



THE CONVENTION ON
**THE RIGHTS
OF THE CHILD**



UNESCO's CONTRIBUTION

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Preface

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20th, 1989, has given a new authority to UNESCO is work for human rights and universal education.

Two major principles inform the various Articles of the Convention, namely, furtherance of the best interests of the child and non-discrimination. In the child's best interests, the Convention guarantees the right to participate and give opinions, to exercise freedom of conscience, and to actively participate in community life through freedom of expression and association. In practice, it is through education, within the family and at school, that an attitude of social participation among children can be fostered so as to prepare them to exercise these rights and become active and responsible citizens.

Non-discrimination in education means that every child, regardless of nationality race, sex or socio-economic group has the right to a full and comprehensive education. Provision of educational access is the iron test of a nation's will to cherish all its children or only a privileged few. In particular, the human right of girls to education must be safeguarded and expanded. Unless there is a dramatic change in prevailing trends, three world regions - South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States - will enter the twenty-first century with half of their women still illiterate, and with a gap of more than 20% in the literacy rates for men and women. Of the world's 950 million illiterates two-thirds are women, and of the 130 million children with no access to school 63% are girls.

Non-discrimination applies also to children belonging to indigenous or minority groups, handicapped children, displaced and refugee children. They and their parents need education in order to secure the full enjoyment of the fundamental human rights mentioned in the Convention: their right to an identity nationality name and family relations; the right to protection and humanitarian assistance; the development of health care and healthy behaviours; protection against child labour or others forms of exploitation or maltreatment; the right to engage in play and recreational activities; the right to a fair hearing if they have infringed the penal code; the prevention of violence, racism and delinquency among young people.

On this 50th anniversary of UNESCO's foundation, it is well to recall the original vision of the founding nations that UNESCO should be devoted to • the education of humanity for justice, liberty and peace,>. Article 29 of the Convention acknowledges this humanistic vision of education. Education should be directed to

- 1) the development of the child's personality, talents and abilities;
- 2) respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- 3) respect for parents cultural identity the national values of the country in which the child lives or from which he or she originates, and for civilisations different from its own.

Education should also prepare the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples of differing ethnic, national or religious groups. These are principles which UNESCO honours and will encourage its Member States to practise in their schools and places of learning.



Federico Mayor
Director-General

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UNESCO'S MANDATE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

At the end of the Second World War when the full extent of the genocide in Europe was becoming apparent, the founders of the United Nations were conscious that political agreements only would be insufficient to guarantee a lasting peace. Ethical objectives had also to be pursued, in particular, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. At the international level, there was the need to reinforce the implementation of international humanitarian law, the recognition of the equal dignity of cultures and the moral solidarity of all nations for world-wide development.

These objectives deeply influenced the founders of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which was created in November 1945 to promote, through education and intellectual co-operation, two essential aims of the United Nations, viz. development and peace. As the framers of the Constitution wrote: «since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that peace must be constructed.» A cornerstone of peace-building must necessarily be respect for human rights and international law. Since its foundation, therefore, the promotion of human rights and international solidarity has been central to UNESCO programming.

In the context of this brief report, it has been deemed useful to review briefly the activities of UNESCO in the field of human rights, the instruments it has proposed and the initiatives it has taken - all of which have prepared in their own way the formulation and adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNESCO's present work for the Convention, both direct and indirect, is also reviewed. No recommendations are made, however, concerning UNESCO's future orientation except to note the request of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, viz., that the Organisation should contribute to promoting the Convention in two fields: monitoring education systems, cultural and communication environments in its Member States so as to improve their compliance with Convention standards; and secondly, to invest its energies into the long-term task of educating children to a knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.

