



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/34/600
18 October 1979
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/RUSSIAN

Thirty-fourth session
Agenda item 26

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD: PLANS AND ACTION TO IMPROVE
THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY IN THE
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Letter dated 8 October 1979 from the Permanent Representative of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the texts of the two principal documents adopted by the World Conference entitled "For a Peaceful and Happy Future for All Children", which was held at Moscow from 7 to 11 September 1979: "Appeal to the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to the Governments and Parliaments of all countries of the world" (annex I) and "Appeal to the world public, public organizations and movements" (annex II).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the text of these documents as official documents of the General Assembly under agenda item 26.

(Signed) O. TROYANOVSKY
Permanent Representative of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
to the United Nations

ANNEX I

Appeal of the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Secure Future for All Children", held in Moscow, from 7 to 11 September 1979, to the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to the Governments and Parliaments of all countries of the world

1. We, the representatives of 47 international and regional organizations and 385 national organizations in more than 130 countries gathered in the International Year of the Child for the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Secure Future for All Children", in Moscow, 7-11 September 1979, address the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Governments and Parliaments of all countries.
2. We speak on behalf of hundreds of millions of men and women - members of the largest public organizations and movements of various orientation, which are broadly and prestigiously represented at our Conference being held under the sign of unity and co-operation in the name of the rights and interests of the child.
3. We note that during recent decades new possibilities were opened for an improvement of the living conditions of children due to international détente, to the broader understanding and co-operation among peoples, to the successes of the struggle of public forces for peace, national liberation, justice and democracy. The adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child by the United Nations in 1959 was an important factor in the protection of the rights and interests of the younger generation.
4. Stressing that concern for children is of decisive significance for the whole of civilization, we state with satisfaction that the proclamation of the International Year of the Child met with great response throughout the world, and we consider it necessary to continue and develop activities concerning the constant improvement of the position of children, paying special attention to children, who are in the most disadvantageous situation.
5. As a matter of fact, 20 years after the proclamation of their rights, hundreds of millions of children still suffer from hunger, illiteracy, racism and apartheid. Millions of them are deprived of pure drinking water and medical care; thousands of children are dying victims of aggression, war and armed conflicts.
6. The arms race threatens the very life and future of children. It deprives them of the resources that could ensure the economic and social preconditions for their development. Man walked on the moon, but millions of children have never held a book in their hands.
7. Being convinced that the solution of the tasks related to children's rights is inseparably linked with the national liberation of peoples, with development and social progress and the democratization of all social life and depends on the general situation in the international arena;

8. Being convinced that the United Nations disposes of a wide spectrum of international means of influence, and Governments and Parliaments possess the necessary power to pass and implement laws in their countries, we call on you:

(a) To intensify your efforts in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (1945) to save future generations from the scourge of war, to ensure international peace and security;

(b) To contribute to guaranteeing children - innocent victims of aggressions and armed conflicts - the right to a nationality and the stability of a home;

(c) To achieve respect for the rights of peoples to national identity, self-determination, independence and social progress as a guarantee of the fundamental rights of mother and child;

(d) To promote the restructuring of international economic relations on the basis of genuine democratic principles and the establishment of a New International Economic Order based on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (1975), which will undoubtedly open up new opportunities for improving the situation of children all over the world;

(e) To ensure the rights of all children to adequate nutrition and housing, to health protection and medical care, to education and upbringing irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinion or conviction, national or social origin, property status, birth or any other circumstances bearing on the child or its family;

(f) To protect the child against all forms of violence;

(g) To recognize everywhere motherhood as a social function and to ensure a system of protection of mother and child in all countries bearing in mind that the child's right to health protection starts with the protection of motherhood;

(h) To do everything so that in all countries child-care programmes may be an integral part of the long-term and short-term economic and social development plans with the aim of eliminating famine, malnutrition, diseases, illiteracy, exploitation of child labour and other social evils;

(i) To multiply efforts in seeking concrete ways for radically improving the situation of the younger generation in the near future.

