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Notes

[Archives: CF/NYH/SP/SUM; Folder: S0355.] Contents: Section 1: Members of the Planning Committee - Schedule of (remaining) meetings and activities; Section 2: Schedule and Programme of the World Summit for Children; Section 3: Draft Declaration of the World Summit for Children - Draft Plan of Action; Section 4: Report of Meetings: - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Meetings of the Planning Committee - Meetings of the Working Group on Format - ~~Meetings of the Working Group on the Declaration - Statement of Agreement of the six Initiating Governments -~~

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Forward Header

Subject: A Global Agenda for Children Beyond the Year 2000
Author: Marta Mauras
Date: 5/29/98 7:55 PM

Dear Carol,

Please find below preliminary comments on the Global Agenda for Children Beyond the Year 2000, which are based on discussions from working groups within the RMT and the plenary session in Costa Rica last April. These comments consist for now of:

- general comments on content and format
- answers to the three questions you raised
- a document (attached) still in draft called "Facing the Future: A view from Latin America and the Caribbean of the Global Agenda for Children Beyond the Year 2000", which tries already to translate the directions of the Global Agenda into the region's realities.

In addition, the RMT is preparing inputs to four Priority Themes which will be sent as soon as ready. These are ECCD, Learning, Gender and Participation. The latter is the background document to start the work of the global Working Group on Child and Adolescent Participation, which is lead by TACRO and Marta Santos Pais. There are two additional papers prepared in this region, on health reform, a study lead by the Costa Rica Office, and on Rights Approach to Policy and Programme Development by TACRO, that could be used to define and prioritize the actions UNICEF should undertake.

The process followed to produce these comments has been very participatory, with the RMT involved from the initial phases of the "Tarrytown process" by providing inputs to my participation in it and thereafter helping with the critique of the documents produced by it as well as elaborating specific inputs to the Priority Themes. Most of it is on-going work in the region, which we offer for global consideration.

I note with appreciation your call for country offices to provide feedback after discussion with their country teams, and I am sure that these inputs will enrich the discussion even further.

General Comments

First, we are happy that the vision, from where the whole

construct of the Agenda stems, is centered on the fulfilment of human rights for all. Yet we feel it needs to be expressed in far more compelling terms. Thus we would like to propose that, as was captured in the second Tarrytown document, and endorsed fully by the RMT, we state the vision as follows:

We seek a world in which human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, and are central to the concerns of all people, as part of a cross-cultural global ethic of respect for human dignity and democracy.

We aspire to a world in which children grow up to their full human potential, capable of living a long and healthy life, with opportunities for learning, earning and participating in social, cultural, civic and political endeavours.

We see children in this world as citizens, respected participants, and as people who hold and fully exercise rights.

We see children rights as inalienable human rights, and view the meeting of their economic, social and cultural rights as inseparable from fulfilment of their civil and political rights.

We believe that the realization of this rights will both flow from and contribute to the growth of cohesive and inclusive societies, locally and globally. These societies will be based on the values of equity and solidarity, and will be conscious especially of the needs and aspirations of their poorest and most disadvantaged members. They will seek to ensure both equity and equal opportunities for all; will be guided by the best interest of children; and will organize to support the development of the capabilities of every single individual.

Second, overall trends described in the paper are general enough to represent virtually any region where UNICEF works. It is obvious that the focus will differ somewhat from region to region and within regions. From a LAC perspective, we would urge that UNICEF promotes the conception and execution of all UNICEF actions within an explicit framework that focuses on Equitable Human Development, i.e. addressing the issues of equity and disparity as well as the integrality between economic and social development. At the same time, more explicit emphasis on the normative and juridical aspects of reforms required to ensure child rights is needed in the Agenda as part of the strategies.

Third, the paper requires a more explicit conceptual framework, based on human rights and equitable human development, to clarify the relationship between transformations, priority themes and strategies which presently seem confused. Conceptually and in terms of a practical agenda, there is a need to link democracy, rights, economic growth and modernization, all of these in terms of specific public policies that aim at human development. Also, the analysis of global trends and the transformations identified should lead to some kind of global agenda larger than that of UNICEF. Yet, this isn't there and, as a result, the jump to defining UNICEF priorities is too abrupt. An example is the need to promote a culture of values, not only at family level but also in national and international contexts.

* Fourth, the RMT decided to recommend that three additional themes be considered as Priority Themes: Public Policies and Equity,

Family Enabling and Empowerment and Resource Mobilization for Children.