It should be noted that the activities presented in the following pages, reflecting predominantly work from UNESCO headquarters, will increasingly be surpassed in the coming years by activities at national and regional level. Article 44 of the Convention imposes on ratifying States Parties the obligation to make an initial report on implementation within two years, and thereafter, every five years. For this reason - and given the importance of education, culture and the media in Convention implementation - many Member States are now making serious efforts to build national capacity to research human rights statistics; to monitor access to education and the practice of children's rights in schools; to produce curricula reflecting tolerance and respect for human dignity- or in the more distressing situations, to eradicate the abuses of child prostitution, abandonment or child labour. UNESCO National Commissions and the Organisation's field offices will have a growing role to play in these tasks.



ACTION IN FAVOUR OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1

An overview

Throughout its fifty-year history, UNESCO has been consistently active in the field of human rights, concentrating in particular on racial discrimination and apartheid, education rights, cultural rights, human rights teaching and research'. In those fields, UNESCO has proposed for adoption by its Member States a number of normative instruments (Annex I - *Selected standard-setting instruments adopted by UNESCO General Conferences*) and has published quite extensively²

UNESCO has also contributed significantly to human rights activities adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, e.g. it has proposed in recent years for adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations, both the International Year of Tolerance (1995) and the World Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). To orient the implementation of the Decade, it proposed the World Plan of Action on Education for

1. UNESCO has also contributed significantly to questions of humanitarian law international law, copyright laws, the status of women...

2. See UNESCO's Standard-Setting instruments, UNESCO, 1994

Human Rights and Democracy agreed by the Vienna Declaration of June 1993, and set up a voluntary fund for the development of human rights teaching. The Organisation has also contributed regularly to the United Nations Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1993-2003), to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1994-2003) and to the Decade of International Law (1990-99).

2. Human rights teaching and research

It is perhaps in the field of human rights teaching and research that UNESCO's greatest contribution has been made throughout the years. Several important initiatives have been taken to promote research and teaching of human rights. Among them may be cited:

1951

- ▶ *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Guide for Teachers.*

Five years after its effective founding, UNESCO published and disseminated in eight languages its first teaching aid on a UN instrument. Since then, UNESCO has published teaching materials on many of the UN instruments including the two International Covenants on Human Rights, the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

1953

- ▶ *The launching of the Associated Schools Project for International Co-operation and Peace (ASP).*

In 1953, thirty-three secondary schools world-wide were invited to organise programmes to teach international understanding,

human rights and activities of the United Nations system. Today, the network of schools numbers almost 4000 throughout the world, and will double that number by the year 2000. The network is animated by materials and serial publications, such as the bulletin *International Understanding at School*.

1960

► *Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.*

Possibly the best known of the UNESCO Conventions, States Parties ratifying the Convention agree to apply immediate measures to eliminate all discrimination in education, such as the abrogation or modification of their existing legal texts, prohibition of differences of treatment or restrictions in certain fields. There is also the positive obligation to promote by appropriate methods equality of opportunity and treatment in the matter of education. UNESCO Member States are required to report periodically on the action they have taken to implement this Convention. So far, five international consultations have been undertaken, the sixth being due in 1999 which will focus on the education of girls and women, persons belonging to minorities, refugees and indigenous peoples.

1974

► *Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.*

Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its eighteenth session, the Recommendation calls upon Member States to take steps to ensure that the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination should be applied in the daily conduct of education at all levels, and that textbooks - especially in history and geography should be balanced, without prejudice, and enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples. The Recommendation is supported by a permanent system of reporting on the steps taken by Member States to implement it in their school systems.

1978

- ▶ UNESCO Prize for the Teaching of Human Rights.
Open to educational institutions, organisations or individuals which have made a particularly deserving and effective contribution to the development of human rights teaching, it is awarded every two years.

- ▶ Vienna International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights.
The first in a series of congresses devoted to human rights education, convened by UNESCO and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. This first congress was a landmark in the development of education related to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and stressed that the indivisibility of human rights must be recognised. Human rights education and teaching must aim at: fostering attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity, providing knowledge about human rights, and developing the individual's awareness of the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into social and political reality.

