of his early work among the youth of Poland, the Pope told Dr. Aldaba Lim that, in contrast to the youth of the late sixties whom he said rebelled against the establishment, the youth of his era were in search of spiritual values. He underscored the importance of the child as a personality, a developing being with inherent value and a special destiny. In an article published in People magazine, the Pope was quoted as saying:

"The Holy See thinks that we can also speak of the rights of the child from the moment of conception, and particularly of the right to life, for experience shows more and more that the child needs special protection, de facto and de jure, even before his birth. Stress should thus be laid on the right of the child to be born in a real family, for it is essential that he or she should benefit from the beginning from the joint contribution of the father and the mother, united in an indissoluble marriage."

1 People Magazine, Julie Yap Daza (editor), “Year of the Child –do you have your own Child of the Year project?,” October 1979
In anticipation of the conclusion of the IYC, the Special Representative had looked toward its sustainability and long-term global impact. Said Dr. Aldaba Lim:

...with more than half a year behind us, our main task now is to ensure that the momentum and action generated by the IYC is sustained after 1979, to ensure that the promise, the hopes and expectations born of the Year do not expire with it. For the challenge of IYC only began with 1979. In brief, the challenge was to ensure that children received a higher national priority in terms of planning, allocation of resources, operational programmes and services, on an enduring basis.\(^2\)

One of the initiatives taken in the final days of IYC was called “A Child’s Eye View.” The United Nations had distributed film cameras to select children around the world so they could make motion pictures about whatever was important to them. The resulting work consisted of a series of films written, directed, photographed and animated entirely by children. These ranged from traffic pollution in Bangkok, Thailand, to a thoughtful essay filmed in Bogotá, Colombia, about what life was like for the homeless children who roamed its streets. Children in Senegal produced a film about the fate of an all-in-one anti-hero: a youngster who was a truant, pickpocket, market thief and cheater at school. To carry out the project, the UN sent filmmakers to a number of schools where the experts worked with both the teachers and children, and showed the youngsters how to use the Super 8 camera and various animation techniques. The UN documented the training of the children.\(^3\)

**Acapulco Conference of First Ladies**

In November 1979, the first-ever meeting of First Ladies was organized by the First Lady of Mexico in Acapulco, (in full, Acapulco de Juárez) a town and seaport of southern Mexico, which is also sometimes called the Riviera of Mexico.\(^4\) The gathering was meant to provide a venue for discussion of possible programs and activities beyond IYC.

The first Conference of First Ladies who headed the national IYC Commissions was convened at the Acapulco Convention Centre from November 24 to 26, 1979,

\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopaedia 2002 © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
upon the invitation of the First Lady of Mexico, Madam Carmen Romano de Lopez Portillo. Participating in the Conference were the First Ladies of Bulgaria, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Israel, Morocco, Panama, Samoa and Venezuela. Unfortunately, Asia was not represented. United Nations observers included Mr. Bruno Ferrari-Bono, UNICEF Representative in Mexico, and Mr. Luis Sanchez, UNIC Director, Mexico City.5

The Conference was formally opened with a welcome statement by Mrs. Lopez-Portillo on 24 November, followed by statements from all participants on 25 November. Mme. Lopez-Portillo was elected Chairperson of the Conference and Mr. Marco Vinicio Martinez-Guerrero, Executive Director of Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF), or the National System for the Integral Development of Families, was named Secretary-General of the Conference. The final report of the Conference was circulated by the Conference Secretariat to the U.N. Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNICEF, and First Ladies who were not able to attend the Conference, as well as other Conference participants.

The Acapulco Conference confirmed the firm intention of the countries represented to pursue their long-term plans and programs for children resulting from the IYC. Guinea, for example, intended to maintain its National Commission after 1979, while the Congo proposed to establish a permanent agency for child welfare.

Chairing National IYC Commissions appeared to have challenged the First Ladies toward a greater sense of responsibility and inspired them to work further for the benefit of the children in their respective countries. Speaking of the emerging role of the wives of heads of state, Colombia’s First Lady articulated their desire to promote the well-being of children. The First Ladies in Acapulco manifested an eagerness to institutionalize the leadership role they had assumed for the IYC.6

The First Ladies’ involvement in improving the plight of children beyond 1979 was, in effect, made possible by the decision of the Conference to continue periodic meetings involving as many countries as possible to facilitate further sharing of experiences on national programs for child welfare. This was the main result of the Acapulco

6 Ibid., p.2
Conference. In stimulating further meetings of this kind, the Conference may have encouraged other First Ladies, especially from developing countries, to become more active on behalf of children and sustain the momentum of the IYC. Inspired by the decision to continue meetings, the First Lady of Bulgaria offered to host a meeting of First Ladies in Bulgaria in 1981, which would coincide with the 1,300th anniversary of the country’s founding.

There was broad agreement on the desirability of a permanent secretariat to provide technical support and liaison in hosting future meetings of First Ladies. Although no permanent mechanism was established, it was agreed that Mrs. Lopez-Portillo would maintain contact, through a small secretariat, with the First Ladies pending a possible meeting in 1980. There was also consensus on the usefulness of regional meetings of this kind. The First Lady of Costa Rica suggested these regional conferences could precede global meetings.

Interventions made during the Conference primarily projected national programs for the IYC and forward planning for children. Echoing a previous General Assembly debate on the IYC in 1979 were the denunciations of the negative effects of colonialism, racism and apartheid on children; appeals for disarmament; and Third World voices deplored conditions of children in developing countries, especially in the light of scientific and technological advances; and calls to link the well-being of children to the New International Economic Order.

Among the proposals of special interest was the representative of Israel’s call for “cities of refuge” for child refugees and war victims. The First Lady of Panama invited countries to incorporate the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in their respective legislation. The representative of Morocco recalled a proposal made at the Tangiers Colloquium in March 1979 to extend the IYC into an International Decade for Children.

The official conference program included a showing of films on Mexico’s DIF program and visits to projects sponsored by Mexico’s First Lady in Acapulco and Mexico City. At the Centro Juvenil de Rehabilitacion para los Ninos Farmacodependientes, treatment was offered to drug-addicted children as young as four years old. In Mexico City, the IYC Team revisited the DIF Headquarters, and also visited the Hellenic Cultural Institute, located in a 16th century cloister and chapel, which served as a theatre for cultural presentations, exhibits, lectures and classes.
From discussions with Mr. Ferrari-Bono, UNICEF Representative in Mexico, there emerged a shared perception that some UNICEF field staff had viewed IYC as an additional burden rather than as an opportunity that could support their regular work, if properly utilized. Echoing what the IYC Team suspected was a widely held view, Mr. Ferrari-Bono observed that too much time was spent writing reports, to the detriment of operational tasks. This situation was seen as the result of an increase in administrative tasks. But the most serious criticism of UNICEF was the absence of a consistent basic policy on children. In light of the new demands that IYC had made on UNICEF, the latter part of 1979 was seen as an opportune moment to assess prevailing strengths and shortcomings, in shaping the future directions of UNICEF.\(^7\) The full text of the First Ladies’ Agreement made in Acapulco is found in Annex 3.

