

17. *Reaffirms* that voluntary repatriation, when it is feasible, is the ideal solution to refugee problems, and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, the Office of the High Commissioner and the international community as a whole to do everything possible to enable refugees to exercise their right to return home in safety and dignity;

18. *Reiterates* the right of all persons to return to their country, and emphasizes in this regard the prime responsibility of countries of origin for establishing conditions that allow voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and with dignity and, in recognition of the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon all States to facilitate the return of their nationals who are not recognized as refugees;

19. *Calls upon* all States to promote conditions conducive to the return of refugees and to support their sustainable reintegration by providing countries of origin with necessary rehabilitation and development assistance in conjunction, as appropriate, with the Office of the High Commissioner and relevant development agencies;

20. *Recalls* Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 of 29 July 1995 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, and welcomes the decision of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to review, in the course of 1996, aspects of that resolution relevant to the work of the Office of the High Commissioner;

21. *Notes with appreciation* the programme policies established by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner, and underscores the importance of their implementation by the Office of the High Commissioner, implementing partners and other relevant organizations in order to ensure the provision of effective protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees;

22. *Reaffirms* the importance of incorporating environmental considerations into the programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner, especially in the least developed and developing countries which have hosted refugees over long periods of time, welcomes efforts by the Office of the High Commissioner to make a more focused contribution to resolving refugee-related environmental problems, and calls upon the High Commissioner to promote and enhance coordination and collaboration with host Governments, donors, relevant United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other actors concerned to address refugee-related environmental problems in a more integrated and effective manner;

23. *Recognizes* the importance of the introduction of Russian as an official language of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner in facilitating the work of the High Commissioner and the implementation of the provisions of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, notably in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States;

24. *Calls upon* all Governments and other donors to demonstrate their international solidarity and burden-sharing with countries of asylum through efforts aimed at continuing to alleviate the burden borne by States which have received large numbers of refugees, in particular those with limited resources, and to contribute to the programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the effect on countries of asylum of the increasing requirements of large refugee populations and

the need to widen the donor base and to achieve greater burden-sharing among donors, to assist the High Commissioner in securing additional and timely income from traditional governmental sources, other Governments and the private sector in order to ensure that the needs of refugees, returnees and other displaced persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner are met.

97th plenary meeting
21 December 1995

50/153. The rights of the child

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/209, 49/210, 49/211 and 49/212 of 23 December 1994,

Recalling also the recommendation in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,¹⁰⁵ that measures be taken to achieve, by 1995, universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, and the universal signing of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s adopted by the World Summit for Children,¹⁰⁶ as well as their effective implementation,

Recalling further Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1995/78 and 1995/79 of 8 March 1995,¹⁰⁶

Convinced that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as a standard-setting accomplishment of the United Nations in the field of human rights, makes a positive contribution to protecting the rights of children and ensuring their well-being,

Seriously concerned about those reservations to the Convention that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise contrary to international treaty law, and recalling that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action urges States to withdraw such reservations,

Reaffirming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which states that national and international mechanisms and programmes should be strengthened for the defence and protection of children, in particular the girl child, abandoned children, street children, economically and sexually exploited children, including through child pornography, child prostitution or sale of organs, children victims of diseases including acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, refugee and displaced children, children in detention, children in armed conflict and children victims of famine, drought and other emergencies, and also requires measures against female infanticide and harmful child labour,

Reaffirming also that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children,

Mindful of the important role of the United Nations and of the United Nations Children's Fund in promoting the well-being of children and their development,

Noting with appreciation the important work carried out by the United Nations, in particular the Committee on the

¹⁰⁵See A/45/625, annex.

¹⁰⁶See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2).*

Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the expert designated by the Secretary-General to undertake the study on the effect of armed conflicts on children,

Recognizing also the valuable work done by relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child,

Reaffirming that the rights of children require special protection and call for continuous improvement of the situation of children all over the world, as well as for their development and education in conditions of peace and security,

Profoundly concerned about the continuing deterioration in the situation of children in many parts of the world as a result of armed conflicts, and convinced that immediate action is called for,

Convinced that children affected by armed conflicts require the special protection of the international community and that there is a need for all States to work towards the alleviation of their plight,

Profoundly concerned also that the situation of children in many parts of the world remains critical as a result of inadequate social and economic conditions, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation, intolerance, unemployment, rural-to-urban migration, illiteracy, hunger and disability, and convinced that urgent and effective national and international action is called for,

