

The evolution of international standards on child rights

- 1924** The League of Nations adopts the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child. The declaration establishes children's rights to means for material, moral and spiritual development; special care when sick, disabled or orphaned; first call on relief when in distress; freedom from economic exploitation and an upbringing that instils a sense of social responsibility.
- 1948** The UN General Assembly passes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which refers in article 25 to childhood as "entitled to special care and assistance."
- 1959** The UN General Assembly adopts the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes rights such as freedom from discrimination and the rights to a name and nationality. It also specifically enshrines children's rights to education, health care and special protection.
- 1966** The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are adopted. The covenants advocate protection for children from exploitation and promote the right to education.
- 1973** The International Labour Organization adopts Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, which sets 18 years as the minimum age for work that might be hazardous to an individual's health, safety or morals.
- 1979** The UN General Assembly adopts the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which provides protection for the human rights of girls as well as women. It also declares 1979 as the International Year of the Child, which sets in motion the working group to draft a legally binding Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1989** The UN General Assembly unanimously approves the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which enters into force the following year.
- 1990** The 1990 World Summit for Children adopts the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, along with a plan of action for implementing it in the 1990s.
- 1999** The International Labour Organization adopts Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.
- 2000** The UN General Assembly adopts two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, one on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the other on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
- 2002** The UN General Assembly holds a Special Session on Children, meeting for the first time to specifically discuss children's issues. Hundreds of children participate as members of official delegations, and world leaders commit themselves to a compact on child rights, 'A World Fit for Children.'
- 2007** The five-year follow up to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children ends with a Declaration on Children adopted by more than 140 governments. The Declaration acknowledges progress achieved and the challenges that remain, and reaffirms commitment to the World Fit for Children compact, the Convention and its Optional Protocols.