On Public Policies and Equity, an agenda that promotes child rights should be capable of contributing to the empowerment of civil society and the democratization of the State with the objective of extending full citizenship to all and making societies more inclusive. Public policies can then be formulated to promote the development of a culture of rights and specifically of the "citizenship" of children, that aims at equitable human development and takes account of diversities. Important here are the investment in universal coverage of basic social services, the commitment to targeting the poor and vulnerable and to the social organization of demand, enhanced public decision-making, improved revenue collection and debt restructuring, improved efficiency and effectiveness with equity. Also important is the development of monitoring systems and tools based on community participation to evaluate and guide policy.

On Family Enabling and Empowerment, the agenda should promote public policies that allow families to recover their central role in fostering well-being, solidarity and democracy. This in turn requires an enabling political, economic and social environment. (See Facing the Future).

On Resource Mobilization for Children, the agenda should focus on leveraging resources from both the State and the private sector for financing public policies for children and the families. This should be distinctly different from fund raising for UNICEF. The emphasis rather is on the commitment by the national community itself to its children, process that at the same time contributes to creating a culture of rights, without forgetting the need for international solidarity. This needs to be examined in the context of a globalized world where management of resources is increasingly in the hands of transnational private organizations and ODA is taking the form of capital flows either through the private sector or the international development banks.

Fifth, on the priority theme Adequate Living Standards, we recommend that it is approached also from a rights perspective in terms of ensuring child rights at the community level, concretely related to the development of more efficient, effective and open institutions. Also, it is necessary to link it directly to the achievement and consolidation of WSC goals. The challenge is to consolidate institutional and governmental commitment to these goals, adapted and modified as they have been in the different regions but forming a concrete set of actions which cannot be forgotten (and which identify with UNICEF very strongly).

Sixth, priorities need to be chosen with a sense of the vision and the politics behind. There is no sense of "politics" in the paper in terms of why these and not others, or what are the chances of success or failure in achieving the goals behind these priorities. *wley*

Answers to questions by Executive Director.

QUESTION 1- "Have the trends in your region been taken into

account?"

1. The introductory section of the paper clearly highlights the equity and public policy issues (section 1-3) and the importance of growing disparities between rich and poor. However the role of public policy and UNICEF's role in promoting and reinforcing those public policies get lost in the section on priority themes for UNICEF advocacy and action. The broad theme of adequate living standards forms the panacea for most UNICEF interventions that were formerly included under the 70's basic needs framework and tries to incorporate the policy development, budget restructuring, participatory planning and monitoring of social investment all into one very generic theme that lacks focus if areas for intervention are to be seriously and systematically addressed in any way.

We are therefore suggesting the public policies promoted by UNICEF should search for:

- universal coverage of basic social services
- social organization of demand and participation of users in the organization of what is offered
- strengthening national capacity to provide basic social services by paying attention to improved revenue collection, and debt restructuring; with an aim to improving efficiency and effectiveness in service of equity
- enhance public decision-making over private decision-making
- allocation of resources to favour social interests and the exercise of children's rights and citizenship.

UNICEF should clearly identify public policy as a priority theme for advocacy and action.

2. Another regional trend that is insufficiently articulated is that of early child-care and development. The separation of early child-care and development from education does not support the programme thrust in the region of LAC where the emphasis is to focus on the psycho-social aspects of child-care be it in homes or day-care centers, and inclusion of child care programmes within support for pre-primary education. The link between early child-care and development and learning needs to be explicitly maintained.

3. On Violence and Exploitation, the issues of domestic violence and violence among youth linked, among others, to the trafficking and use of drugs and strategies to deal with this phenomenon are trends in the region that need to be overtly addressed.

4. Under the theme Adolescents, attention needs to be paid to issues of life skills. The communication component in these types of programmes is critical, more use of modern media and the communication revolution is critical to ensure development and protection of this age group. Explicit linkages need to be made between ensuring adolescent development, protection and participation and communication strategies for reaching this age group.

5. Resource mobilization for Children:

- (a) Needs to be set within the broader context of leveraging

resources for children, by governments, donors, international financial institutions, NGOs and service organizations, public and private partners. It should be a priority theme for UNICEF in the next millennium and not merely a strategy for achieving our own objectives. UNICEF's greatest legacy to children will not be the one billion that it invests in Children's programmes every year, but rather the commitment it leverages from governments, institutions and individuals for children. Recognition of the importance of other key players and advocacy with these groups has been the key to raising visibility on children's issues in a region where UNICEF's financial resources are modest.

(b) An organizational strategy for fundraising within UNICEF needs to be developed based on a synergistic approach that blends experiences at the country and regional levels. The experiences of the LAC region in working with the private sector and public agencies is not picked up in the document. The issue of UNICEF's image and an awareness of its mandate and the strategic choice of causes we identify ourselves with, needs to be clearly articulated over a sustained period of time, rather than moving progressively from one corporate priority to another.

