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Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together

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Leading Organization: The Light Millennium – <http://www.lightmillennium.org>

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

***The Vision is that we must build on the foundations which have been
created by the United Nations***



Written and Presented
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The best interests of the Child shall be a primary consideration.
(Article 3 of the UN-sponsored *Convention on the Rights of the Child*)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 was followed by the September 1990 World Summit for Children which adopted a Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action. The Declaration was named a “first call for children” and stressed that the essential needs of children should be given a high priority in the allocation of resources.

The Declaration stated “The children of the world are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope. Their time should be one of joy and peace, of playing, learning and growing. Their future should be shaped in harmony and co-operation. Their lives should mature as they broaden their perspectives and gain new

experiences.”

The Convention on the Rights of the Child created a “treaty body” – the Committee on the Rights of the Child to which States report on their implementation of the Convention. In the light of the issues raised in the Committee, two protocols to the Convention have been opened for ratification: *the Optional Protocol on the Convention of the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflict*, and *the Optional Protocol on the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*.

The principle of the best interests of the child offers a good starting point for important political, cultural and ethical discussions about the status of children in our emerging world society.

However, we know that there are continuing problems concerning children and youth throughout the world. At both the 1990 World Summit for Children and the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, it was agreed that young people should be actively involved in the search for solutions and so should have access to appropriate information.

Today, we need to look at progress made since 1990 and at new issues and challenges to improve the wellbeing of children and youth. As world citizens, we see that our world is moving toward a universal legal culture of world law governed by a single and coherent vision of justice and fairness as represented by the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Thus we need to consider together what can be done within the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, what can be done at the national level by government administrations and legislatures and by non-governmental organizations, to meet problems that are not adequately addressed today, such as children without citizenship papers and so are considered as “stateless” and the question of too early marriage of girls.

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