1987

- ▶ *Malta International Congress on Human Rights Teaching which focused on information and documentation.*
Among the topics examined were the importance of audiovisual materials in human rights education; the need for international co-ordination and exchange of experiences, methods and teaching techniques, improving teacher training and the protection of teachers; improving international research on human rights education; the role of non-governmental organisations.

1992

- ▶ *Launching of UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights.*
Part of the UNITWIN/UNESCO programme, the key objective of which is to establish in developing countries university teaching in essential disciplines, twelve university chairs in human rights teaching and research were created in the period 1993-94, the majority being in Central Europe.

1993

► *Montreal Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy.*

This third international congress organised by UNESCO in co-operation with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, gave itself three aims: to outline an implementation strategy for education in human rights and democracy focusing on action at national, regional and international levels; to identify areas in which there is a need to produce teaching and/or training manuals and materials; to improve access to information and documentation on human rights teaching. Work on the first aim provided the World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy which influenced profoundly the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for Human Rights adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993.

1994

► *Geneva International Conference on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy.*

In October, 1994, UNESCO convened the 44th Session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva on the theme Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. In the Declaration from this meeting, the 131 participating countries pledged themselves to promote the values of tolerance and non-discrimination throughout their education systems. Several activities were stressed, such as programmes to develop the capacity of pupils to access information; the promotion of foreign languages and cultures; democratic school management involving teachers, pupils, parents and the local community; teacher training in peace and human rights education; action on behalf of vulnerable groups; research and development; co-ordination between the education sector and other agents of socialisation; regional and international co-operation to benefit especially countries in crisis situations.

Further information:

International Bureau of Education,
Case postage 199, CH-121 1 Geneva 20, Switzerland,
Fax: (41-22) 798.14.86



ACTION IN FAVOUR OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

UNESCO's promotion of standard-setting instruments in education or culture and its work for human rights teaching and research has been consistent and extensive. Nor have children been neglected in these efforts: activities to promote their rights have been included in the above fields and - just as importantly - within the general programmes of UNESCO. Since the adoption of the Convention in 1989, however, UNESCO has designated a focal unit to liaise with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and to promote activities in favour of the Convention. In the paragraphs that follow, some selected activities promoting the Convention will be listed and briefly described.

1

Co-operation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child

(UNESCO ED/YCF, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP,
Fax: 33-1-44.49.99.18)

UNESCO hosted a meeting of members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child at Headquarters on 23rd November 1993 with the purpose of planning how the Organisation could contribute effectively to promoting the Convention in its Member States and to contributing to the Committee's work in Geneva. The following lines of co-operation were identified:

◆ *Co-operation in monitoring the Convention.*

The Committee requested UNESCO to participate actively in its sessions in Geneva, particularly at the pre-session meetings which take place twice or three times a year, and at the one-day thematic sessions in the areas of competence of the Organisation. With the other participating agencies, UNESCO will examine thoroughly the Initial Reports of presenting Member States and provide information concerning the educational, cultural and information situations of children. In this exercise, statistics contained in the UNESCO's World Education Report and in the major literacy and mid-term Jomtien surveys which UNESCO is now undertaking are potentially useful to the Committee³. UNESCO will also provide a set of educational indicators to assist the Committee in analysing the performance of school systems.

3. Official statistics pose certain difficulties, not least because enrolment figures for schools are seldom desegregated sufficiently to give a true picture of the difficulties being encountered at district level or in the classrooms. In short official accounts must be supplemented by up-to-date field reports from NGOs local school bodies and school records.

◆ *Educating for the Convention.*

In line with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), UNESCO should attach high importance to planning effective methods of teaching the Convention to children, e.g. through organising the publication and dissemination of effective school versions of the Convention prepared by children, and manuals and guidelines for teachers and educators. UNESCO should also co-operate with its Member States in educating groups which enter into direct contact with children: parents, teachers, textbook writers, curriculum designers, lawyers, police etc. Technical assistance should be provided by UNESCO to set up education programmes for such groups, especially in developing countries. Pilot information and participation campaigns could be undertaken, particularly through the Associated Schools network and UNESCO Clubs. A further elaboration of this project is found in the section below *Promoting Convention rights and attitudes in schools.*