QUESTION 2 - "Are the priority themes for UNICEF informed by the lessons of the 1990's?"

1. An analysis of the accomplishment and failures of the WSC goals will help provide some of the answers to this question. By and large those goals that required transformations in public policies across the board and touched on equity issues have been the hardest to address i.e. reduction of malnutrition. The priority themes insofar as they no longer take a sector specific approach, address the issue of the need for a comprehensive intersectoral focus that undergirds the rights based approach to programming.

2. In the LAC region the final goal of UNICEF's cooperation in favour of children and women is seen as the accomplishment of civil, political and social rights. While the priority themes in the global agenda touch on many of key elements, the importance of transformation goals (objectives related to children that are intended to guarantee, ensure one or more rights which will consequently allow other rights to be exercised) within these priority themes will help towards providing a focus, based on experiences within the region.

3. A recurrent theme in the 1990's has been the growing marginalization of large segments of society, as detailed in page 2 of the Global Agenda. It is not clear however how these priority themes aim to focus on dealing with these structural inequities. Flagship elements of our programmes need to explicitly address this issue.

4. Also, the role of communications in the formation of attitudes and behaviours need some explicit analysis; the role of information for decision-making and resource allocation forms part of this.

QUESTION 3 - "Should these be the priority themes for UNICEF's advocacy and action. How can we define and prioritize what UNICEF should do"

1. It is critical for UNICEF in the current environment of UN reform and shrinking ODA to maintain a "cause celebre" with which our identity is tied up. One or two causes around which we can mobilize popular support and where we are able to demonstrate visible progress.

2. These priorities need to be set in the context of what are the one or two key issues which, if systematically addressed by the organization, will lend significant momentum to a rights based Agenda. This is not to exclude activities in other areas that based on the country programming process appear as important, but rather to galvanize popular support and public opinion around tangible targets and goals for a sustained period of time.

3. Part of the difficulty in prioritizing the themes outlined in the global agenda stems from the fact that before defining what UNICEF should do, we need some clarity on where do we want to go. What is the social horizon toward which the rights based approach to policy and programme development should lead us. (Elements of this vision are detailed under item 2 of the Agenda, but it is far too broad and not child centered). Based on this vision we should clearly prioritize actions for the year 2000 and beyond. It is critical to establish the connections between the priority themes and flagship elements and articulate how these link to our long term vision.

Best regards,
Marta Mauras

(See attached file: Facingf2.wpd)



Facingf2.wpd

FACING THE FUTURE

A view from Latin America and the Caribbean of the Global Agenda for Children Beyond the year 2000

This document addresses UNICEF regional strategy for children as part of a global vision of the world in which human rights constitute one of its central pillars.

Starting from a Global Agenda being developed by UNICEF, this document presents the strategic priorities, focus areas and direction and priorities for action in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

By the end of 1997, a small group of experienced UNICEF staff members worldwide were appointed to outline preliminary suggestions on what a long-range global agenda might look like and what UNICEF's role should be. As a result of their work an initial paper was prepared and is now in process of wider consultation.

Based on the economic and social situation and trends in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, particularly among children and women, the accumulated experience and knowledge in the region and the papers developed globally, UNICEF Regional Office with the active participation of LAC UNICEF Country Offices, the Regional Standing Committee on Knowledge Acquisition and Policy Planning and a flexi-team, especially appointed, produced several documents with orientations towards implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and improving the well-being of children and women in the region.

This document presents, in sum, priorities for LAC as part of the Global Agenda. It should be considered as work in progress that will be enriched by future developments.

Introduction

Humanity is going through a deep process of social transformation derived from complex political, economic and social determining factors. Globalization and economic interdependence are emerging as new features of society; mass culture is expanding on a universal way; scientific certainty is weakening and there is a need to find new strategies and grounding for a new social order so as to enhance democracy and overcome inequalities¹.

The extreme inequality that characterized the Latin America and Caribbean Region in the 1970s has increased, not only during the crisis of the eighties, but also during the period of economic liberalization of the nineties. Recent trends towards lower growth rates and intensified stabilization and adjustment programmes, together with slow recovery of social expenditure, are increasing inequities and contributing to conflict, corruption and new social problems.

Poverty is a persistent problem in LAC. Between 1980 and 1990, poverty grew from 35% to 41% of the population, which means that in the course of ten years more than 61 million people became part of the poor population. Thirty five percent of this total are children, while one-third of them belong to the poorest 20% of all households².

Despite the reactivation of economic growth and improvement in the provision of social services observed in many countries during the first five years of the current decade, progress with regard to reducing poverty was minimal and insufficient to counteract many years of worsening social conditions. While impressive achievements have taken place in term of increasing school enrolment, the quality and efficiency of education remains the major concern for political leaders and civil organizations. According to regional experts, the failure to advance more rapidly in

1 TACRO-UNICEF, "Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean", 1997 (work in progress)

2 ECLAC, Social Panorama 1996

improving education is principally due to the inability of governments to overcome the political obstacles to reform.

