

# \*\*\* WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN FOLLOW UP

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Report to the Chief Executive Officers of the United Nations World Summit for Children on Baha'i International Community activities contributing to the attainment of the goals set by the World Summit for Children

Geneva, Switzerland

May 1994

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Activities related to children and youth are an integral part of the Baha'i International Community's programme of social and economic development. Baha'i communities world-wide currently operate more than 1,300 social and economic development projects addressing a wide range of problems associated with underdevelopment and environmental degradation around the world. Of these projects, more than 700 are schools and about 200 are literacy programs. Most of these projects are the result of grass-roots initiative. Local Baha'i communities identify their own needs, set their own priorities, and determine what they consider to be appropriate measures. In developing countries, where a majority of these projects are located, projects tend to focus on basic education, primary health care, or environmental issues, all of which tend to benefit children directly.

The Baha'i International Community has also undertaken activities on the international level toward the attainment of the goals of the World Summit for Children. The following are some of the United Nations activities in which the Baha'i International Community has participated:

- The Baha'i International Community is helping to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. After having actively participated in the elaboration of the Convention, the Baha'i International Community delivered statements, co-signed by other NGOs, on its implementation at both the 47th and 49th sessions of the Commission on Human Rights. The Baha'i International Community has participated in the NGO Group on the Convention on the Right of the Child since its inception in 1983. In addition several national Baha'i communities have requested their governments to ratify the Convention. The Baha'i International Community is also currently coordinating the work of the Sub-Group on Education and the Media.
- The Baha'i International Community endorses "Facts for Life," the international health education project co-sponsored by UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO. It co-sponsored publication of the Facts for Life book and distributed several thousand copies to its national affiliates world-wide.
- As a contribution to the Earth Summit in 1992, the Baha'i International

Community produced, with UNICEF support, the book *Tomorrow Belongs to the Children*. This book contains artwork and essays in which children from more than twenty-five countries express their hopes and concerns for the future. It was presented to all Heads of State and UN agencies and has had world-wide circulation. 7,500 copies have been presented to UNICEF for sale to aid in UNICEF's on-going efforts to improve the lives of the world's children.

- At the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition, the Baha'i International Community joined forces with UNICEF and several other NGOs to ensure that reference to the nutritional goals of the World Summit were included in the World Declaration and Plan of Action produced by that conference.

- The Baha'i International Community signed a joint statement on refugee women and children that was presented to the 35th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and has also made statements on the girl child to the Executive Board of UNICEF in 1991 and to the Commission on the Status of Women in 1992. Moreover it signed a joint statement on the girl child at the 50th session of the Commission on Human Rights in 1994. The Baha'i International Community is a member of the Working Group on the Girl Child of the Sub-Committee on the Status of Women (Geneva).

- The Baha'i International Community was a founding member and has been an active participant in the Education For All Network (EFA). This Network encourages cooperation among governments, NGOs, and intergovernmental agencies in order to attain the goal of universal basic education.

- The Baha'i International Community is assisting in the dissemination of *The Progress of Nations*, a UNICEF contribution to the renewed effort to meet minimum human needs.

- In collaboration with UNICEF and UNIFEM the Baha'i International Community co-sponsored in May 1994 in New York a Symposium on a Violence-Free Family, the objective of which is to develop a portrait of a violence-free family, and to circulate widely, to all levels of society, a plan of action for implementation.

- The Baha'i International Community has been designated IYF Patron "for exemplary support to the United Nations programme on the International Year of the Family (IYF)." In addition, national Baha'i communities around the world are actively engaged in activities related to the IYF.

- The Baha'i International Community is a member of the NGO Committee on UNICEF and in this capacity it has been an active member of the Planning Committee for the preparation of the Third CEO Meeting "The Contribution of Youth to Lasting Peace." It is worth noting that the Secretary-General of the United Nations designated the Baha'i International Community as a Peace Messenger "in recognition of a significant contribution to the programme and objectives of the International Year of Peace (1986), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly."

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