\(^7\)Ibid., p.7

Director-General of UNESCO Amadou M’bow and Mrs. Liudmila Zhikova of Bulgaria were active supporters of the IYC.
Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim, UN Special Envoy for the International Year of the Child, with Franciska Von Vietinghof, UNICEF staff, and Laura Lopez, Executive Assistant to the Special Envoy visit a day care center in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim introduces “The Eensy Winsy Spider” an action song to the children in a day-care center in Bulgaria.
The sidewalk painting exhibition (above) and a choral concert by children (below right) marked The International Children’s Assembly “Banner of Peace, Unity, Creativity, Beauty” held at Sofia, Bulgaria in August 15-25, 1979.
Chapter XII

**Beyond IYC: Sustaining Programs for Children’s Welfare**

The work of UNICEF, through the IYC Secretariat and the Special IYC Envoy, had opened the eyes of governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations and many others involved in children’s issues, to the importance of advocating for and inspiring children worldwide. The 26 years following the IYC have seen many initiatives to meet the challenges of providing a secure, sound and healthy environment for the optimum development of the child. While most of these efforts have not been systematically recorded, they are nevertheless gaining ground.

It would take years of research and a whole other book to describe the legacy of the Year of the Child within each country, at the level of governments and NGOs, and the resulting impact on children. This final chapter deals with the follow-up of the IYC by the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and with actions leading to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the World Summit for Children.

To consolidate the gains made during the 1979 IYC, the United Nations General Assembly designated the UNICEF to spearhead IYC’s follow-up among the member states and to merge the follow-up activities with its regular program. This instruction was contained in Resolution 34/4, 18 October 1979. The UN Yearbook describes in detail the scope of UNICEF’s follow-up work for IYC:

Specific approaches and activities were approved which would signify UNICEF’s broad concern with the world’s children but would not detract from its overriding commitment to meeting the needs of children in developing countries; these were to
include establishing a referral service for technical and operational information regarding the situation of children, and promoting inter country exchange of information. In developing countries, UNICEF was asked to widen the scope of its co-operation to include giving more attention to the general conditions for children's sound personal development, and to children with special problems; at the same time, UNICEF should assume responsibility for drawing attention to the needs and problems of children that were common to both developing and industrialized countries.1

A year later, on December 05, 1980, the General Assembly adopted resolution 35/79, which recognized the need for a much greater effort by the international community to sustain the impetus generated by the IYC and to help achieve the goals and objectives of the new International Development Strategy for the Third UN Development Decade (1980s). In that resolution, the Assembly commended the policies and activities of UNICEF and endorsed Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/62, which supported the actions and conclusions of the UNICEF Executive Board, including an appeal to all governments to increase their voluntary contributions to the Fund towards an income target of US$350 million in 1982 in support of the UNICEF medium term work plan.2 The Assembly urged UNICEF through its national committees “to respond imaginatively and vigorously to its important responsibilities in IYC follow-up activities.”

Follow-up UN Action

The various bodies within the UN system had marked the Year and committed themselves to pursuing follow-up action in accordance with their priorities. For example, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), based in Bangkok, asked the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to review and report on the Year’s activities to facilitate the formulation of national and regional programs for children’s welfare.3

The following describes the specific measures taken by the regional economic commissions and UN bodies with respect to the IYC.

1 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1980, Volume 34, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY, USA, 1983, p. 927
2 Ibid.
3 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1979, Volume 33, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY, USA, 1982, p. 718
ESCAP

- The Commission endorsed a summary of the five-year regional action program included in the report of its Committee on Social Development as the broad base of legal authority for future programmes in the field of integration of women in the development process.

- An ESCAP regional preparatory conference for the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women was held in New Delhi in November of that year. Its recommendations included a strategy and plan of action for 1980-1985—the second half of the decade—in education, health and employment as a regional input to the Conference. Greater resources and manpower allocation were called for to assist member countries in implementing the world and regional plans of action.

- A meeting to advise the Executive Secretary on priorities in youth affairs activities in the region was held. Advisory services were provided by governments in development-oriented training in social work and community development. The mobile training scheme for the training of front-line and supervisory personnel in the least developed and land-locked countries concluded after a follow-up assignment in Bangladesh from March to June.

Economic Commission for Latin America

The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), based in Santiago, Chile, expressed commitment to improving the situation of children through partnership with NGOs.4

Other ECLA decisions supported work on international conferences held or scheduled under the aegis of the United Nations, and implementation of their plans of action in the region. It expressed satisfaction with the results of regional preparatory meetings for the 1979 United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development. It noted the recommendations of an Ad Hoc Working Group on Financing Machinery for Scientific and Technological Development (Lima, Peru, 26 and 27 March 1979), which set out basic principles for such machinery and requested that an international

4 Ibid., p. 722
working group study and report on the question; and it approved preparatory work for the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. A second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America was held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 12 to 16 November. In addition, ECLA stressed the need for improving the situation of children in connection with the International Year of the Child (1979), and sought to strengthen relations with NGOs.

**Economic Commission for Africa**

In contrast, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), based in Addis Ababa, marked the International Year of the Child in concrete, practical ways:

In observing the International Year of the Child (1979), the ECA prepared a manual of child development, family life and nutrition for trainers in rural areas, and published a directory of youth organizations in Africa. It also updated a survey of youth policies, programs and training requirements in Africa, and continued to collaborate with specialized agencies and regional intergovernmental organizations in implementing its youth programs. Technical advice and support to the program activities of the Association for Social Work Education in Africa continued.

**International Labour Organization**

As its contribution to the International Year of the Child, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted a resolution at its 65th session in 1979 supporting the Commission on Human Rights’ call to give priority to resolving the issue of child labor and advocating the progressive elimination of child labor. The resolution also called on governments to implement the Minimum Age Convention, 1973, or ratify it if they had not done so. The resolution was strong and contained provisions on fair remuneration, education and protection of working children. The full text of the resolution is found on Annex 4.

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5 Ibid., p. 731
6 Agence Virtuelle. Working Conditions and Environment Department (TRAVAIL), International Labour Office, Geneve, Suisse, 06 May 1999
UNESCO Contributions to IYC

UNESCO, for its part, had national and regional activities as its contribution to the IYC. These included an exhibition of children's books from 70 countries at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and the conduct of seminars and training courses on the publication of children's books and magazines, alongside the launch of co-publication programs for such books in Africa and Latin America, following a pattern successfully established in Asia.

The IYC was used by some groups to support their particular interests, for example in opposing apartheid, racial segregation and discrimination practiced in some countries and Nazi crimes during World War II. The government of Poland, on 13 June 1979, transmitted a joint letter to the Secretary-General from officers of national commissions to investigate Nazi crimes and for IYC, as well as an appeal of the International Scientific Session on “The Child in the Second World War,” held in Warsaw in April 1979; and Bulgaria on 5 October 1979 forwarded an appeal made by children who took part in the International Children’s Assembly “Banner of Peace” in August 1979 at Sofia. The UN Yearbook further states:

In addition, the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid transmitted the conclusions and recommendations of the International Seminar on Children under Apartheid, held at Paris in June 1979, which was organized by the Special Committee in co-operation with the Non-Governmental Organizations Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization.

