

CHILDREN'S DAY - NOVEMBER 20



"Have we forgotten about the children,
and thus forsaken the next generation?"
-- Audrey Hepburn

In the past, children were all too often viewed more as property than people. Many victories for children's rights have been won in the last 100 years, such as child labor laws, protecting children from having to work long hours in unsafe conditions; public education, allowing all children to have access to learning; and laws preventing child abuse. On November 20, 1959, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, spelling out specific rights to which all children should be entitled. On the same date in 1989, the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, creating a legally binding agreement on rights for children. The Convention was ratified faster and by more member nations than any other international human rights treaty. 192 countries have agreed and only 2 have refused - the US and Somalia.

There is still much to do in protecting children's rights around the world. 40 million children below the age of 15 suffer from abuse and neglect; 180 million children are forced to work in the worst child labor conditions, 300,000 children are forced to be soldiers and over 1.2 million children are trafficked as prostitutes. In 2000, world leaders agreed to reach specific targets to 8 Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The goals range from providing universal primary education, to stopping the spread of HIV and eliminating poverty. 6 of these goals relate directly to children.

Universal Children's Day is celebrated on November 20 to commemorate the adoption of the Declaration and Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a day to show children that they are valued members of society, and remind us that children need love and respect to grow to their full potential. It is an opportunity to increase awareness about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to remind governments to live up to their promises to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Do One Thing for a Better World

1. Learn more about the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. Urge leaders to honor their pledge to meet the MDGs
3. Support UNICEF and other organizations working for the needs of children

Links for Children's Rights

- Child Rights Information Network (crin.org)
- Children's Defense Fund (childrensdefense.org)
- Children Now (childrennow.org)
- Global Movement for Children (gmfc.org)
- National Youth Rights Association (youthrights.org)
- Save the Children (savethechildren.org)
- UNICEF (unicef.org)

DO ONE THING

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