2. Standard-setting instruments relative to the rights of the child

(UNESCO SHS/HRS, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15,
Fax: 33-1-43.06.72.03)

In addition to the many education and cultural covenants listed in Annex I, a number of new standard-setting initiatives are now being prepared by the Organisation, which are directly relevant to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- ◆ UNESCO is working toward the creation of a new international instrument against the sexual exploitation of the person (including a section on the exploitation of children and minors);
- ◆ Following the instructions of its Executive Board (142

EX/Decision 5.5.3), UNESCO is preparing a comprehensive document on the Protection and promotion of the cultural rights of persons belonging to minorities, within UNESCO's fields of competence.

3.

Promoting the Convention in schools, universities and education systems

(UNESCO ED/YCF, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP,
Fax: 33-1-44.49.99.1 8)

Within the context of the UNESCO Chairs Programme, a university chair on researching children's status and teaching the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been requested by the People's Republic of China. This chair will concentrate on child research and training within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A preliminary report on the status of children (survival, protection, developmental and participatory rights) in China will be among the first activities programmed.

In preparation

1995

▶ *Empowering the child through the school.*

Within the framework of the Organisation's planning for 1996 and 1997, a significant, sub-regional Convention initiative is being launched by UNESCO entitled *Empowering the child through the school*. The aim of the initiative is to work with Education Ministries, UNESCO National Commissions, school administrations, teachers' unions and NGOs to ensure that the Convention is reflected in school legislation, regulations, management, curricula, programmes, teaching styles and child participation, and that the education community is actively

mobilised behind the Convention. Already, UNESCO has prepared the initial project document and provided some seed-fun-

ding for the pilot phase of this project for Central Europe.

4. Publications and research

UNESCO publishes extensively in the field of human rights. Publications dealing directly with aspects of the Convention are:

1991

- ▶ Support for the publication of the Coordinators' Notebook: *Protecting Children from the Scourge of War*;

1993

- ▶ Translations of the Convention into national languages, e.g. into Bulgarian, Slovak, Thai, Linguala/Kikongo/Swahili/Tshiluba (four languages of Zaire), etc.;
- ▶ *La protezione internazionale dei diritti del fanciullo*, the report of a meeting in Trieste with the International Institute of Human Rights;

1994

- ▶ An illustrated French cartoon version of the CRC for children aged 6-12 for use in French schools, which UNESCO distributes also to French-speaking countries - in co-operation with COFRADE and the French Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family;
- ▶ A series of brochures on the Convention targeting different age-groups: Written for the use of UNESCO Clubs and animadores in the Spanish-speaking world, they are distributed by the UNESCO Centre at San Sebastian;

- ▶ Co-operation with the Secours Populaire Français in producing a children's kit *Compter sur tes dix doigts* for the use of schools, leisure and youth centres in France, particularly in priority educational zones. An extension of this project to francophone developing countries is being planned;
- ▶ Publication of *Educating for Human Rights: an international perspective* in the UNESCO:IBE Series Comparative Education eds. Ray and Tran, University of Western Ontario;
- ▶ Support to the NGO *Group Focus on Children* (Ireland) to research and produce their report, *Blueprint for Action*, in favour of children in Ireland. The needs assessment adopted took as its framework the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ▶ Support to the Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme to produce training videos for teachers and parents.

1994/5

- ▶ Publication of reports by the Basic Education Division of UNESCO UNESCO ED/BAS, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP
Fax: 33-1-40.65.94.05
 - *Education: a means for empowering girls and women;*
 - *Education of girls and women: beyond access*
 - *Education of girls and women in Europe*
 - *Reports on the education of girls in Africa*
 - *The Role of the Family in the Promotion of the Rights of the Child*

IV

GENERAL PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The importance for the Convention of the general programmes of UNESCO should not be overlooked. Human rights are indivisible: the promotion of individual rights cannot be pursued in isolation from the advancement of social and economic rights nor will the rights of children be fully respected in situations where adults are denied fundamental freedoms. Without reputed UNESCO programmes, such as the Basic Education Programme or the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), those working for the right to education or the right to freedom of expression would lack major international allies. Within the space of this report, however, it is not possible to mention all the activities undertaken by the different Sectors (Education, Culture, Communications) which support basic human rights. What follows is an outline of selected activities which have direct relevance for the implementation of the Convention.