By a resolution adopted without vote on 18 October, the General Assembly expressed satisfaction to Governments for their national programmes and to those which had initiated major regional and international events. It expressed deep appreciation to UNICEF, the Executive Director and his Special Representative and staff and commended the efforts of other organizations. The Assembly urged Governments to consolidate and build on the results of IYC in order to achieve lasting benefits for children. It suggested measures such as: including programmes and services benefiting children in national development planning; identifying, defining and documenting the situation of children; setting specific national targets for meeting their needs, inter alia in health and education and for the development of intellectual and cultural abilities; and increasing budgetary provision for programmes for children.

7 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1979, Volume 33, op. cit., p. 1261
8 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1979, Volume 33, op. cit., p. 909
Recognizing the importance of aiding and protecting the family as a basic unit of society and the natural environment for the development and welfare of its members, especially children, the Assembly asked Governments and organizations to develop special assistance programmes for children oppressed by apartheid, to review their assistance policies to developing countries and to give more recognition and aid to programmes benefiting children. It stressed the importance of following up on activities of the Year through long-term plans and action, asked Governments and United Nations organizations to do so, to evaluate IYC’s impact on their activities and to inform the Secretary-General, invited non-governmental organizations to expand their programmes, and designated UNICEF as lead agency to co-ordinate the developmental aspects of follow-up activities in consultation with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. It further requested the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy to take the interests and needs of children into account in elaborating its goals and objectives.

The assessment of the IYC by the UN General Assembly had been positive, and the Executive Board of UNICEF believed it important to maintain the momentum gained from two years of preparation and commemoration of the Year. At the same time, however, the Board seemed uncertain about the extent to which UNICEF should be responsible for sustaining that momentum in the future. According to the UN Yearbook:9

The Board discussed UNICEF’s work as lead agency for the International Year of the Child (IYC). It agreed that IYC had created an interest in the well-being of children far exceeding original expectations and that this momentum should be maintained, that the IYC secretariat should not continue beyond the end of 1980 but that care should be taken to phase it out smoothly, and that UNICEF should consider maintaining the minimum level of activities required to maintain the impetus generated by IYC until the Board could determine the extent to which UNICEF should be further involved in this work. The Fund might facilitate a useful exchange of information among developing and industrialized countries on common problems.

There was wide agreement that UNICEF should continue as lead agency for children in the United Nations system and that the Executive Director’s 1980 report should examine ways in which UNICEF could respond to requests from developing countries for additional co-operation.

ECOSOC

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) also supported the notion of sustaining the momentum generated by the work of the IYC Secretariat, as reported in the UN Yearbook.10

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9 Ibid., p. 907
10 Ibid., p. 908
The Economic and Social Council, at its second regular 1979 session, considered
a March 1979 progress report of the UNICEF Executive Director on activities undertaken
by States and organizations in connection with IYC.

The report, prepared in accordance with a 1978 General Assembly resolution,
discussed reasons for the success of IYC, which it said was due to five main factors: 1) the
international awareness of the need for such a Year; 2) the work of national IYC commissions
and Government support; 3) the role played by the organizations of the United Nations
system; 4) the enthusiasm of non-governmental organizations and other groups; 5) and
the activities of the IYC secretariat. The report also discussed the IYC Trust Fund and
various other questions that had arisen regarding follow-through on the interest created
by IYC, and contained recommendations thereon.

The Council also heard an oral report of the Special Representative for IYC on the
progress achieved at the national and international levels in implementing the objectives
of the Assembly's 1976 resolution proclaiming the Year.

By a resolution adopted on 3 August 1979, the Council expressed appreciation for
the manner in which UNICEF had carried out its responsibilities as lead agency for IYC
and commended the efforts of participating agencies and non-governmental organizations,
in particular the Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations for the International
Year of the Child. The Council urged Governments to include in their national plans and
programmes measures aimed at improving the situation of children, and invited all
Governments to participate in the Assembly's forthcoming debate on IYC. International
organizations, in particular those within the United Nations system, were asked to continue
to co-operate with UNICEF in developing a co-ordinated and interdisciplinary approach
to the welfare of children. The Council also recommended that the Assembly consider
ways of ensuring adequate follow-up to IYC.

Resolution 1979/57, containing these actions, was adopted, without vote, on the
recommendation of the Third (Programme and Co-ordination) Committee, which had
similarly approved the text on 24 July. It was sponsored by Barbados, Colombia, India,
Mauritania, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Turkey, the United
Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

The General Assembly at its regular 1979 session considered a later version of the
Executive Director's report, which presented some preliminary conclusions and suggestions
on projects and programmes initiated, included information on the enthusiasm with
which the Year had been received world-wide, and summarized plans and activities to
which IYC had given rise in some 170 countries and territories. An addendum described
the work of organizations in the United Nations system participating in the Year and that
of the Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations for IYC, (which contains) reports
by the members of the Inter-Agency Advisory Group brought together by UNICEF to
coor-ordinate and stimulate activities in the system.
Aside from the results of the IYC already noted in this chapter, IYC was also seen to have broadened the focus on the child within the context of the family and hastened the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The objectives of the 1980 International Development Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 35/56, included fostering the welfare of children. The Strategy also emphasized the essential role of the family in the balanced development of the child, as well as efforts to improve the living conditions of children and to eliminate child labor, particularly those who were under 15 years of age and living in poor rural and urban areas.

Early in 1980, the Commission of Human Rights gave priority to working on a draft convention on the rights of the child by requesting the Economic and Social Council to facilitate its completion. The Commission also obtained approval for a special rapporteur to prepare a report on the exploitation of child labour, taking into account the economic, social, cultural and psychological dimensions of the issue.

Origin of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (DRC)

The very notion of children’s rights is new in world history. For centuries, children were regarded as the absolute property of their parents, and under the values prevailing for centuries, whatever happened to children was entirely a family affair.

In response to the great suffering of children brought about by World War I, “The Save the Children International Union” was created in Geneva. Its charter, adopted in 1924 by the League of Nations, laid down basic principles for the protection and welfare of children. Subsequently, this declaration was redrafted and unanimously approved by the UN General Assembly in its present form in 1959.

The principles of the Declaration spring from two fundamental notions: the need to protect the child from all forms of abuse, mental or physical, which may endanger his very survival, and the need to actively promote his development by adequately responding to his needs for food, health care and education.

The extent of child labor is appalling. The Declaration is implicitly concerned with various threats to the survival or well-being of children. For example, the extent of child labor is appalling.
labor, even today, is disturbing. According to ILO statistics, the number of working children is currently estimated at 52 million. Child labor is not confined to developing countries alone, but also exists in parts of Europe and North America. The incidence of child abuse, which may lead to death, severe physical damage or permanent emotional trauma, remains disturbing. And what of the effects of drug abuse on the physical and mental well-being of the child?

According to Dr. Aldaba Lim\[12\] :

These concerns and objectives are also reflected in many conventions, covenants, declarations, world plans of action and recommendations of international conferences, and numerous resolutions of the United Nations, its subsidiary organizations and the specialized agencies.

Up to that time, however, no comprehensive record of the United Nations system with respect to children had been published. We hope, however, that a consolidated document recording the relevant extracts from these various international commitments will eventually be published, as a major contribution to the further implementation of the children’s rights.

