



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON CHILDREN

New York, 9 May 2002

EXPLANATORY NOTE

UNICEF and IPU are organizing a parliamentary forum on 9 May 2002, as part of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children (8-10 May). The forum will provide members of parliaments from around the world with an opportunity to develop political and legislative strategies for the effective implementation of the outcome of the Special Session. It will also serve as follow-up to the IPU resolution *Protecting and caring for children, the driving force of future society*, adopted at the 106th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (September 2001), and to the outcome of the 107th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Marrakech, Morocco, where child labor will be a subject of discussion.

Objectives of the Forum

Much remains to be done to fulfill the commitments that governments made at the first *World Summit for Children* of 1990 and to implement the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, an international treaty that went into force also in 1990.

Members of parliament are leaders of public opinion and have been elected by the people to represent them. As lawmakers and overseers of government action, they have an important role to play in promoting the rights of the child. They hold governments accountable for their promises. In order to be effective, they have to be more closely involved in the international decision-making processes that will require subsequent action at the national level.

The Forum is designed to bring a parliamentary dimension to the UN Special Session. In particular, it aims at developing political and legislative strategies required to implement both old and new commitments. It will also provide parliamentarians from different countries with an opportunity to exchange views and experiences in advancing the global agenda for children.

Programme

10 a.m. Introductory remarks by Dr. Najma Heptulla, President of the IPU Council, Ms. Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, and a representative from the Children's Forum which precedes the Special Session.

10:20 a.m. I. Panel Presentation and Discussion:

The legislative measures required for the protection of children according to international commitments, including the follow-up to the IPU resolution on Child Protection from the 106th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Ouagadougou, 2001).

11:30 a.m. II. Panel Presentation and Discussion:

Resource mobilization to implement the international commitments on children, and the role of parliament in assessing the impact of national budgets and legislation on children.

Panel presentations, by expert legislators, will be short and are meant to prompt an interactive debate among participants. As soon as the list of panelists is finalized, it will be posted on the IPU Web site at www.ipu.org. Participants are encouraged to address the issues presented by the panelists. Reading prepared speeches is discouraged.

There will be no list of speakers; participants will be given the floor for three minutes at a time and, time permitting, may be able to take the floor more than once.

12:50 a.m. Closing of session with concluding remarks. A final communiqué will be issued.

Participation

The meeting is open to:

- Members of national parliaments
- Members of regional parliamentary assemblies
- Members of Children's Parliaments
- Representatives of government delegations, representatives of Permanent Missions, and representatives of non-governmental organizations accredited to the United Nations as observers

There will be no assigned seating. In order to facilitate contacts among participants for follow up and implementation, a list of participants will be established.

Languages

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the six official languages of the United Nations, i.e., Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Background Documents

The following documents will be available in English and French:

- The draft Outcome Document of the Special Session
- The Secretary-General's report, *We the Children*
- An IPU-UNICEF background paper
- Compilation of IPU resolutions and statements on children during the period 1985-2002

Time and Place of the Forum

The forum will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in Conference Room 4 (first level underground), from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

To prevent any delay on the program, participants are invited to arrive at the conference room beginning at 9:30 a.m..

Registration

All participants should return the attached registration form by 15 April 2002 to the IPU Liaison Office in New York. On the basis of the registration forms received a final list of participants will be established and distributed at the meeting.

Access to the Forum

Security arrangements at the General Assembly Special Session are very strict and no one may enter the UN premises without appropriate accreditation.

- Members of *national* parliaments must obtain their entry badges from the UN Security office through their national missions at the United Nations.
- Members of *regional* parliamentary assemblies must obtain their entry badges from the UN Security Office. UNICEF will provide the security office with the information for the issuance of these entry badges on the basis of the registration forms received.

The UN Security Office is located at 801 UN Plaza, at the corner of 1st Avenue and 45th Street, directly at street level.

All participants are responsible for their own travel arrangements (flights, hotel reservations etc.)

Useful Contacts in New York

The IPU Liaison Office is located directly across the street from the UN compound at 821 UN Plaza, 9th floor (corner of 1st Avenue and 46th Street, inside the Turkish Center). Inquiries can also be made by phone (212- 557-5880), or by e-mail (ny-office@mail.ipu.org) during regular office hours (9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.).

The focal person in UNICEF for matters related to the Parliamentary Forum is Ludo Welffens, of the UN Affairs and External Relations team in New York: e-mail, lwelffens@unicef.org; phone, (1-212) 326-7226; fax, (1-212) 326-7770.

New York, 25 February 2002