

Annual Full-Day Meeting on the Rights of the Child

Wednesday, 11 March 2009

Statement by the India

Mr. President,

India welcomes the convening of an annual full day meeting to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

India is the home to the largest child population in the world. As per the 2001 census, India has around 157.86 million children constituting 15.42% of India's population.

To pledge its commitment to the cause of its children, India acceded to the UN CRC in 1992. India has also ratified both the Optional Protocols to the CRC. Further, India remains committed to the child-related MDGs and the SAARC Conventions on Child Welfare. India has prepared a **National Plan of Action for Children** after harmonizing the goals for children set in the UNGA Special Session on Children held in 2002. India is also the largest Country Programme of UNICEF in the world.

Mr. President,

To ensure the proper enforcement of children's rights and effective implementation of laws and programmes relating to children, India set up the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights in 2007**. It is a statutory body brought into existence to protect, promote and defend child rights in the country. It is the foremost symbol of India's commitment to adopting a **rights-based approach** for effective implementation of the CRC. The Commission visualises a rights-based perspective flowing into all National Policies and Programmes related to the child. It emphasises the principles of

universality, inviolability, indivisibility, interdependence and mutual reinforcing character of child rights. Further, it believes that **child participation** is integral to addressing child rights and ensures that its work is directly informed by the views of children in order to reflect their priorities and perspectives.

While carrying out its mandate, the Commission examines all factors that inhibit the enjoyment of rights of children affected by terrorism, communal violence, riots, natural disasters, domestic violence, HIV/ AIDS, trafficking, maltreatment, torture and exploitation, pornography, and prostitution and recommends appropriate remedial measures. The Commission looks into matters relating to children in need of special care and protection, including children in distress, marginalised and disadvantaged children, children in conflict with law, juveniles, children without family and children of prisoners. It also studies treaties and other international instruments and undertakes periodic review of existing policies, programmes, and other activities on child rights and makes recommendations for their effective implementation "**in the best interest of children**". Moreover, it undertakes and promotes research in the field of child rights and spreads child rights literacy among various sections of society while promoting awareness of the safeguards available for protection of these rights through its publications. Further, the Commission's mandate authorizes it to inquire into complaints and take suo moto notice of matters related to deprivation and violation of child rights as well as non implementation of laws providing for protection and development of children.

Mr. President,

The Government of India has also adopted a **National Charter for Children in 2004** which is a statement of intent embodying the Government's agenda for Children. The document emphasizes Government of India's commitment to children's rights to survival,

health and nutrition, standard of living, play and leisure, early childhood care, education, protection of the girl child, empowering adolescents, equality, life and liberty, name and nationality, freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the right to a family and the right to be protected from economic exploitation and all forms of abuse.

In conclusion, Mr. President, India would like to state that the concept of "**child budgeting**" is gaining impetus since it was first introduced in 2001 by the Center for Child rights and is currently being employed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in partnership with UNICEF.

Thank you, Mr. President.