1.

Communication programmes

(UNESCO Communication Division, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15,
Fax: 33-1-45.67 43.58)

The UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication or IPDC programme was founded in 1980 to develop communication infrastructures and to promote access to information and the right to freedom of expression. Faced with a growing communications gap between North and South, UNESCO concentrates on the aim of developing communications infrastructures in the South without any obstacle to the free flow of information.

For his outstanding contribution to advancing the cause of freedom of expression, the Director-General, Mr Federico Mayor, received in 1993 the 45th Anniversary Prize of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers. In the Fall of 1995, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO is helping organise two major international meetings in Sweden: the International Newspapers in Education Conference *The Rights of the Child* in Stockholm, and a colloquium on Violence on the Screen and *the Rights of the Child* in Lund. On many occasions, UNESCO has shown its concern about the exposure of children to violence, pornography, stereotyping of girls or the corruption of values in the media. The Organisation insists, not on government regulation, but on the need for self-discipline and responsibility by media producers and decision-makers. At the moment, it is preparing a study on guidelines adopted by various television channels on the screening of violence - a study which will be widely disseminated.

2. Culture programmes

(UNESCO ADG/CLT, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15,
Fax: 33-1 -42.73.04.01)

For many years, UNESCO has supported the production of school texts in developing countries. It has also been closely associated with the major professional bodies and NGOs which promote the publication of children's literature, e.g. a major Asia/Pacific programme for the co-publication and diffusion of children's books is sponsored and executed by the Asia and Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU). An international prize is being launched by UNESCO during the United Nations International Year of Tolerance, 1995, for outstanding children's books promoting tolerance and peace. Another UNESCO award worthy of mention is that given to an outstanding children's film at the biennial Prix Jeunesse television festival.

3. Basic education

(UNESCO ED/BAS, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP Fax:
33-1-44.49.99.18)

UNESCO promotes the best interest of the child through its world-wide basic education programme which aims to improve access to and the quality of basic education. In this drive for education for all, governments are encouraged to include universal values such as peace, international understanding and tolerance in educational curricula. It should not be forgotten, however, that physical access to basic education is the sine qua non of any serious Convention

programme. Without the school or other educational institution, it is difficult to raise awareness within families and societies about the just ordering of relations with children. In many countries, poor, illiterate children are readily exploited because their rights remain unknown, not to mention the other disadvantaged groups traditionally excluded from decision making in society: girls and women, the illiterate, street children, nomadic and refugee children, children from ethnic minorities or children with special needs. To address these problems, UNESCO with UNDP, World Bank and UNICEF convened in 1990 the World Conference *Education for All* which brought together 155 countries in Jomtien, Thailand. Since then, its Basic Education Division has set itself the task of promoting access to quality education for all children, and in particular, of improving the internal capacity of schools to retain the children who have enrolled, including the disadvantaged groups mentioned above. The division provides to governments a whole range of basic education services, technical assistance and policy inputs. Among the themes it privileges are: the democratisation and decentralisation of education system through giving communities a greater voice in determining priorities and programmes; promoting, whenever it is possible, education for girls and the underprivileged; advocating child-centred process and learning in schools.

1994-95

▶ *Monitoring learning achievement.*

A joint UNESCO-UNICEF project. The monitoring project has at its first responsibility to monitor the learning achievement of primary school children at the end of Grade IV. In 1994, its scope was enlarged to include measurements of the developmental state of children as they enter school. Obviously, measurements at this age will include the measurement of children's basic needs as defined by the Convention. Countries which are targeted for coverage are Slovakia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Oman, Mauritius, Greece.

