

Independent human rights institutions for children share global initiative to make children's rights a political imperative

13 December 2007 - Independent human rights institutions for children worldwide, are this week attending a special United Nations meeting in New York, convened to review the implementation of the UN document, *A World Fit for Children*.

A World Fit for Children, adopted at the UN Special Session on Children in 2002, is a plan of action to promote the realization of children's rights by significantly improving the care, education, protection, dignity and well being of children and young people across the globe. Some progress has been made in the five years since the document was agreed, however much more needs to be done to live up to the standards agreed in 2002.

In an unprecedented effort by independent human rights institutions for children, they met with a number of high level State representatives, the Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe and Portugal, as current holder of the EU Presidency.

Together they called upon all those present to urgently address the key issues that continue to threaten the development of children and the enjoyment of their rights.

They demonstrated the myriad of challenges that exist globally; from the continued recruitment of children by militia in Columbia, child labour in India through to the persistence of child poverty in developed countries. They emphasized their ability as agents that translate children's experiences, perspectives and concerns into policy change, and emphasized the need for regional and international cooperation and assistance.

They also called for the establishment and strengthening of independent structures at national level that will contribute to the monitoring, protection and promotion of children's rights.

What followed was a public endorsement of the work of independent human rights institutions for children by individual States in the General Assembly and support for the development of such institutions worldwide.

Children are often a low political priority. The collective efforts of the independent human rights institutions for children in New York represents the beginning for a group united in their aim to ensure that children's rights are a political imperative.