On the other hand, key indicators such as infant and under five mortality rates have experienced a significant reduction, but despite major efforts displayed by governments and international cooperation, under five mortality rate in 1995 was higher than that of industrialized countries in 1960. The gap between LAC and the industrialized world has increased from 4 to nearly 6 times from 1960 to 1995.

A more positive aspect of recent development in Latin America and the Caribbean is that in twelve out of fifteen countries for which comparative data is available, the resources assigned to social sectors increased during the early years of the 1990s, even reaching higher levels than those existing at the beginning of the eighties. On average, social public expenditure as a percentage of the GDP increased 1.8 points (ECLAC, 1996); however, there is great variation from country to country. The amounts these countries spend per capita are still small with respect to the increase in coverage and quality of social services provided.

The challenge of the future in Latin America and the Caribbean can be expressed in terms of building inclusive and democratic societies in which full exercise of rights, especially social rights, are the backbone and where children's rights are a fundamental axis for change.

A Vision of Children in the 21st Century

The heart of this vision is the conviction that children's rights -economic, social, cultural, civil and political- are inalienable and inseparable human rights and are achievable within the normative and legal framework provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore:

We seek a world in which human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, and are central to the concerns of all people, as part of a cross-cultural global ethic of respect for human dignity and democracy.

We aspire to a world in which children grow up to their full human potential, capable of living a long and healthy life, with opportunities for learning,

earning and participating in social, cultural, civic and political endeavours.

We see children in this world as citizens, respected participants, and as people who hold and fully exercise rights.

We see children rights as inalienable human rights, and view the meeting of their economic, social and cultural rights as inseparable from fulfillment of their civil and political rights.

We believe that the realization of these rights will both flow from and contribute to the growth of cohesive and inclusive societies, locally and globally. These societies will be based on the values of equity and solidarity, and will be conscious especially of the needs and aspirations of their poorest and most disadvantaged members. They will seek to ensure both equity and equal opportunities for all; will be guided by the best interest of children; and will organize to support the development of the capabilities of every single individual.

Behind the “Vision”³

Human rights—and especially child rights—is the cornerstone of UNICEF conceptual framework to project into the future, given a certain reading of global economic, social and cultural trends in a globalized world.

The first element of the conceptual framework follows the basic idea that **human rights** constitute the “paradigm” or normative framework from which we analyze the global situation and project our vision of society or social horizon.

The second element is an analysis of **global trends** as they affect society and children. Accomplishment of the WSC goals by the year 2000 should constitute the first step to ensure the satisfaction of basic needs as fundamental rights.

The third element is the **vision of society** which is value-laden and which

³ TACRO-UNICEF. “Rights and social inclusion: challenges for the 21st Century”, 1997.

indicates the changes required to transform society, from a child rights perspective.

The fourth element is the **identification of instruments** required to produce these changes. The CRC is a powerful instrument for social transformation. The identification of “transformational goals”⁴ can be an effective way of stimulating the process.

Human rights constitute a universal ethical, legal, social paradigm which directly refers to the organization of people and society. Human rights are in continuous expansion; from civil and political rights to social rights, even, in this century, moving on to the new concept of “intergenerational” rights.

The CRC and the CEDAW, as international agreements of human rights widely ratified by member States, obligate governments to recognize the right of every child and woman to adequate living standards, turning public policy from one that merely assists the needy into one which complies with rights. These conventions call for legislative, institutional, fiscal and budgetary reforms to guarantee the coverage of universal quality services for all as part of the realization of human rights.

Globalization creates opportunities but, at the very same time, is built on, consolidates and amplifies old as well as new gaps and inequities. It has become increasingly clear that the market by itself will not correct these disparities. Poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, and often conflict, constitute the main social issues which need to be addressed. A focus on human rights, as equal entitlement for all people, forces us to extend the analysis beyond poverty alone. Thus, the emphasis also on those that are excluded economically, socially and/or culturally and those that are in situation of vulnerability.

Social inclusion and social citizenship⁵ may constitute the key elements to address this factor. The concept of inclusion is a multifaceted concept, with priority assigned to the aspects of political, economic and social

⁴ Transformational goals are those objectives related to children that are intended to guarantee, ensure or enforce one or more rights which will consequently allow other rights to be exercised. When achieved they have the power of transforming society as a whole.

⁵ Citizenship is understood as “the daily practice of a right-based culture, a culture that not only serves children, but necessarily originates with them”. Quote from Ximena De la Barra’s presentation to the International Forum on Urban Poverty, Florence, Nov. 1997.

integration.