Further information:

UNESCO-UNICEF Monitoring Project,

7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP, Fax: 33- 1 -44.99.18

4. The education of girls

(UNESCO ED/PE, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP,
Fax: 33-1-40.65.94.05)

A priority of UNESCO in its Education for All programmes is the education of women and girls, an issue which has been addressed on numerous occasions by the Director-General. In most countries, women have far less access than men to educational and employment opportunities. In some countries, the disparities are glaring. Unless there is a dramatic change in prevailing trends, three world regions - South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States - will enter the twenty-first century with half of their women still illiterate, and with a gap of more than 20% in the literacy rates for men and women. Of the world's 950 million illiterates, two-thirds are women, and of the 130 million children with no access to school, 63% are girls.

Aware of the important social and individual consequences of this situation, and mindful of the role of mothers in transmitting culture and values, UNESCO sees the education of women and girls as a major challenge and opportunity. The research which the Organisation has sponsored suggests that the educational situation of women and girls in poor countries is due to interlocking socio-economic and educational factors. Action to combat the socio-economic bases of gender discrimination in education - poverty, emphasis on security and traditional values, early marriage, the duty of the girl child to assist with domestic and childminding chores, negative cultural attitudes toward educating girls, female illiteracy, the low status of women in society as a whole - has taken place on a number of broad fronts, through programmes such as *Women in development*; *Women and the media*; *Environment, population education and information for human development*; *Education for democracy*; *Women's literacy...*

UNESCO is aware that the only sustainable basis for socio-cultural change - and the improved status of women and girls in the North as well as in the South - is the long-term building of societies founded on economic well-being, lifelong education and respect for civil liberties. To bring about this objective, the Organisation has sponsored thousands of contracts, technical meetings and operational projects in its Member States in the last years.

A second major cause of low learning achievement among girls is the inadequacy of educational systems. In some countries, government subsidies are linked more to enrolment figures rather than to actual attendance at school, while in others, attendance is more important than actual learning achievement. For a variety of reasons, girls drop out of schools in the developing world much more easily than boys. Their abandonment of schooling is encouraged by the high cost of schooling to households, irrelevant curricula, poor teaching, restrictive learning environments, long distances to school, the incompatibility of school schedules with household demands and not infrequently, by the risk of sexual harassment and teenage pregnancy.

UNESCO's action to remove discriminatory or unfavourable practices against girls within educational systems has been incessant, particularly in the critical regions of South Asia, the Arab States and Sub-Saharan Africa. Among its recent actions the following may be cited:

◆ *The Ouagadougou Declaration and Framework for Action.*

In view of the low participation rate of African girls in education, UNESCO, in association with UNICEF, sponsored the Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls in April 1993 at Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso which resulted in the Ouagadougou Declaration and Framework for Action endorsed in June 1993 by the Organisation of African Unity at their Cairo Conference. Several sub-regional activities have already been organised in Southern Africa, the East Africa islands, the Sahel countries, Ethiopia, Sudan and Cameroon.

- ◆ *The 2000+ Project.*
It co-operates with education and technology ministries in order to promote gender equity in science and technology teaching, especially in relation to basic needs technology in the developing world.
- ◆ Support to FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists) who received in 1994 the UNESCO Comenius Medal.
- ◆ The UNESCO-UNICEF innovations project.
It identifies and supports innovative education projects in the developing world which are truly efficient and have a real chance of being replicated. Among the projects identified are several which target specifically the education of girls and women, e.g. Community education of girls in Ketou, Benin⁴; the TOSTAN project in Senegal; the SAPTAGRAM women's self-reliance movement in Bangladesh; the PROPEL movement for the education of rural children, especially girls, in India...
- ◆ *Contributions toward the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, Beijing, September 1995. In preparation for the Beijing Conference, UNESCO has made significant contributions to the official documents (World Survey of the Role of Women in Development, The World's Women: trends and statistics; The Platform for Action).
- ◆ The Organisation was also given responsibility for the UN preparatory regional meetings on the education of women and girls held for Asia (Jakarta), Latin America (Mar del Plata), Europe (Vienna), Arab States (Amman) and Africa (Dakar). International Literacy Day will also be celebrated in Beijing

4. The first phase of this project lasting three months was an in-depth study of the milieu and the reasons for gender discrimination in education; the second phase -again lasting three months -brought together parents and the communities to devise methods of educating girls in keeping with the economic and sociocultural realities of the province; the third phase was the actual organisation and funding of the courses offered.

and the UNESCO International Literacy Prize will focus on literacy projects targeting women and girls.

