

Chapter XI

Children, youth and ageing persons

In 2002, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued to work with its partners to ensure that every child was cared for, nurtured and protected early in life; was fully immunized and received essential nutrients; was helped to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS; was protected from harm, abuse and violence, including war; and that all children completed their education.

The General Assembly convened its twenty-seventh special session on children (New York, 8-10 May) and adopted "A world fit for children", an outcome document consisting of a declaration reaffirming participants' commitments to act together for the benefit of children; a review of progress made in achieving the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children; and a plan of action. For the first time in the history of UN meetings, the special session included more than 600 children as delegates and active participants.

UNICEF began work on the five organizational priorities established in its 2002-2005 medium term strategic plan: girls' education; fighting HIV/AIDS; integrated early childhood development; immunization "plus"; and improved protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination. In 2002, UNICEF's Executive Board held two regular sessions in January and September and its annual session in June, adopting 19 decisions.

The two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict, entered into force on 18 January and 12 February, respectively (see p. 637).

In 2002, the United Nations continued its efforts to strengthen the implementation of the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. In December, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people in the process.

The Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, Spain, 8-12 April) adopted a Political Declaration by which participants reaffirmed the commitment made during the first World Assembly in 1982 to improve the lives of older persons. It also adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, containing recommen-

dations for action in three priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments for older persons.

Children

General Assembly special session

The General Assembly held its twenty-seventh special session from 8 to 10 May to review progress made in achieving the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children [YUN 1990, p. 797], as decided by the Assembly in resolution 51/186 [YUN 1996, p. 1083]. It adopted an outcome document, "A world fit for children"—a rigorous plan with time-bound commitments for promoting healthy lives, providing quality basic education, combating HIV/AIDS and protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence—comprising a Declaration and Plan of Action (**resolution S-27/2**) (see p. 1169). Participants pledged to complete the unfinished agenda of the 1990 Summit and to achieve other goals and objectives, particularly those of the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the Assembly in resolution 55/2 [YUN 2000, p. 49], and reaffirmed their obligation to promote and protect children's rights, acknowledging the legal standards set by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, contained in Assembly resolution 44/25 [YUN 1989, p. 560]. The Plan of Action was a commitment to ensure a world where children received the best possible start in life, had access to quality basic education and developed their individual capacities. Governments set priority actions and targets for 2010, as benchmarks towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The session brought together 69 world leaders, 190 national delegations, 1,700 representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and others, and included, for the first time in the history of UN meetings, more than 600 children as delegates and active participants. Some 400 children from 154 countries participated in The Children's Forum, which met from 5 to 7 May.