While some of the major UN agreements in the field of development and international economic cooperation make no specific reference to children, their implementation would undoubtedly promote child welfare by creating the conditions necessary for economic and social progress. In the widest sense then, children would be among the main beneficiaries in the implementation of the New International Economic Order.

Social objectives of direct relevance to children are enumerated in the international development strategy for the Second Development Decade (1970); in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development; and the world plans of action of recommendations of international conferences in the seventies, in the development strategies for future decades.

The conferences of the seventies on Environment [1972]; on Population [1974], on International Women’s Year [1975]; on Human Settlements [1976] and the World Employment Conference [1976] call for a number of measures relevant to child welfare, including primary health care, education, nutrition, the provision of water supply and sanitation facilities. A few of these conferences also include mention of immunization, health and nutrition, education, ante-natal and delivery service; family planning, family education, welfare services and rural development.

\[12\] Ibid.
In focusing attention on these concerns, the foregoing conferences had helped pave the way for the International Year of the Child. The situation of children in terms of health, nutrition and education, underscored the tremendous distance between the rights enshrined in the Declaration on the one hand, and on the other, the distressing realities reflected in child statistics in 1979.

**Health**

Two of the provisions of the Declaration refer to the child’s right to health and adequate medical services. In 1979, 80 percent of the world’s population were living in rural areas, and 85 percent were without health services. Notwithstanding the progress achieved in previous decades, infant mortality still accounted for a substantial share of deaths in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In most of Africa, nearly two-thirds of all deaths were those of children under five years of age.

Infant mortality was, on average, five to six times higher in developing countries than in developed countries. Among infants and young children, the risk of dying is closely associated with three interrelated factors: malnutrition, unregulated fertility and poor hygiene.

Recognizing the basic importance of child health, the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) states that its function shall be to promote maternal and child health and welfare. In the thirty years preceding the Year of the Child, the growing priority given to maternal and child health had been accompanied by a shift in emphasis away from the traditional and costly medical care prevalent in developed countries, to the provision of basic health services to underserved people, especially in rural areas. This evolution of health policy in the UN system, promoted by WHO and UNICEF, culminated in the WHO/UNICEF-sponsored Alma Ata Conference, which, in 1978, established primary health care as the new approach of the UN system to extending wider coverage of basic health services for children.

In this regard, the goal adopted at Alma Ata, to ensure access of all the world’s children to immunization against the six major infectious diseases by 1990, is a significant landmark in the field of health. The Alma Ata Conference also reaffirmed that a main social target of the world community should be the attainment of a level of health that will permit all people to lead socially and economically productive lives by the year 2000.
The absence or insufficiency of potable water is a major contributing factor in the transmission of disease, whose principal victims are children. In a 1975 survey of 29 countries, 77 percent of the urban population had access to community water supplies, while such service was available for only 15 percent of the rural population. This constitutes a burden for millions of women and children living more than 100 metres away from the nearest source of water. To rectify this situation, the provision of safe drinking water and sanitary facilities for all peoples by 1990 was proclaimed as a goal of the world community at the Habitat conference, and was reaffirmed at the United Nations Water Conference.

**Nutrition**

The right to adequate nutrition is a cardinal point in the Declaration. At the time of IYC, three quarters of the world’s children were suffering varying degrees of protein-energy malnutrition. In severest form, it affected some ten million children. African studies showed that up to 50 percent of hospitalized children were afflicted by nutritional diseases. In Asia alone, excluding China and Japan, the number of malnourished children was estimated at 70 million. Furthermore, about 250,000 children annually became blind due to vitamin A deficiency.

The effects of malnutrition are most critical during the pre-school age. This realization was prompting international organizations active in child nutrition, including UNICEF and the World Food Programme, to shift their assistance from supplementary feeding programmes at primary school level to the more vulnerable pre-school age group.

The 1974 World Food Conference called on all governments to accept the goal that “within a decade, no child will go to bed hungry . . . and no human being’s future and capacity will be stunted by malnutrition.” But the critical situation revealed in world statistics only shows how much remains to be done in this vital area.

**Education**

Under principle seven of the Declaration, children are entitled to free and compulsory education, at least in the elementary stages. The struggle against illiteracy was declared by the UNESCO General Conference The International Women’s Year Conference and the World Employment Conference urged equality of access to educational services especially in rural areas.
Yet universal primary education had yet to be achieved in many developing countries. At the time of IYC, it was estimated that by 1985, some 134 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 in the third world would not be in school. In 1976, 72 countries had an enrolment ratio below 50 percent. The majority of children in most developing countries do not complete the first level of education, and each year only increases the absolute number of illiterate children and school dropouts.

But numbers do not tell the whole story. Quality is an equally pressing concern, since education is meaningless if it has no relevance to the lives of the urban and rural poor. Through non-formal education and other approaches, education more relevant to employment opportunities in rural areas was being developed.

Current statistics on children show some improvement in their plight. Nevertheless, the absolute number of children experiencing the problems highlighted by IYC in 1979—in terms of poverty, poor health, inadequate nutrition, limited access to education, vulnerability to abuse, violence and exploitation—has grown, and the challenges confronting children in 1979 persist in varying degrees. Today, new threats to the health and security of children have increased as a result of war, terrorism and HIV/AIDS. The world has still a long way to go to assure children's basic right to health, nutrition and education, while combating new dangers to the health and survival of children.

New perspectives

One of the results of IYC was to broaden thinking on the concept of children's rights. But among the perspectives that emerged from the Year was the enlarged framework of children's rights, beyond the scope of the basic needs defined in the Declaration on the Rights of the Child. Concepts such as the right to a good parenting experience, the right to individuality, the right to participatory citizenship, the right to effective advocacy services, represented new dimensions in thinking about the child.

One of the countries that has sustained its campaign on children's issues is Algeria, based on a report on its Promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the legal protection of children and adolescents (2002).13
An independent National Commission on the reform of the legal system in Algeria was set up in 2000. Among the conclusions drawn were issues concerning the independence of judges and the implementation of international conventions ratified by the country. This gave UNICEF an opportunity to promote the effective use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the judiciary. The entry point was the “Institut National de la Magistrature” (INM), which is the only school in Algeria providing full-time three-year post-graduate training for future magistrates.

UNICEF’s partnership with INM seeks to make the practice of child rights consistent with the international standards for juvenile justice in the Algerian legal system by referring to the application of ratified international treaties such as the CRC. In Algeria, international treaties ratified by the country carry greater legal weight than national laws. This is key to promoting the commitments assumed through the ratification of treaties.

The application of the CRC has been limited by the lack of knowledge about the principles of child rights. Although ratified treaties are published in the official newspaper, it is not certain that judges will use these treaties in their work. The same applies to lawyers and other professional groups such as the police.

One aspect of the approach adopted by the INM and UNICEF has been to increase the knowledge base in the judiciary system by training student magistrates and serving judges on the CRC. This has resulted in the incorporation of a new course in the curriculum on “International Human Rights Legal Instruments.” There is also in-depth teaching on the CRC and its Optional Protocols and their practical application.

