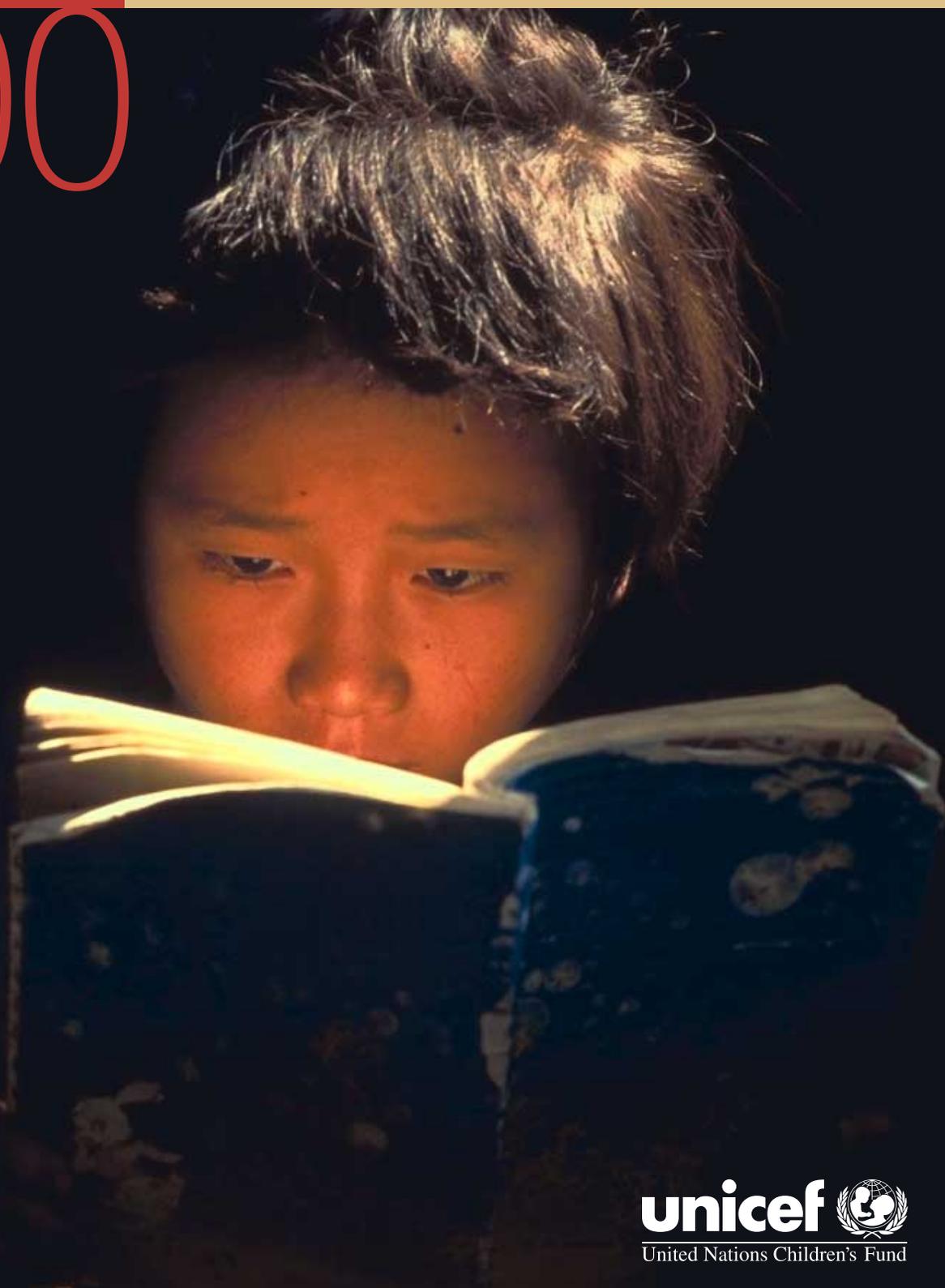


THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2000



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THE STATE
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2000

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United Nations Children's Fund

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Foreword

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they grow up in peace.

The State of the World's Children 2000 is a rallying call to us all. It is a call to governments, civil society, the private sector and the whole international community to renew our commitment to children's rights by advancing a new vision for the 21st century: a vision in which every infant has a healthy beginning, every child a quality education and every adolescent the opportunity to develop his or her unique abilities. It is a call to families and communities – and to children and adolescents themselves – to make their voices heard in helping translate this vision to reality in their daily lives.

This report tells of the many ways the world's commitment to children has been translated into action – particularly since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the World Summit for Children the following year. More children are born healthy and more are immunized; more can read and write; more are free to learn, play and simply live as children than would have been thought possible even a short decade ago.

But as *The State of the World's Children 2000* so eloquently tells us, this is no time to stand on past achievements. Millions of children continue to endure the dreadful indignities of poverty; hundreds of thousands suffer the effects of conflict and economic chaos; tens of thousands are maimed in wars; many more are orphaned or killed by HIV/AIDS.

The State of the World's Children 2000 begins and ends with the premise that the wellspring of human progress is found in the realization of children's rights. It spells out a vision in which the rights of all children, without exception, are realized. The challenge, as so often, lies in the implementation of good intentions. Let us summon all our courage and commitment to make it so. Because a child in danger is a child who cannot wait.



Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations

A vision for the 21st century



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A girl from Mozambique stands by a tree trunk in a transit camp.