Deeply concerned by the persistence of the practice of the use of children for prostitution, sexual abuse and other activities, which may also often constitute exploitation of child labour,

Recognizing the existence of a market which encourages the increase of such criminal practices against children,

Concerned by the exploitation of child labour and by the fact that it prevents a large number of children from an early age, especially in poverty-stricken areas, from receiving basic education and may unduly imperil their health and even their lives,

Alarmed, in particular, by the exploitation of child labour in its most extreme forms, including forced labour, bonded labour and other forms of slavery,

Encouraged by measures taken by Governments to eradicate the exploitation of child labour,

Determined to safeguard children's right to life, and recognizing the duty and responsibility of Governments to investigate all cases of offences against children, including killing and violence, and to punish offenders,

Deeply concerned about the growing number of street children worldwide and the squalid conditions in which these children are often forced to live,

Welcoming the efforts made by some Governments to take effective action to address the question of street children,

Recognizing that legislation *per se* is not enough to prevent violations of human rights and that Governments should implement their laws and complement legislative measures with effective action, *inter alia*, in the fields of law enforcement and in the administration of justice, and in social, educational and public health programmes,

I

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

1. *Welcomes* the unprecedented number of one hundred and eighty-three States which have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a universal commitment to the rights of the child;

2. *Urges* all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify or accede to the Convention as a matter of priority, with a view to reaching universal adherence by the end of 1995;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the full implementation by States parties of the provisions of the Convention;

4. *Urges* States parties to the Convention which have made reservations to review the compatibility of their reservations with article 51 of the Convention and other relevant rules of international law, with the aim of withdrawing them;

5. *Calls upon* States parties to the Convention to ensure that the education of the child shall be carried out in accordance with article 29 of the Convention and that the education be directed, *inter alia*, to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, for the Charter of the United Nations and for different cultures, and to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and friendship among peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

6. *Also calls upon* States parties to the Convention, in accordance with their obligation under article 42, to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known to adults and children alike;

II

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICTS

7. *Calls upon* States fully to respect the dispositions contained in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949¹⁰⁷ and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977,¹⁰⁸ as well as those in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which accord children affected by armed conflicts special protection and treatment;

8. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on concrete measures taken to alleviate the situation of children in armed conflict;¹⁰⁹

9. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on its eighth session¹¹⁰ and the recommendations contained therein concerning the situation of children affected by armed conflicts;

10. *Expresses its support* for the work of the expert designated by the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive study of the situation of children affected by armed conflicts, with the mandate established by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993;

¹⁰⁷United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, vol. 1125, Nos. 17512 and 17513.

¹⁰⁹A/50/672.

¹¹⁰CRC/C/38.

11. *Urgently requests* that appropriate measures be taken by Member States and United Nations agencies, within the scope of their respective mandates, to facilitate the extension of humanitarian assistance and relief and humanitarian access to children in situations of armed conflict and in the immediate aftermath of such conflict;

12. *Invites* the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to the involvement of children in armed conflicts to pursue its mandate;

III

INTERNATIONAL MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION AND ERADICATION OF THE SALE OF CHILDREN, CHILD PROSTITUTION AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

13. *Welcomes* the provisional report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;¹¹¹

14. *Expresses its support* for the work of the Special Rapporteur appointed by the Commission on Human Rights to examine, all over the world, the question of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

15. *Takes note* of the establishment by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1994/9 of 22 July 1994 of an open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights responsible for elaborating, as a matter of priority and in close cooperation with the Special Rapporteur and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, guidelines for a possible draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as the basic measures needed for the prevention and eradication of those abnormal practices;

16. *Requests* that all States support efforts in the context of the United Nations system aimed at adopting efficient international measures for the prevention and eradication of all those practices and consider contributing to the drafting of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

17. *Welcomes* the convening of the first world congress against the commercial sexual exploitation of children, to be held at Stockholm from 26 to 31 August 1996;

IV

ELIMINATION OF EXPLOITATION OF CHILD LABOUR

18. *Encourages* Member States which have not yet done so to ratify the conventions of the International Labour Organization relating to the elimination of exploitation of child labour, in particular those concerning the minimum age for employment, the abolition of forced labour and the prohibition of particularly hazardous work for children, and to implement them;