A second aspect of the approach is to review the degree of conformity of Algerian law with the CRC as well as the current practice of judges when ruling on relevant cases. A comparative study of Algerian law and the CRC was made in 1993 to determine the compatibility of legislation with the CRC. However, this study was not extensive. Since 2002, the INM has been carrying out a detailed study to compare each article of the CRC with Algerian legislation to identify gaps and ways of ensuring greater harmonization between Algerian law and the Convention.

To complement this study, further research will be carried out to examine the conformity between jurisprudence in the Algerian courts and the CRC in matters affecting children. Research will also be conducted on the application of juvenile justice and its conformity with international standards. Both research The aim is to identify all legal provisions related to juvenile justice in Algerian laws. The study will then compare the
legal provisions against the standards provided by the international instruments relating to juvenile justice. Finally, it will identify mechanisms and propose any necessary amendments to Algerian laws to ensure that they are consistent with the international standards and new trends in juvenile justice.

This initiative has made children more visible in the judicial system. Among others, it has prompted the INM to offer a one-year specialization in juvenile justice on top of its three-year postgraduate course. Still another outcome of the initiative is the creation by the Minister of Justice of a Director for Child Rights under the Department for Human Rights. In a related development, the Parliamentary Committees on Youth and on Justice have agreed to work with UNICEF to create mechanisms for the effective application of the CRC in all draft legislation before Parliament.

Treading Path toward Convention on the Rights of the Child 14

The entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 2 September 1990 marked the culmination of nearly 70 years of efforts to obtain international recognition of the special needs and vulnerability of children as human beings.

The road to the CRC dates back to 1924 when the League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations, endorsed the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which stated, “Mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give.”

But a stronger commitment to the child lay ahead. The 1924 Declaration was improved upon in 1948 when the UN—formed in 1945 after World War II—adopted a second Declaration of the Rights of the Child that included seven points of concern related to children. That same year, a Universal Declaration on Human Rights was also adopted by the UN General Assembly. A third, more detailed Declaration of the Rights of the Child, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1959.

In 1966, the UN adopted two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Both of these Covenants, along with their amendments known as “Optional Protocols” and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, make up the International Bill of Human Rights, which came to fruition in 1976 when both Covenants entered into force.

14 UNICEF Website, 2004
The Declarations on Children’s Rights adopted by the United Nations were statements of goodwill and not legally binding treaties. This meant that while states agreed with what the specific declarations about children’s rights, they were not legally obliged to ensure that those rights were upheld in their countries.

Hence, in 1978, NGOs advocating child rights used preparations for the International Year of the Child as a platform to lobby for a legally binding covenant or convention for child rights, similar to other legally binding tools for advancing human rights. In 1978, a draft convention on children’s rights was submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) by the Government of Poland. During the International Year of the Child in 1979, the Commission set up a working group to coordinate the range of ideas on the draft convention being submitted by governments around the world. Ten years of painstaking negotiations followed.15

On the eve of the Year of the Child, Poland took the lead in pursuing this initiative by formally proposing a draft text for a Convention. The Polish draft was essentially the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, with the addition of legal text on the implementation of the ten-point declaration. In 1979, the UNCHR established a working group to review and expand the Polish text. The group consisted of a broad range of government representatives and members of civil society groups. Independent human rights experts and observer delegations of non-member governments and UN agencies such as UNICEF also participated in the drafting of the Convention. Their painstaking work continued for ten years, from 1979 to 1989, when the Convention was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly.

As UNICEF explains, the CRC is not an absolute license for children.16

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child upholds a number of basic rights, it does not infringe on the rights of parents to decide what is best for their children. Instead, it specifically states that governments shall make every effort to keep families intact, and shall provide support and assistance to parents in fulfilling their primary responsibilities with regard to the upbringing and development of their children. The promotion of children’s rights is not a matter of placing children in conflict with the adult authorities in their lives, but of encouraging all citizens to work together for a safe, healthy and productive future for children.

14 UNICEF Website, 2004
The type of climate in which examination of children's rights issues takes place is an essential part of the learning process. Children may learn about rights through methods in which the adult imparts information. But learning involves creating a group atmosphere in which each individual is valued and respected, where bias and discrimination have no place, where democratic participation is encouraged and where responsible expression of opinions is the norm. In short, learning will be most effective when young people not only grasp cognitive concepts, but also practice the skills and experience the attitudes relevant to the promotion of rights.

In working with young people, adults need to be aware that there are many rights issues that will be highly sensitive and personal. In any group, there may be young people who have experienced or are experiencing poverty, abuse, neglect, separation from one or both parents, or discrimination. Their need for privacy must be respected; in no circumstances should they be compelled to discuss these issues against their will. On the other hand, adults would do well to inform themselves in advance about the appropriate resource people or agencies in their school or community that could intervene in serious matters of rights violations. Should the need arise, they would then be prepared to refer those children who might need specialized support.

**IYC as a Milestone**

As this chapter has shown, the Year of the Child was one milestone in a series of initiatives taken during the twentieth century to improve the well-being of children. In September 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child became legally binding on all the countries that ratified it. That same month, government leaders gathered for the 1990 World Summit for Children, one of the largest meetings of government leaders in history. At the Summit, a World Declaration and Plan of Action were agreed upon to advance the rights of children. The International Year of the Child, with its focus on national and local initiatives, had been a precursor of the Summit. Eleven years later, the world was ready for a World Plan of Action for Children.

The UNICEF Executive Board decided to support the World Summit for Children, as the following account will show.\(^\text{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) Ibid.

The Executive Board held a special session (New York, 18-22 December 1989) to consider Secretariat support of the 1990 World Summit for Children, initiated by six Governments (Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden). The Summit had originally been proposed in *The State of the World’s Children Report* (1989) to draw attention and promote commitment at the highest political level to the goals and strategies for ensuring the survival, protection and development of children as key elements in the socio-economic development of all countries. The Executive Director recommended that UNICEF take advantage of the opportunity presented by the Summit to promote public awareness and stimulate programme mobilization among governments, NGOs, the media, professional organizations and public leaders.

Welcoming the initiative of the six governments, the Board agreed that UNICEF should provide secretariat support for the preparation of the Summit. It noted the initiators’ establishment of an ad hoc planning committee and requested that its membership include other Governments. The Executive Director was authorized to enter into necessary committal expenditures for the preparation of the Summit up to an amount of $700,000; he was requested to establish a special account for the preparation of the Summit and a special account for mobilization activities related to the Summit.

**Basic Education for Children**

Much is yet to be done, however. A report released by UNICEF on December 8, 1998, declared that about 130 million children between the ages of 6 and 11, including 73 million girls, would go without basic education. This shortfall has broad implications for those children’s welfare, and by extension, for world peace and security, UNICEF argued in its annual State of the World’s Children Report. Although the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child established the right to education as a basic human right, more than 850 million people—about a sixth of the world’s population—would enter the 21st century unable to read or write.