9. The adoption by the United Nations and the implementation by all its Member States of an international convention, based on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, that would formulate in detail and concretely the legal measures necessary for the improvement of the situation of children, would be an important step towards this goal.

10. We call on the United Nations, the States Members of the United Nations, their Governments and Parliaments:

(a) To make all efforts and take action against all forms of aggression, economic domination, foreign occupation, colonial oppression and genocide, which are violations of the norms of international law as well as the rights of the peoples to self-determination and national independence;

(b) To do all in their power to consolidate and render irreversible international détente, to halt the arms race, to ban nuclear weapons and all other types of weapons of mass destruction, and to attain one of the major objectives of mankind - universal and complete disarmament - that would ensure a peaceful and secure future for all children.

11. We, participants in the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Secure Future for All Children", believe that the United Nations, all its Member States, their Governments and Parliaments must everywhere intensify their joint efforts to achieve the humane and noble objectives embodied in the motto of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child: "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give".

ANNEX II

Appeal of the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Secure Future
for All Children", held at Moscow, from 7 to 11 September 1979,
to the world public, public organizations and movements

1. We, representatives of 432 international, regional and national organizations from more than 130 countries gathered for the World Conference "For a Peaceful and Secure Future for All Children", in Moscow, 7-11 September 1979, appeal to you, women and men everywhere, mothers and fathers.
2. The destiny of humanity depends on what we, the people, do today to build a peaceful, secure and just future for our children. It is our particular responsibility to safeguard them from the horror of nuclear catastrophe.
3. The children are our future. Yet in many countries millions of children go hungry, millions of them die from epidemics, for lack of medical care; millions of them are illiterate and have no access to education. In order to solve these problems it is necessary to eradicate the basic reasons of under-development: colonialism, neo-colonialism and all forms of exploitation of human beings, and to establish a new international economic order.
4. Apartheid, social inequality and racial discrimination continue to destroy the lives of children in many countries. Fascist and reactionary dictatorships, militarism and imperialism deprive children of the most elementary rights and human dignity.
5. Tens of millions of children have no possibility to study, millions are exploited as cheap labour force. This is not only a gross injustice, it inflicts irreparable harm to the moral and physical health of the growing generation.
6. Workers in industry and agriculture, teachers, doctors, scientists, workers in culture and in the mass media, members of trade unions, and political parties, women's, youth, students' and children's organizations, movements and associations, mothers and fathers!
7. We call upon all of you to create conditions for and to guarantee a happy and secure childhood for our children in a peaceful world.
8. We appeal to each of you to unite your efforts in the fight against wars and the threat of war, for détente and mutual confidence among nations, for a ban on weapons of mass destruction and for disarmament, for strengthening the policy of peaceful coexistence. There is no more urgent task for humanity than to guarantee the right to life - the basic human right of every woman, man and child. There is no more terrible and direct threat to the lives of the children than war.
9. Today we have every possibility to ensure stable peace. A pledge for this is relaxation of international tension, an increase of the forces for peace and social progress.

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10. We call upon you to actively work for the creation of real conditions that will guarantee the rights and interests of all children, to satisfy their need for adequate nourishment, for effective health care and education, for physical, moral and cultural development. It is the duty of all of us to contribute to the creation of conditions for the all-round development of each child.

11. The possibilities to achieve these aims are varied, but they do exist as was clearly manifested during the International Year of the Child.

12. In trade unions, in women's and youth organizations and other national and international movements, in religious, social and cultural associations, in parliaments and local authorities, in factories, cities and villages, wherever you are, fight for a better life for all children, for:

(a) A clear sky without rockets and bombers;

(b) The robust health of all children;

(c) A future, where hunger and malnutrition have no place;

(d) The happiness of seeing our children educated and prepared to take their place as responsible citizens.

13. Let us strengthen our unity in the interests of the tomorrow of our planet - our children and grandchildren!

Concern for children's well-being must be constant!

Let everyone of us contribute his or her share to the cause of peace, democracy and social progress, towards achieving the humane and lofty aims embodied in the slogan "For a Peaceful and Secure Future for All Children"!

Participants
of the World Conference