Political inclusion or exclusion refers to what can be called "formal citizenship" and participation or nonparticipation as citizens in the functioning of society.

Economic and social inclusion are related to participation in community life and the market. Two dimensions are important: one refers to employment and social protection, strongly determined by the economic structure which leads to economic inclusion/exclusion. Economic inclusion refers to the insertion of individuals in the labour market, according to the characteristics, quality and forms of employment and to the level of income to which they have access. The other refers to individual and collective interactions or "social capital", where a set of factors such as networks, transparency of institutions and trust are decisive for the well-being of individuals and families, for community and social life, and for the development of institutions. Social inclusion takes into account aspects such as health coverage, education, social security and family income, among others⁶.

Economic inclusion is a basic factor for social inclusion, but social inclusion generates the possibility of an integrated and democratic society.

According to these factors, the population can be classified in three large groups: the fully included, the excluded and the vulnerable or at risk, which are useful categories for public policies based on equity and human development.

The **fully included population** encompasses the families of the upper and upper-middle classes. These are families who possess a support base that is very stable in terms of economic and social capital. At the other extreme is the **excluded group** to which families that live in high-risk situations belong, who face educational and cultural barriers and have difficult access to basic services. Also the population or individuals who suffer some kind

⁶ Fitoussi Jean Paul, Rosanvallon Pierre, "Le nouvel âge des inégalités", Paris 1995.

of social discrimination or situation of marginalization or isolation in specific physical spaces, as is the case of refugees and displaced people affected by violence. The **vulnerable group** includes those poor population who nevertheless seek alternatives for inclusion as well as impoverished middle class who have lost their channels for inclusion.

From these elements of the framework, the vision to make human rights a reality can be decomposed into three interrelated aspirations: sustainable and equitable development, social inclusion and social citizenship⁷.

The appropriate **policy instruments**, legal, economic, social, financial and institutional, to produce the desired transformations requires consensus-building, alliances and open dialogue between the State and civil society institutions at international, regional and national level. The term “public” is defined in this interaction, thus public policies are those generated through a process of participation.

Families have to become “spaces” for the construction of inclusive societies where the values and practices of democratic coexistence and social justice are forged. Education becomes the social and cultural process that creates human capital and contributes to social capital formation, democracy and equity. The “voice of children and adolescents”⁸, i.e. the right of children to express their opinion and participate in matters of their concern, constitute an element of this process.

State and civil society institutions need to provide confidence, ensure equity and manage resources efficiently and transparently. These “ideals”, that the international community has set for itself, need to materialize through a process over time, on different spheres, one of which is the construction of citizenship, starting with that of the child. Moving towards this desired “social horizon” or vision needs

⁷ See “Rights and Social Inclusion: Challenges for the 21st Century” by TACRO-UNICEF, 1997, where the concept of social or “emancipated” citizenship is expanded on, basically referring to the capacity to fully exercise rights by all.

⁸ “Voice” in this context means empowerment of children through the creation of spaces for participation which have an effect on society. TACRO-UNICEF, “Conceptual framework for developing an agenda for children”, version of December 1997.

transformations to take place within the society, at micro and macro level as well as at local, national and global levels.

Setting Regional Priorities⁹ within a Global Agenda

It is now commonly understood that there is a need for a new development approach focusing on equity, solidarity and respect for others, as well as economic, social and cultural inclusion, as the basis for sustainable development and democracy.

Children and adolescents are a crucial population group that could trigger the process of change leading to inclusive societies, to modes of coexistence that are more democratic. Children and adolescents are the nucleus of change since they represent the means through which society can:

- build values
- build citizenship
- build human capital (social investment in children and adolescents is the investment that has the highest rate of return)
- build social and cultural capital

Children rights are the path and the foundation to build inclusive societies and social citizenship. They constitute the framework that orients LAC's medium and long term strategy for action.

The CRC defines a level of social protection and welfare whose achievement should be sought by all States, regardless of their systems and circumstances, visualizing the full exercise of rights as the result of progressive development of public policy, legislation and practical action.

In this context, the final goal of UNICEF's cooperation in favor of children and women is the accomplishment of civil, political, economical and social rights by all. For this to occur, it is necessary to define the minimum basic

⁹ TACRO-UNICEF, "Rights and social inclusion: challenges for the 21st Century, 1997

content for each child right, which can contribute to the formulation of appropriate policies¹⁰.

To reverse exclusion and overcome disparities implies to concentrate efforts in areas where it is possible to make a difference in terms of impact, promoting political commitment of society as a whole to change the situation prevailing towards a more equitable society.