In preparation at UNESCO:

- ◆ *A global framework for action in support of education for women and girls*; an international consultation on Education for Development of Women and Out-of-school Girls in the Least Developed Countries; a symposium La situation juridique des femmes dans les pays de tradition islamique, a high-level consultation on Women's Contribution to the Culture of Peace; special issues in 1995 - on the status and education of women and girls - of the major UNESCO journals and publications: World Education Report, UNESCO Sources, Courier, ERA Journal...

5.

Promoting humanistic values, democracy and international understanding

(UNESCO ED/HCI, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP,
Fax.33-1-40.65.94.05)

(UNESCO SHS/TOL, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15,
Fax.33-1-45.67.67.91)

(UNESCO SHS/HRS, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15,
Fax.33-1-43.06.72.03)

Where human rights teaching and research are concerned, Section 11 above has provided some idea of the extent of UNESCO's work. Here, attention is given to its work of promoting humanistic values - in particular, democracy, peace and tolerance- in schools, curricula and programmes. In this regard, the work of UNESCO's Associated Schools and Clubs has been significant. In addition, the *Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating*

to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1974 obliges States Parties to ensure that the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination should be applied in the daily conduct of education at all levels. Textbooks - especially in history and geography - should be balanced, without prejudice, and enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples. The proclamation of both the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Teaching (1995-2004) and the International Year of Tolerance (1995) have led to increased attention to education systems by UNESCO so as to ensure that the ideals of tolerance and peace are included in curricula and actively taught in schools. A programme of activities for the International Year of Tolerance is available from UNESCO SHS/TOL, whose address is given above.

6. Support and education of disadvantaged groups: children with disabilities, street children, children in emergencies and armed conflicts, children with AIDS

(UNESCO ED/ADG, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP,
Fax. 33-1-40.65.94.05)

In recent years, the Director-General, in consultation with the executive bodies of UNESCO, has taken the initiative of setting up several units to care for disadvantaged groups, in particular:

◆ *Children with special needs.*

The main thrust of this programme is on policy, planning and teacher training for special education. Emphasis is placed on the equalisation of opportunities for children with special needs

and their integration into mainstream education. Advisory services to Member States are undertaken to enable them to develop in their schools appropriate responses to children with special needs. A UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack and video-training packs for parents have been developed, and a World Conference on Special Needs Education convened in co-operation with the Government of Spain. Copies of *the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* can be obtained from:

UNESCO Special Education unit,
7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP, Fax: 33-1-40.65.94.06.

◆ *Street and working children.*

Following instructions by the Director-General, UNESCO is giving greater attention to work on behalf of street children and working children. Special grants from the German government have made funds available to enable research and intervention in Brazil (Rio - courses for police and street educators in census work, approach, laws, teaching materials) Mexico (Puebla - intervention and census work), Romania (Bucharest- intervention) Vietnam, Palestine, Philippines (Manila - street education, census work, prevention). Work on child labour has begun in one state in India where a pilot methodology to deal with bonded labour is being established.

Further information from:

UNESCO, Street Children Unit,
7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP, Fax: 33-1-40.65.94.06.

◆ *Children in emergency situations.*

With the alarming increase in inter-ethnic and civil wars in the last years, UNESCO has established a unit established to look after Educational Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. Its main objective is to maintain or mobilise education services for children in armed conflict or other emergency situations and to reconstruct education systems once hostilities have ceased. Already, UNESCO has been active in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Armenia, Mozambique, Angola and Iraq in close co-operation with UNHCR, UNICEF and professional NGOs. Obviously, such action is at the heart of Article 28

of the Convention which guarantees the right of education to all children.

