

Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Report of the Secretary-General ^[1]

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Summary:

The General Assembly, by its resolution 44/25, adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As at 1 July 2009, the Convention had been ratified or acceded to by 193 States. By its resolution 54/263, the Assembly adopted two Optional Protocols to the Convention. As at 1 July 2010, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict had been ratified by 132 States and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been ratified by 137 States.

Pursuant to resolution 64/146, the implementation of child rights in early childhood is the focus of section IV of the present report, which highlights roles and responsibilities at different levels for the fulfilment in early childhood of the rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

Excerpts from the report's early childhood section:

States have an obligation to ensure that the rights of the child are fully implemented. However, the exercise of rights in early childhood is strongly contingent upon the capacities and resources available to the major caregivers of the young child. This includes the full range of those who take responsibility for their care, education and development, such as the child's parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom; legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child; and childcare professionals, as well as, later, the teachers and other community members. The ability of these individuals to care for the child is in turn strongly affected by their enjoyment of human rights, including economic circumstances; their access to basic information and services; the level of political stability in the community, region or country; and the laws and policies that have an impact on their roles. Recognizing these interdependencies is necessary in order to provide support and assistance to family members or other major caregivers, notably through social protection programmes, health care and education.

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Implementing rights in early childhood requires a comprehensive, child- centred framework of laws, policies and community-based services. Offering a continuum of care, health care, education and development through a multisectoral approach is of prime importance to enable young children to exercise their rights and achieve their full potential. This must include all children, without discrimination.

Accordingly, a strong, positive agenda for rights in early childhood, as recommended in general comment No. 7 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, is necessary. Such an agenda requires a shift in attitude, in ways that recognize that young children are active participants in their development, not passive recipients of care and teaching. A positive agenda also requires the development of comprehensive policies and national action plans to ensure respect for the rights of the young child.

Region: International ^[3]

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