To this end, the LAC region will address the following priorities:

Global Priorities¹¹	LAC Regional priorities	Strategies
<p>1. Early childhood care and development:</p> <p>Ensure the best possible start to life of the young child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting and caring practices • Young child health and nutrition services • Girls' education • Public policies • Partnership with community and civil society organizats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reform child protection institutions * Empowering the family as focus of public policy * Promotion of responsible parenthood and of early child care practices * Development of national ECCD policies with particular emphasis on strengthening the role of families * Advocating for the realization of child rights

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion based on concrete experience in Country Programme development based on the CRC see "Rights Approach to Policy and Programme Development", TACRO-UNICEF, April, 1998.

¹¹ UNICEF-TACRO. "FACING THE FUTURE: A view from Latin America and the Caribbean of the Global Agenda for Children Beyond the year 2000". Discussion Paper.

<p>2. Gender equity:</p> <p>Ensure the realization of the rights of women and girls, including improvement of their status in society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote legal and institutional reforms • promote participation & leadership • women's health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maternal mortality - reproductive health/safe motherhood • girls' education • life skills • work conditions and protection • violence and exploitation • gender socialization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> male/women roles, behavior, values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop legal and institutional framework by country, addressing selected legal rights e.g. inheritance, property * Design and promote public policies to strengthen gender equity within families and society * Promote legal protection and sanctions against violence * Promote maternal mortality/ safe motherhood care, particularly in countries with high maternal mortality rates. * Strengthening girls' education * Elimination of child labour * Promotion of sanctions to sexual exploitation * Advocacy for elimination of all kind of discrimination and violence against women and girls
<p>3. Learning:</p> <p>Ensuring an enabling learning environment for children and adolescents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality basic education with particular emphasis on child girl (formal and continuing for children and adolescents) • Ethics standards • School health, sanitation and nutrition • Parental, community and civil society participation in school governance • Child participation • Health, culture and participation of adolescents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enabling the participation of families, particularly of parents, in the design and management of education systems through parents school associations and community groups. * Enabling the participation of children and adolescents * Increasing access and completion of girl's education * Access to health, sanitation and nutrition services in schools * Insertion of core values of equity, solidarity, social inclusion, in school programs * Creating a learning environment
<p>4. Violence and Exploitation:</p> <p>Eliminate violence against and exploitation of women and children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labour • Domestic violence • Eradication of drugs • Juvenile protection • Women & children in armed conflict: • Women as victims; rape as war-crime • Girls and women recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Report sexual exploitation * Promoting reform of protection institutions * Support reform of juvenile justice systems * Promotion of peace * Elimination of child soldiers * Eradication of child labour * Elimination of all kind of female genital mutilation

<p>5. Living standards:</p> <p>Promote the attainment of adequate living standards for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal quality services • Public policy development and advocacy for adequate living standards, mainly food, income, shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Access to universal quality services * Promotion of basic education for all * Promotion of financial and national budget reforms to ensure adequate resources for social sectors * Advocacy and support for improvement of children & women's nutrition
<p>6. Adolescents:</p> <p>Ensure their full development, protection and participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social participation • Life skills • Protection against violence, disease, exploitation and drugs • Public policy development on adolescents and the family system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Legal and institutional reforms t * Development of space for participation: e.g. opinion polls, elections, youth councils, parliament of children * Reinforcing health services, particularly to fight HIV/AIDS * Protection of adolescent pregnancies
<p>7. Children's Participation:</p> <p>ensure recognition of the child as subject and holder of rights, and provide opportunities to exercise rights, including expressing views and influencing decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote education for democracy • Children fora on rights • Awareness on child rights at Parliaments and political organizations level • Mass education on rights • Afro-Latin populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Advocacy for children participation as a right * Empowering children to promote their rights and prevent violations * Strengthening participation of families and communities to promote respect and realization of rights. * Promotion of cross-fertilization of experiences, lessons learnt and dissemination (e.g. children's elections and parliaments, Child-to-Child programmes) * Creating partnership with CSO, political institutions and municipalities to promote and support children participation
<p>8. Families empowerment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills • Public policy development in favor of the family as institution • Access to quality basic services • Access to knowledge, skills And new technologies • Income opportunities • Participation in decision-making and governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enabling family environment for children * Strengthening access to knowledge, skills, economic opportunities, access to quality basic services * Advocating for participation in decision-making process as family * Creating opportunities for alternatives of production at family level
<p>9. Resource mobilization for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget and fiscal reforms • Policy development and advocacy to mobilize resources for children • Institutional social sectors reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Advocating in favor of children * Capacity building for national budget and financial reform * Support local initiatives for financing programmes and projects * Social communication to inform and mobilize alliances for children

Focus areas for action in LAC

1. Universal quality services

It is ever more widely recognized that satisfaction of the basic needs of children is a necessary requirement for guaranteeing solution to the principal problems that oppress and threaten humanity. Great progress has been achieved in the satisfaction of children needs: child survival and the coverage of basic services have increased significantly in almost all of the countries of the region; infant mortality and malnutrition are at historically low levels; school enrolment in Latin America is almost universal and without discrimination between girls and boys; and in the last decade several million more people have come to receive drinkable water in their homes. However, critical situations related to increased poverty and disparities and to insecurity and violence threaten the survival of a significant number of people.