UNICEF’s report devoted special attention to girls and women, who, according to the report, comprise two-thirds of the world’s illiterate population. The problem is worst in developing countries, but even countries such as the United States face problems, such as educational systems that fail to prepare students for the workforce. Discrimination is a major impediment to educating girls and women, but the rewards of overcoming this bias are far-reaching. Educated women were found to contribute more to the economic
and political life of their countries and have fewer and healthier children than uneducated women. Their children were also more likely to be educated themselves. Basic education could be achieved worldwide with an investment of US$7 billion per year, the report said.\textsuperscript{18}

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly reviewed the implementation and outcome of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the corresponding Plan of Action. The written review was called, “We the Children: End-Decade Review of the Follow-up to the World Summit for Children.”\textsuperscript{19} In 2002, the same body adopted a document entitled, “A world fit for children,” which affirmed the obligations and commitments required to protect the rights of children, as well as recognized the role of parents and families.

\section*{IYC in Hindsight}

The IYC was officially born on September 1977 with the appointment of Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim as the Special Envoy. It ceased to exist on December 1979 at the end of the appointed year. While there had been a motion for the Secretariat to continue beyond the Year, Dr. Aldaba Lim decided to go back to her home country to join her family and continue her pursuit of children’s cause, whether locally or globally, at a less frenzied pace.

The shift from international civil service to service in her native land has not stopped her from becoming a part of international and local activities focusing on development issues. From 1981 to 1986 the former Special Envoy served as the chairperson of the UNESCO International Commission for Peace in the Minds of Men and the International Jury for the UNESCO Prize on Peace Education. In 1981, she was on a Panel of Experts meeting on “Policy and Planning for Children” in London, UK, organized by the St. Louis University, Missouri, USA. In 1984 and 1986, Dr. Aldaba Lim was appointed chairperson of the “LAWASIA Human Rights Committee Experts Meeting on the Exploitation of Children: Child Prostitution and Labour,” in Singapore and Malaysia, respectively. From 1985 to 1987, she was the President of the World Federation of Mental Health based in Alexandria, Virginia, USA. In the succeeding years, she took on

\textsuperscript{18} United Nations General Assembly, “We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children,” May 2001

\textsuperscript{19} United Nations General Assembly, “A World Fit for Children,” October 2004
several other committee chairmanships, and participated in experts' meetings and other fora to share her expertise and to represent the Philippines.

In Manila, she became an Executive Board Member of Caritas from 1981 to 2001. In 1993, she also founded the Museo Pambata (Children's Museum) Foundation, Inc., which operates a museum for children. She was also the Founding President Emeritus of the Women of Malolos Foundation, Inc., from 1999 to 2002 (Malolos, Bulacan being her birthplace.) In 1980, she was awarded a Doctor of Laws, _honoris causa_, by her alma mater, the Philippine Women's University, and in 1991 by the University of the Philippines (UP). The UP also bestowed on her its Most Distinguished Alumna award on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee (75th Anniversary) on June 1983.

Canon Moerman, one of the early advocates for IYC, once described Dr. Aldaba Lim as “very devoted,” commending her for making the effort to visit many countries to promote the IYC, which would not have worked if it were not for her initiative:

> She was a nice person; and of course ladies were pleased to meet her, with the consequence that something happened in the country. That’s not the most classical way of proceeding for certain people, but everybody, as we say, has his or her own charisma and one has to find one's own charisma.20

Asked what she considered her biggest accomplishments and what she cherished most as IYC Special Envoy, Dr. Aldaba Lim enumerated the following:

...(1) the chance to meet and discuss children’s most serious problems with Prime Ministers, Presidents, First Ladies, Cabinet Secretaries, Members of Parliaments, and other officials of government and NGOs alike; (2) the team spirit exemplified by NGO support worldwide, which continues to this day; (3) the models of child welfare followed by some countries, such as the mobile crèche and hospitals for children and their parents, to name a few; (4) the inclusion of child rights in the Indian and Spain constitutions; (5) Poland’s initiative to formulate the Convention on the Rights of the Child; 6) Advocacy at the WIDF and Komsomol conference in Russia; and 7) Diversion of military spending by the then German Democratic Republic from arms spending to children’s programs.

Canon Moerman views the accomplishment of IYC from another perspective:

> The most global result of IYC is surely that when you get in touch with governments or wit private organizations in whatever country, and when you say that you are working

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for children, you have a better audience. People much more easily accept the idea that indeed something has to be done for children. I would be inclined to say that a great benefit of the Year of the Child is that, generally speaking, greater attention is given to children, and that, for instance, even the present child health revolution and all the very dynamic policies of Jim Grant, would not have had the repercussions they have had without the Year of the Child.21

People may wonder what were the weak points of the Year? That’s difficult to answer; there were surely weak points—the first obvious thing, one can say, is that if we had had more money we would have done more. After all, the potential donors were a little bit mean in providing only $7.2 million for the whole programme over three years. In one of my interventions at ECOSOC I said that this was the cost of a wing of a fighter plane. We have not had even one fighter, one military plane; we have just had the equivalent of a wing of a plane. So I would be tempted to say that from the UN point of view, relatively much has been accomplished with an amount which for UNICEF and for the United Nations was relatively small. Much hard work had been done.22

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21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
As part of an outreach for children, the Museo Pambata/Mobile Library travels to slum areas to give out-of-school children opportunity to borrow books or listen to story tellers.
When Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim mulled over the major assignment of writing a book about the height of her career as an international expert in social welfare with a focus on children, the author had not anticipated the trust that she would give to him to undertake the work. It was after all a job that could have been done better by her IYC Executive Assistant, Ms. Laura Lopez, who currently based in New York, USA, had continued to be very much involved in social issues. Based mainly on actual mission reports, memoirs and official UN documents, the book chronicled what Tita Fanny referred to as the things she saw, the people she met, and the things and events that were moved from a personal and somewhat official viewpoint during the IYC two year campaign. The author had hoped that with the documents available and the time needed to do the job, those elements were captured and related in an interesting way. Indeed, Ms. Lopez’s role in later serving as the editor and critique of the work provided the necessary perspective which is as close to what the subject matter needed to be narrated and discussed.

The screening done by Dr. Aldaba Lim herself and her son, Alberto, regarding the author’s competence and dedication to social issues regarding children, were strict as they would want to ensure that the work will not just be an enumeration nor a simple diary but something more substantive and thought provoking.

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Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development (UPCSWCD) since 1986. He is currently a senior lecturer at the University of the East, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Communication Arts, where he teaches courses in journalism, information and communication technologies, and communication research methodologies. He occasionally serves as critique of undergraduate and masteral theses in major universities.

He obtained his Bachelors degree in Journalism and Master in Communication Research from the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication. Previously he was a Programme Specialist of the United Nations with assignments in Nairobi, Kenya and Paris, France (1992 - 1998). Since 1986, he has undertaken joint research and editorial undertakings with Dr. Quieta and other UPCSWCD faculty under the auspices of UPSARDFI. Currently, he writes research data analysis and interpretation for various foreign and local funded program evaluation and social assessment towards evolving national policy as team leader or research associate.