Further information from:

UNESCO, Educational Rehabilitation and Reconstruction unit,
7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP, Fax: 33-1-40.65.94.05.

◆ *Children with AIDS.*

Predictions about the spread of AIDS in developing countries are chilling, especially for the African countries, e.g. a World Bank report foresees in Tanzania by the year 2020, 22% fewer children enrolled in primary schools and a death total of 27,000 teachers. Already, significant numbers of children are affected by and suffer during their school years the increasingly debilitating cycles of HIV-related illness. The Unit for Preventive Education at UNESCO has been active in research on the problem and in training educational personnel. With the World Health Organisation, it has produced a series of resource books for curriculum planners with the objective of improving school health education and prevent the spread of the AIDS.

Further information from:

UNESCO, Section for Preventive Education,
7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07-SP, Fax: 33-1 -47.83.27.10.

V

CONCLUSION

From its founding, the investment of UNESCO in the area of human rights has been consistent and serious. Today, it is attempting to rally its efforts behind the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Although many other Conventions, Declarations or Recommendations make reference to children, the CRC takes children as its target and brings together in one comprehensive text, a definitive statement about their survival, protection, developmental and participatory rights.

The comprehensiveness of the Convention invites co-ordinated inputs from the UN specialised agencies and their mutual co-operation. Already, UNESCO and ILO have begun to co-operate in order to sensitise teachers concerning the problem of child labour. It is to be hoped that positive co-operation in educating for the Convention can also be established between UNICEF and UNESCO within the present Joint Committee on Education or other body.

In education and culture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child summarises and expands on previous rights. Important sections and articles reinforce essential UNESCO objectives, in particular, those relative to increasing access to education, the teaching of rights, the rights of cultural minorities and to the conduct of education in general. The right to education provided

in other Covenants and Declarations is confirmed, with now a real obligation placed on States Parties to provide free, compulsory primary education which ensures both equality of chances and the development of the child's personality. In addition, the child's rights in education are developed: Children now have the right to receive - and States, the duty to provide - instruction and information about their human rights, the right to participate in the organisation of their schooling. In addition, they have the right to freedom of expression in judicial and administrative proceedings in schools, especially when the interests of the child are at stake.

Because of its binding character and its broader vision of the participatory rights of children in education, the Convention on the Rights of the Child reinforces UNESCO's work for education and indeed, for culture and democracy. The caring and respectful relationships which the Convention puts forward as an ideal for education systems also form the basis for democratic institutions. In short, as affirmed by James Grant, the late Executive Director of UNICEF, both at the World Conference of Human Rights at Vienna and again at the United Nations General Assembly, shortly before his untimely death:

Taking children as a cutting edge of human rights generally and of our many ongoing efforts in diverse fields of development, would contribute more to international peace and security, more to democracy, development and the environment, more to preventing crises and conflicts - in a shorter period of time and for a lower cost - than any other set of doable actions aimed at remedying global problems.

Annexe I

Selected standard-setting instruments adopted by UNESCO General Conferences

(Further information: UNESCO SHS/HRS,
1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, Fax: 33-1 -43.06.72.03)

- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (the Hague Convention) with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention as well as the Protocol to the Convention and the Conference Resolutions (1954)
- Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- (With ILO) Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966)
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Export, Import and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)
- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- Recommendation concerning the Status of Scientific Researchers (1974)
- Recommendation concerning the Right to Technical and Vocational Education (1974)
- Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace, and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974)

- Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976)
- Recommendation on the Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and their Contribution to It (1976)
- Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978)
a Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980)
- Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989)
- Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)

Procedures for examining the status and implementation of the above Conventions, Declarations and Recommendations have been laid down and regular reporting established, e.g. the third report on the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, based on replies from 44 Member States and 67 NGOs was submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session in October 1991.