

A world fit for kids ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

We are the world's children. We are not expenses, we are investments. We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is fit for everyone.

With those blunt words, 400 young people at the United Nations Special Session on Children in New York shamed 3,000 delegates, 180 governments and the inevitable bloated final communiqué preaching kids' rights.

The United States and other rich countries spend \$800 billion a year on military goods. But they can find barely \$50 billion to help half of humanity, who live on \$2 a day. The kids suffer most. They are exploited as child soldiers, sex slaves, hard labourers. They are neglected AIDS victims, street children, castoffs. This skewed use of wealth is foolish and criminal.

So, what to do? Start here in Canada. Parliament vowed to end child poverty by 2000, yet 1.3 million kids today live in poverty. Let's not point complacently to the \$11 billion we allegedly spend. It obviously isn't enough. We need a national child-care program to free parents to work; affordable housing; less miserly welfare and jobless benefits. Do it.

As well, help the world. The U.N. doesn't need more declarations and targets. It needs \$100 billion to fight poverty, ignorance and disease. Until Canada, the U.S. and others dig twice as deep, our pious moralizing about the evil of child poverty will be hot air. Kids can't eat hot air.

reprinted from the Toronto Star.

Tags: poverty ^[2]

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