This December, the General Assembly reviews the 5-year implementation of *A World fit for Children* that was committed to on May 8, 2002.

**Overview of the Five-Year Review:**

About 180 nations created the agenda *'A World Fit for Children'* Specific goals for the next decade were established with a focus on promoting healthy lives; providing quality education for all; protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS.

At this 5-year anniversary it is for all of society to work in a global movement to improve the life of each child around the world. Three necessary outcomes set in place are: the best possible start in life for children, access to a quality basic education, including free and compulsory primary education, and ample opportunity for children and adolescents, to develop their individual capacities.

There are strong calls to support families, to eliminate discrimination and to tackle poverty. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd have constantly worked to support children’s rights, especially the rights of the girl child. We are active participants in the Working Group on Girls (http://www.girlsrights.org). Good Shepherd is a members of CRIN, the Child Rights Network (http://www.crin.org). We collaborate to organize Girls Speak Out events and other forms of girls’ participation. We include the issue of violence against girls in many of the statements we submit to the UN, in contexts such as trafficking, migration, indigenous, and economic justice. We also include them; their parents; their families and other caregivers; local governments; parliamentarians; NGOs; the private sector; religious, spiritual, cultural and indigenous leaders; the mass media; regional and international organizations; and people who work with children.


Facts about a World Fit for Children campaign: to inform our prayer and increase our solidarity with the children of the world.

Promoting healthy lives:
Early childhood care and education establishes a solid foundation for learning and makes both girls and boys ready to attend school at the right age. It also improves parents’ and caregivers’ readiness to send their children to school by equipping them with deeper knowledge and skills. More girls can attend and complete school if other children are receiving early childhood care and education; this is particularly crucial for children affected by HIV and AIDS.

Providing quality education for all:
Enabling girls to attend school is literally a matter of life and death. Education, especially for girls and women, is the best way to break the cycle of ill health, hunger and poverty...

- Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson, Global Campaign for Education

There are 115 million children out of school – the majority of them, 62 million, are girls – and 77 million children not enrolled in school. The difference represents the millions of children who are enrolling in but not attending school.

Protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence:
Seventy per cent of the world’s working children are in agriculture. From tending cattle to harvesting crops, handling dangerous machinery and spraying pesticides, over 132 million children aged 5 to 14 help produce the food we eat and the clothes we wear.

Girls between 13 and 18 years old constitute the largest group exploited in the commercial sex industry. It is estimated that around 500,000 girls below 18 are victims of trafficking each year.

Female genital mutilation/cutting affects 130 million girls and women globally and places 2 million at risk annually.

In some cultures, the preference for boy children results in prenatal sex selection and infanticide of girls. In India, there are 933 Indian women for every 1,000 men, reflecting 40 million ‘missing’ women.

More than 80 per cent of the world’s 35 million refugees and displaced people are women and children.

Combating HIV/AIDS:
If all children received a complete primary education, around 700,000 cases of HIV in young adults could be prevented each year.

Women represent 62 per cent of the 15- to 24-year-olds living with HIV and AIDS globally. 15.2 million children under age 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS; 12 million of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Prayer starters:
Place a photo of children of the world in your prayer space – perhaps children of your own family next to children from international news stories. As we pray for Children’s Rights, remember the children in your life as well as those around the world.

Think of yourself as a child and pray from the heart of a child.

We are the world’s children.
We are the victims of exploitation and abuse.
We are the children of war.
We are victims and orphans of HIV/AIDS.
We are denied good quality education and health care.
We are victims of political, economic, cultural, and environmental discrimination.
We are children whose voices are not being heard: it is time we are taken into account.
We want a world fit for children, a world fit for us if a world fit for everyone.

“A World Fit for Children”

As children of God created in God’s image, human persons have a preeminent place in creation... There is a unique and sacred worth that is present in each person simply because she or he exists. The germinal aptitudes and abilities each person possesses at birth constitute a divine vocation, a specific and unique calling to further the development of human society as a whole.

Catholic Social Teaching: “The Development of Peoples,” Populorum Progressio

Gabriela Mistral: Piececitos (1922)

Piececitos de niño, dejáis;
azulosos de frío, que allí donde ponéis
¡cómo os ven y no os la plantita sangrante,
cubren, el nardo nace más
¡Dios mío! fragante.

¡Piececitos heridos Sed, puesto que marcháis
por los guijarros todos, por los caminos rectos,
ultrajados de nieves heroicos como sois
y lodos! perfectos.

El hombre ciego Piececitos de niño,
ignora dos joyitas sufrientes,
que por donde pasáis, ¡cómo pasan sin veros
una flor de luz viva las gentes!

Thanks to Melissa Alvarenga, Good Shepherd Volunteer who prepared this prayer note.