Various countries, with UNICEF LAC's support, have committed to meet WSC goals by the year 2000 and have defined concrete strategies in several areas, among them health and provision of basic services, to guarantee child survival. Three strategic elements should be taken into account to fulfil and ensure sustainability of the goals beyond the year 2000: create better conditions for achieving a culture of rights; consolidate objectives and actions in each country, as well as the processes for institutionalization of plans and programmes for children; and expansion of grass-roots participation, particularly in co-management and co-financing of basic services, which is necessary to support policies in favor of children and guarantee their sustainability.

2. Adaptation and reform of national legislation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the internationally most accepted legal instrument for human rights. The challenge is how to take the Convention into the field of concrete actions for children, thus going beyond initial universal ratification.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a process of legislative and

institutional reform to adapt existing legislation, norms and practices to the Convention is taking place or has already been completed in many countries. This is inspired by a basic shift from the doctrine of *irregular situation of minors* to that of *integral protection of children*, i.e., a move has been made from having legislation aimed at handling emergency situations related to children and adolescents in situations of risk (or at protecting individual children affected by problems such as abandonment, sexual abuse, maltreatment, and early labour), or in situations of exploitation and armed conflict, among others, to a legislation aimed at protecting the exercise of rights by *all* children and adolescents.

3. Reform of child-related institutions

The Convention on the Rights of the Child radically reformulates the relationship between children and the law. With the Convention on the Rights of the Child, protection institutions must use the "supreme interest of the child" as a prime consideration in the exercise of their functions, because children have rights that should be respected by society at large.

Therefore, it is necessary to reform the public and private institutions in such a way that they can appropriately foster the rights of children and adolescents. Among these are the institutions for administration of juvenile justice, the institutions for protection, the social ministries, NGOs, etc. This has also implied their adjustment to the doctrine of integral protection that requires a more participatory and proactive role of civil society and of the concerned people (staff, beneficiaries, etc.).

4. Education and democracy

The process of construction and consolidation of democracy (a necessary condition for a Global Agenda for Children) can only advance if fulfillment of the rights of all children and adolescents is guaranteed at the same time, ensuring child rights promotes democracy. To achieve this, it is necessary that both, formal education and non-formal education, have the values content and practices that make possible the development of the conditions for equity, social inclusion and democracy.

Equitable human development increasingly depends on the quality and

equality of educational opportunities. For it to be possible all schools must be basically "rethought".

UNICEF in LAC possesses the experience for contributing to policy formulation and to programmes aiming at:

- introducing society knowledge, attitudes and practices for creating conditions that make possible the fulfillment of human rights,
- recognizing and supporting the centrality of formal educational systems as the public institutions in which citizenship is constructed from children, linked with the family and community, and
- creating the conditions for the integral development of the child from early childhood to adolescence.

The main lines of action are oriented towards young child development; inclusion, equity and quality in primary school; the "school" as a public institution for developing citizenship; and participation and life skills for adolescents.

5. Empowerment of women

One of the basic elements of the new development paradigm focussed on sustainable human development is the constant fostering of processes for the empowerment of women. UNICEF has especially defined three areas for future work:

- a. *Integral development of women throughout their life cycle, especially with much greater attention to the periods of childhood and adolescence. The complexity of these periods in the life of girls, in which the future woman is formed, opens a range of issues that society must deal with, such as the need to underline the significance and contribution of the participation of parents in the education of their children when this is assumed in a responsible and shared manner; the way in which sex roles are transmitted, and the discrimination caused by their definition; intra family violence; adolescent pregnancy; and the role of the school.*

- b. *Legislation.* Important progress has been achieved in the area of legislation. However, not all rights are enforced, and application of the legal statute is selective and distorted. It is not necessary to insist that, in the case of women, this selectivity is negative. In this regard, UNICEF actions will be based on recognition of the fact that only when the value of a right is actively assumed by all social groups that are subject to discrimination does it become an effective instrument for transforming society.
- c. *Female leadership.* This is strategic for continuing the progress in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and for generating a platform in favour of women that radically changes their quality of life and that of their children. It is intended that more women participate in decision-taking with the certainty that their contribution will be a decisive contribution for solving the problems faced by all women and their children.