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**Ms. Med Ramos**, for the final layout of the book;

**Ms. Tess Bacalla**, for editing the manuscript; and

**Ms. Mary Ann Maglipon**, for supervising the over-all editing and layout.
The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on measures and modalities to ensure the adequate preparation, support and financing of an international year of the child, Economic and Social Council decision 178(LXI) of 5 August 1976 on an international year of the child and the additional report of the Secretary-General prepared in the light of the discussions in the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the fundamental importance in all countries, developing and industrialized, of programmes benefiting children not only for the well-being of the children but also as part of broader efforts to accelerate economic and social progress,

Recalling in this connexion its resolutions 2626(XXV) of 24 October 1970 containing the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, 3201(S-VI) and 3202(S-VI) of 1 May 1974 containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and 3362(S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation,

Deeply concerned that, in spite of all efforts, far too many children, especially in developing countries, are undernourished, are without access to adequate health services, are missing the basic educational preparation for their future and are deprived of the elementary amenities of life,

Convinced that an international year of the child could serve to encourage all countries

Annex 1:

**The Second Committee of the General Assembly Resolution 31/169 Supporting the International Year of the Child**

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on measures and modalities to ensure the adequate preparation, support and financing of an international year of the child, Economic and Social Council decision 178(LXI) of 5 August 1976 on an international year of the child and the additional report of the Secretary-General prepared in the light of the discussions in the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the fundamental importance in all countries, developing and industrialized, of programmes benefiting children not only for the well-being of the children but also as part of broader efforts to accelerate economic and social progress,

Recalling in this connexion its resolutions 2626(XXV) of 24 October 1970 containing the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, 3201(S-VI) and 3202(S-VI) of 1 May 1974 containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and 3362(S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation,

Deeply concerned that, in spite of all efforts, far too many children, especially in developing countries, are undernourished, are without access to adequate health services, are missing the basic educational preparation for their future and are deprived of the elementary amenities of life,

Convinced that an international year of the child could serve to encourage all countries
to review their programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children and to mobilize support for national and local action programmes according to each country’s conditions, needs and priorities.

Affirming that the concept of basic services for children is a vital component of social and economic development and that it should be supported and implemented by the cooperative efforts of the international and national communities,

Bearing in mind that the year 1979 will be the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and could serve as an occasion to promote further its implementation,

Aware that, for an international year of the child to be effective, adequate preparation and the widespread support of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the public will be required,

Believing that administrative costs for the international year should be kept to the minimum necessary,

Taking note of the statement made by the Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund before the Second Committee,

1. Proclaims the year 1979 International Year of the Child;
2. Decides that the International Year of the Child should have the following general objectives:
   (a) To provide a framework for advocacy on behalf of children and for enhancing the awareness of the special needs of children on the part of decision-makers and the public;
   (b) To promote recognition of the fact that programmes for children should be an integral part of economic and social development plans with a view to achieving, in both the long term and the short term, sustained activities for the benefit of children at the national and international levels;
3. Urges Governments to expand their efforts at the national and community levels to provide lasting improvements in the well-being of their children, with special attention to those in the most vulnerable and particularly disadvantaged groups;
4. Calls upon the appropriate organs and organizations of the United Nations
system to contribute to the preparation and implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Child;

5. Designates the United Nations Children's Fund as the lead agency of the United Nations system responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the International Year of the Child, and the Executive Director of the Fund to be responsible for its co-ordination;

6. Invites non-governmental organizations and the public to participate actively in the International Year of the Child and to co-ordinate their programmes for the Year as fully as possible, especially at the national level;

7. Appeals to Governments to make contributions or pledges for the International Year of the Child through the United Nations Children's Fund to ensure the adequate financing of activities for the preparation and carrying out of the Year;

8. Expresses the hope that Governments, non-governmental organizations and the public will respond generously with contributions to attain the objectives of the International Year of the Child and, through the United Nations Children's Fund and other channels of external aid, to increase substantially the resources available for services benefiting children;

9. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-third session, on progress in preparing for the International Year of the Child, including its financing and the level of contributions pledged.
Annex 2:

EXCERPTS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA CONSTITUTION

Article 24
PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN FACTORIES, etc
No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engage in any other hazardous employment.

Article 39
CERTAIN PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE STATE

The State shall, in particular direct its policy toward securing

e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;
f) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Article 45
PROVISION FOR FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.
Annex 3:

AGREEMENT DURING THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF FIRST LADIES HEADING IYC NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

Considering that the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its Thirty-First Period of Sessions, proclaimed 1979 “The International Year of the Child” by Resolution 31/169;

Bearing in mind that, said Resolution appointed the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as the main agency of the United Nations in charge of coordinating the activities of the before mentioned Year, and the Executive Director of the Fund was made responsible for the coordination of these activities;

Recalling that, as a consequence of the exhortation directed by the World Organization to all Nations, National Committees were established in all countries, charged with consolidating efforts to achieve lasting improvements for children, in general, and particularly for those in the most vulnerable groups whose situation is especially unfortunate;

Keeping in mind that, well-being is a legitimate right of every person, and must transcend the interests of the individual to encompass the community;

Recognizing that, the child is capable of developing all its potential in its own interest and in that of its fellows and that, to reach full materialization, the presence of such indispensable factors as health, education, housing and training for work, is necessary;
In the conviction that, an individual’s capabilities are entirely formed in childhood, the importance of nutrition, preventive medicine and education in present and future social welfare assumes its rightful importance;

Affirming that, the child is an integral part of the social group into which it is born, and the environment in which it develops; and that, consequently it must be cared for within the context of family and community problems;

Reiterating that, to attain the lasting improvements on behalf of children demanded by the international community, it is necessary to persevere in systematizing and bringing the work up to date as well as specifying the measures and actions to be developed in this field;

The First Ladies, Presidents of the National Committees for the Year of the Child from Bulgaria, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, Samoa and Venezuela, meeting in Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico, 24-26 November 1979, aware that the International Year of the Child will end, but not the will, the policies, and the programs to improve the plight of children, hereby resolve to accept the following:

**A G R E E M E N T**

1. To express their gratification and profound satisfaction that the Conference of First Ladies, Presidents of National Committees for the International Year of the Child, that took place on the brilliant initiative of the First Lady of Mexico, Mrs. Carmen Romano de Lopez Portillo, providing an opportunity for exchanging points of view and experiences from different geographic regions;

2. To express their appreciation, principally to the United Nations and to UNICEF, for the efforts expended and those made jointly with other related international organizations, for the observance of the International Year of the Child—
3. To promote within each country organizations that offer solidarity for the child so that the community may participate in a responsible manner in the solution its own problems, taking advantage of resources from all sectors,

4. To promote the adoption of regional, bilateral and multi lateral agreements aimed at establishing cooperation among countries, in order to share program experiences as well as human and financial resources, that may guarantee international cooperation in the solution of children’s problems;

5. To continue to hold periodic meetings of First Ladies, encouraging participation from all the geographic areas of the world, with the aim of facilitating an interchange of experiences on national programmes for child welfare,

6. To deliver this Final Document and the present Agreement to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, requesting them to support this movement.

