



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

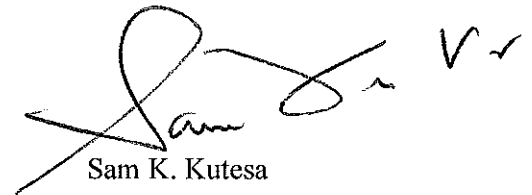
10 December 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit, in accordance with operative paragraph 9 of resolution 68/237, a summary of key messages that emerged from the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was convened on 20 November 2014.

I thank you for your delegation's active and engaging participation, particularly during the interactive panel discussion, which contributed to the success of the high-level meeting.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam K. Kutesa", with a checkmark to the right of the signature.

Sam K. Kutesa

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

**High-level Meeting
of the
General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption
of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
20 November 2014, General Assembly Hall and Trusteeship Council Chamber**

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Topic: “25 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Is the world a better place for children?”

Background and objective

Twenty-five years ago, on 20 November 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is the most comprehensive human rights treaty and legal instrument for the promotion and protection of children’s rights. By adoption of this convention, the international community made a commitment to all children: that it would do everything in its power to protect and promote their rights – to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard and to reach their full potential without discrimination.

In every region of the world, the CRC has inspired changes in laws to better protect children, altered the way international organizations see their work for children, and transformed the way children are able to take an active role and participate in their communities and societies. The CRC has also contributed to changing attitudes towards childhood and the universal understanding that fulfilling the rights of children depends on recognizing childhood as a period that is distinct from adulthood - defining it as a time in which children can grow, learn, play and develop. Equally important is the optimism, clarity and steadfastness that the Convention captures for the future—that one day all children will enjoy a childhood in which their rights are respected; their basic needs are met; they are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination; and empowered to participate meaningfully in all decisions that affect their lives.

Reflection on the last 25 years also reveals gaps and inequalities that are a stark reminder of the work that still must be done in order to ensure that gains are evenly distributed. The quality of children’s lives continues to vary by where they are born; their ethnicity; whether they are a boy or girl; whether they have a disability; the income of their family and whether they live in rural or urban areas, along with multiple other variables.

In light of the 25th anniversary of the CRC and the discussions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, this is a critical moment to bridge implementation gaps and make the vision of the Convention a reality for all children, as well as to highlight innovative approaches that can transform the lives and realize the rights of all children, everywhere. As the international community enters the next 25 years of the CRC with growing and widening disparities within societies, and pressing global challenges driven by climate change, food and water insecurity,

changing population dynamics, and social conflict, business as usual is not enough to make the vision of the Convention a reality for all children.

The main objectives of the high-level meeting were to:

1. Take stock of the progress that has been achieved for children since 1989;
2. Identify the main challenges in realizing the rights of the child, including discrimination and inequalities in the progress made to date; and
3. Look to the future from different perspectives and disciplines to consider the best ways to address these challenges as the international community moves into the next 25 years of the CRC.

Key messages

The following is a summary of the key messages that emerged from the day's opening session and interactive panel discussion.

- Statements were delivered by strong advocates for children's rights, including Member States, civil society, the United Nations, private sector representatives and children themselves.
- The event was a celebration of the remarkable progress achieved in children's rights over the past 25 years. More children than ever have had the chance to survive, thrive and reach their full potential. **However, looking back on 25 years of progress reminds us there is much left to do.** Too many of the commitments made to children – the builders of our future – have yet to be fulfilled.
- Participants agreed that the 25th anniversary of the CRC constitutes an opportunity to renew commitments to children and ensure the best future for them. Participants strongly urged the need to fully reflect **children's rights in the Post-2015 Development Agenda** and beyond.
- **There were reminders to all stakeholders to spare no effort to honour the articles of the Convention and turn aspirations into concrete results for children.** There were also calls for the universal ratification and effective implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols.
- **There must be continued investment in the rights of all children across the world. They are the fundamental building block for achieving the future we want. Explicit targets on reducing inequality, ending all forms of violence against children and combating child poverty are major steps forward in the new agenda.** Poverty, violence, conflict, weak governance and the absence of rule of law severely undermine development gains, and any new development agenda must explicitly take up these issues.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships will be required to deliver on the success of the future sustainable development goals of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and have a special accountability to achieve the rights of children.** Every sector of society needs to be mobilized. In particular, the financial sector, private business, foundations and non-profits will represent central players to bring forward new opportunities.

- Civil society called for rethinking the way we work and emphasized that the rights of every child demands innovative solutions. Innovative services, products and processes and systems are critical to closing the gaps that prevent so many children from realizing their rights.
- **Children and youth are essential stakeholders in this multi-stakeholder partnership. They have a unique perspective that must be sought and cannot be ignored.** Children have the right to be heard, and to be active agents of change in their communities. Today, children specifically called upon adults to ensure that decisions that affect them must start with discussions with children and young people themselves.
- **All actors were urged to consider the most marginalized and excluded children.** Numerous participants – including children – emphasized that inequality and discrimination remain among the biggest challenges to the realization of children’s rights. The quality of children’s lives continues to vary by where they are born; their ethnicity; whether they are a boy or a girl; whether they have a disability; the income of their family; and whether they live in rural or urban areas. In all cases, the best interests of the child must be taken into account.
- Member States and young representatives highlighted the importance of **focusing on children’s access to health, adequate nutrition, quality education, water and sanitation and strengthened child protection systems and mechanisms.** Several participants underscored that paramount responsibility rests with Member States to implement children’s rights and to monitor implementation of the CRC, in partnership with key stakeholders.
- Several participants also highlighted that current conditions make for a challenging environment in which to realize children’s rights. Threats to children are ever increasing in the form of alarming numbers of humanitarian crises, changing population dynamics, natural disasters, violent conflicts and climate change.
- The importance of the **Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa** in July 2015 was emphasized, particularly in the context of investing in children and youth to ensure that their needs are central to the discussions on financing of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- **Information and Communication Technology and the Internet present an important opportunity for empowerment and engagement of children.** Today’s children have far more possibility to participate through online means than 25 years ago. **Children are not simply passive recipients of information; they are also engaged participants and innovative drivers.** Yet, this exciting online world brings with it heightened risks against children, including all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Every child has a right to **a future full of promise** – a right for each child to claim and for each of us to provide. A lot remains to be done to ensure the vision of a better world for children, which lies at the heart of the CRC. The 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is an opportunity for us all to recommit to enhancing, improving and intensifying our efforts to realize the rights of our children, everywhere, and at all times.