19. *Calls upon* Governments to take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the protection of children from economic exploitation, in particular the protection from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development;

20. *Urges* Governments to take all necessary measures to eliminate all extreme forms of child labour, such as forced labour, bonded labour and other forms of slavery;

21. *Requests* that measures be taken by Governments, at the national and international levels, within the framework of multisectoral approaches, to end exploitation of child labour in line with the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in March 1995,⁴⁷ and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in September 1995,⁴⁸ and taking into account the results of other relevant United Nations conferences;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other relevant actors, to report on current initiatives and programmes of the United Nations and its affiliated agencies which address the exploitation of child labour and on how to improve cooperation at the national and international levels in this field;

V

THE PLIGHT OF STREET CHILDREN

23. *Expresses grave concern* at the continued growth in the number of cases worldwide and at reports of street children being involved in and affected by serious crime, drug abuse, violence and prostitution;

24. *Urges* Governments to continue actively to seek comprehensive solutions to tackle the problems of street children and to take measures to restore their full participation in society and to provide, *inter alia*, adequate nutrition, shelter, health care and education;

25. *Strongly urges* all Governments to guarantee the respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to life, and to take urgent measures to prevent the killing of street children and to combat torture and violence against them;

26. *Emphasizes* that strict compliance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant human rights instruments constitutes a significant step towards solving the problems of street children, and recommends that the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other relevant treaty-monitoring bodies give attention to this growing problem when examining reports from States parties;

27. *Calls upon* the international community to support, through effective international cooperation, the efforts of States to improve the situation of street children, and encourages States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in preparing their reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to bear this problem in mind and to consider requesting technical advice and assistance for initiatives aimed at improving the situation of street children, in accordance with article 45 of the Convention;

VI

28. *Invites* Governments, United Nations bodies and organizations, including the United Nations Children's Fund and relevant mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to cooperate to ensure greater awareness and more effective action to solve the problem of children living in exceptionally difficult conditions by, among other measures, initiating and supporting development projects which can have a positive impact on the situation of those children;

¹¹¹A/50/456.

29. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the rights of the child to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, containing information on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the findings of the expert designated by the Secretary-General to undertake the study on the effect of armed conflicts on children; and the problems of exploitation of child labour, its causes and consequences, in accordance with paragraph 22 above;

31. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-first session under the item entitled "The rights of the child".

97th plenary meeting
21 December 1995

50/154. The girl child

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women,⁶¹ the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,⁶⁰ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,⁵⁹ the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights,³ Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,¹¹² the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s of the World Summit for Children,¹⁰⁵ the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs⁵⁶ adopted at the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs,

Recalling also that discrimination against the girl child and the violation of the rights of the girl child was identified as a critical area of concern in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in the achievement of equality, development and peace for women, and that the advancement and empowerment of women throughout their life-cycle must begin with the girl child,

Noting with appreciation that the World Summit for Children sensitized the entire world to the plight of children,

Reaffirming the equal rights of women and men as enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, and recalling the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁴⁹ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁵⁰

1. *Urges* all States to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and to eliminate the violation of the human rights of all children, paying particular attention to the obstacles faced by the girl child;

2. *Also urges* all States, international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively to set goals and to develop and implement

gender-sensitive strategies to address the needs of children, in particular those of girls, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the goals, strategic objectives and actions contained in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

3. *Requests* all States, international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations to increase awareness of the potential of the girl child and to promote the participation of girls and young women, on an equal basis and as partners with boys and young men, in social, economic and political life and in the development of strategies and in the implementation of actions aimed at achieving gender equality, development and peace;

4. *Calls upon* Member States and organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, to take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child;

5. *Further urges* all States to eliminate all forms of violence against children, in particular the girl child;

6. *Calls upon* States, international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations to help mobilize the necessary financial resources and political support to achieve goals, strategies and actions relating to the survival, development and protection of the girl child in all programmes for children;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the goals and actions relating to the girl child receive full attention in the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women through the work of all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to urge all the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system focusing on the advancement of women to make commitments to goals and actions relating to the girl child in the revision and implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001,¹¹³ as well as in the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2002.

97th plenary meeting
21 December 1995

50/156. United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985 establishing the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations,

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995,³⁸ as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1995/32 of 25 July 1995, which authorized the establishment of an open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights with the sole purpose of elaborating a draft

¹¹²Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.1.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

¹¹³E/1993/43, annex.