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*a Conferencia de Primeras Damas (Conference of First Ladies), “First Ladies Conference National Committees Agreement,” (CPD/DT/4/Rev.1), Acapulco, Mexico, 24 November 1979*
Annex 4:

Resolution Adopted at the 65th Session of the International Labour Conference in 1979

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Recalling resolution 31/169 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, proclaiming 1979 as the International Year of the Child, with the general objectives of promoting the well-being of children, drawing attention to their special needs and encouraging national action on behalf of children, particularly for the least privileged and those who are at work,

Noting the activities that were undertaken at the national, regional and international levels in preparation for the International Year of the child and the progress made since,

Convinced that the International Year of the Child provides for all member States an opportunity to review their economic and social policies concerning child welfare and to formulate guidelines in this sphere,

Considering that a new and fair international economic order would greatly contribute towards genuine economic and social development, primarily of benefit to children,

Recalling the endorsement by the ILO of the aims of the International Year of the Child and its pledge to make every effort and lend all support to member States for their earliest possible fulfilment,
Recalling the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959, and particularly Principle 9, which stipulates that the child should be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation; that he should not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; and that he should in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development,

Considering that since its foundation the International Labour Organization has sought to eliminate child labour and to provide protection for children,

Noting with approval the Director-General’s Declaration on the International Year of the Child,

Deeply concerned that child labour still remains widespread in many parts of the world and that working children frequently work under conditions including those of exploitation detrimental to their health and welfare,

Recognizing the need to ensure that the health and strength and the tender age of children are not abused and that children are not permitted to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength,

Considering that the International Year of the Child should be an occasion to reaffirm with practical measures and deeds that the well-being of today’s children is the concern of all people everywhere,

Recalling the decision of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office taken at its 208th Session (November 1978), to request the member States to supply a report in 1980 under article 19 of the Constitution on the extent to which effect has been given or is proposed to be given to the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146) of 1973;

1. Calls upon member States to strengthen their efforts for the elimination of child labour and for the protection of children, and in this context:
   a. to implement the provisions of the Minimum Age Convention,
1973 (No. 138), and, where they have not already done so, to ratify this Convention as early as practicable;
b. to ensure in particular full recognition of the principle that any work undertaken by children who have not completed their compulsory education shall not be such as would prejudice their education or development;
c. to apply the Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146), and the Minimum Age (Underground Work) Recommendation, 1965 (No. 124);
d. to report in detail in 1980 under the procedure of article 19 of the Constitution on the progress reached in the implementation of the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146), 1973;
e. pending the elimination of child labour, to take all necessary social and legislative action for the progressive elimination of child labour and, during the transitional period until the elimination of child labour, to regulate and humanize it and to give particular attention to the implementation of special standards for children relating to medical examination, night work, underground work, working hours, weekly rest, paid annual leave and certain types of hazardous and dangerous work embodied in a number of ILO instruments;
f. to make every effort to extend the provisions of appropriate educational facilities, in order fully to apply compulsory education and to introduce it where it does not exist and, where education is compulsory, to make it effective;
g. to ensure that appropriate protective labour legislation applies to all children at work in the sectors of activity in which they are employed;
h. to ensure that special attention is given to the provision of fair remuneration and to its protection for the benefit of the child;
i. to strengthen, where appropriate, labour inspection and to undertake all other measures conducive to the elimination of child labour;
j. (i) to identify the special needs of children, to strengthen efforts to improve the general economic and social well-being of the
family, and to launch a national campaign aimed at creating awareness among the general public of the adverse effects of child labour on his/her development; (ii) to develop international solidarity and cooperation with the developing countries and to activate efforts to establish a new and fair international economic order so as to respond more effectively to the basic measure undertaken by each State for better child protection.

2. Calls upon governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations to assess the situation of child work and to assist the competent bodies and the ILO to strengthen their action programme for children.

3. Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to instruct the Director-General to continue and reinforce the ILO’s action through such means as factual surveys of national situations and practices for the elimination of child labor and for the protection of children at work, and to make the necessary preparations for a global revision of the relevant ILO instruments.
ACRONYMS

A S-G  Assistant Secretary-General
ATD   Aide à Toute Détresse-(Aid to all in Total Distress)
AVEPAN Asociacion Venezolana de Padres y Amigos de Niños
         Excepcionales
BRAC  Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CMLA  Chief Martial Law Administrator
COIF  Centros de Orientacion Infantil y Familial
CONAME Consejo Nacional de Menores
CRC   Convention on the Rights of the Child
CUCW  Central Union for Child Welfare
CWC   Council for the Welfare of Children
DIF   Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integrado de la Familia
DRC   Declaration of the Rights of the Child
DSSD  Department of Social Services and Development
ECA   Economic Commission for Africa
ECLA  Economic Commission for Latin America
ECOSOC Economic and Social Council
EDSA  Epifanio De los Santos Avenue
EEC   European Economic Community
ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU    European Union
FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGM   female genital mutilation
FRG   Federal Republic of Germany (former West Germany)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic (former East Germany)</td>
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<td>GFIW</td>
<td>General Federation of Iraqi Women</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>GO</td>
<td>Government Organization</td>
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<td>GYC</td>
<td>Guatemalan Year of the Child</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>ICCB</td>
<td>International Catholic Child Bureau</td>
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<td>ICDS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Development Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFARHU</td>
<td>Institute for Formation and Use of Human Resources</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>INM</td>
<td>Institut National de la Magistrature</td>
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<td>IUCW</td>
<td>International Union of Child Welfare</td>
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<td>IYC</td>
<td>International Year of the Child</td>
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<td>KOMSOMOL</td>
<td>Vsesoyuzny Leninskiy Kommunistichesky Soyuz Molodyozhi (All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth)</td>
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<td>NEDA</td>
<td>National Economic and Development Authority</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<td>NIEO</td>
<td>New International Economic Order</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation</td>
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<td>OPI</td>
<td>Office of Public Information</td>
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<td>Oxford Committee for Famine Relief</td>
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<td>PNP</td>
<td>People’s National Party</td>
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<td>PRD</td>
<td>Partido Revolucionario Dominicana</td>
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<td>Partido Revolucionario Institucional</td>
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<td>SR</td>
<td>Special Representative</td>
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<td>SRC</td>
<td>Soviet Red Cross</td>
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<td>Soviet Women’s Committee</td>
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<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
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<td>United Nations Childrens’ Fund</td>
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<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organisation</td>
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<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>VERC</td>
<td>Village Educational Research Centre</td>
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<td>WAGGGS</td>
<td>World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts</td>
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<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<td>WIDF</td>
<td>Women’s International Democratic Federation</td>
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<td>World Refugee Year (1959)</td>
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<td>WSC</td>
<td>World Summit for Children</td>
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<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association</td>
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Uplifting the lives of children all over the world has been the focus of countless efforts throughout the world, involving many organizations and individuals who have selflessly devoted their lives and resources to pursuing this noble cause. These efforts have often been met with numerous challenges, yet—thanks to the men and women who have been unrelenting in their pursuit—it would be impossible to disregard what they have accomplished for children.

The declaration of the International Year of the Child (1979) is without doubt one of a myriad of milestones in promoting children’s cause. Difficult though it might have been, the task of bringing it to fruition is cause for inspiration.

This book chronicles the history of the IYC and the important journey, literally and figuratively, taken by the appointed United Nations Special Envoy, Dr. Estafania Aldaba Lim, to ensure its success. It was to her credit that the IYC proved to be an extremely fruitful endeavor.