6. Child and juvenile labour

Child labour is one of the greatest obstacles to the well-being and development of children. The exploitation of children in heavy and dangerous tasks, in high-risk and abusive conditions, or in any activity that endangers their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development or their education, constitutes a violation of the rights of the child as a human being and an offense against our civilization.

Children and adolescents who enter the labour market before the age of eighteen have not only fewer years of education than those who do not work but also will receive a lower income throughout their adult life, thus generating a vicious circle of poverty. The abolition of economic exploitation of children and the prohibition of any labour that is dangerous or hinders the education of children and adolescents, is a priority element in UNICEF's agenda.

Children's vulnerability is related directly to their level of physical and psychological maturity, of which age is an objective indicator. Thus, a policy for the eradication of child labour needs to be defined in terms of

age groups¹². On LAC, this has been formulated as follows:

- a. Eradicate child labour for children up to age 12. Policies should focus on eliminating any element that interferes with attendance and adequate performance in school.
- b. Maintain school education as the cornerstone of policy for children in the 13 to 14 age group; bearing in mind the age of compulsory education and the needs for work by poor adolescents;
- c. As for adolescents aged 15 to 17 measures should be adopted to enable them to work in a context that offers protection for their rights, without foregoing their possibilities for secondary school.

The strategies that UNICEF has been proposing for preventing the problems that derive from child labour in the region cover a great range of activities mostly focussing on expanding the coverage and improving the quality of education.

7. Construction of “spaces” for participation of children and adolescents

One of the main challenges of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is materializing the right to participate of individuals under eighteen years of age (CRC, Articles 12 and 13). Participation is, itself, the present challenge for all democracies. The natural environments for promoting participation of children and adolescents are the school and the family, with the school being the first opportunity for “public” participation.

A challenge for the future is to open more regular opportunities for the participation of children, thus contributing to more open and democratic societies.

Experience in Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions has

¹² UNICEF. “More education, better schools, less child juvenile labor”, Oslo 1997

been built with opinion polls, child elections, parliaments for children, school governance, etc., as the most recent examples.

8. Empowering families

The future of children depends largely on the results achieved by families, particularly of women, in improving their living conditions and in achieving equity and orienting public decision-taking to give priority to social issues. Families main role in society which is to provide for a nurturing environment, affection and solidarity among members, find themselves increasingly less equipped to do so. Therefore, the State needs to recognize the special needs of families as systems in themselves, and develop public policy accordingly. This means not only acknowledging that families are different according to their cultural patterns, that men and women play different roles in the family group and in society, that children as well as adults have rights, but also that all of this happens in a “system” called the family. UNICEF will support the development of such policies that will strengthen family access to quality social services, provide knowledge and new skills, ensure economic opportunities and active participation in decision-making at all levels.

9. Mobilizing resources for children

The possibility for child rights to become a reality depends on the availability of resources to promote programmes and interventions in their favour which in turn is a demonstration of the priority afforded by society. This focus area for action aims to mobilize resources, investment and financing for children. Community groups and families will be supported for a better management of their own resources increasing efficiency and effectiveness in their use. Promotion of financial and national budget reforms to ensure adequate resources for social sectors will be a priority of UNICEF in LAC, developing alliances with governments, private sector, civil society and international development partners.

Directions and Priorities for the Immediate Future

Based upon this framework, the LAC Region has defined the following

directions and priorities for the immediate future (see Regional Workplan 1998-1999):

1. Consolidate the commitments and governmental agreements of Tlatelolco (1992), Nariño (1994) and Santiago (1996) for the follow-up of WSC goals and actions;
2. Develop a conceptual framework for programming based on the principles of Human Rights focusing on equity, inclusion, participation and social citizenship;
3. Identify “transformational goals” and promote policies and strategies relating to issues directly arising from a rights approach, principally on:
 - Reach the unreached with quality basic services for all, ensuring the sustainability of WSC goals
 - Establish and consolidate legislative and judicial guarantees of the rights of the child
 - Reform child-related institutions
 - Eliminate violence, exploitation and abuse against children and women
 - Eradicate child labour
 - Eliminate discrimination against women, girls and ethnic groups
 - Empower the family as a focus of public policy
 - Adolescents: their health, culture and participation
 - Early childhood development
 - Quality basic education as a right
 - Create spaces for the voice of children and adolescents;
4. Design and implement a resource mobilization strategy focusing mainly on the resources of the region for the region;
5. Establish an effective capacity for knowledge sharing and use;
6. Advocate and ensure the implementation of child rights through the UN System interventions, helping to define and implement UNICEF contribution to UN Reform, by country and regionally.