

# **THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2003**

**Carol Bellamy**  
Executive Director  
United Nations Children's Fund

With photos and artwork by children

# CONTENTS

With a foreword by Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Chapters **1** **2** **3** **4**

**CHILDREN MUST BE HEARD**

Page 1



**WHY PARTICIPATION, WHY NOW?**

Page 9



**ENGAGING LIFE**

Page 19



**ACTIVE LEARNING**

Page 27



<b>Panels</b>	1. What children see, they show .....	6
	2. Child participation: Myth and reality .....	16
	3. A child's 'right' to participate .....	24
	4. Girls win big! .....	32
	5. Building nations.....	40
	6. We asked them to speak.....	50
	7. Children and the media .....	58
	8. We are the world's children .....	66
<b>Text figures</b>	1. Children's participation .....	3
	2. The world is becoming more democratic .....	10
	3. Decline in voter turnout in G7 countries.....	12
<b>References</b>	.....	70

# 5

## THE SHARPEST EDGE

Page 35



# 6

## LISTENING TO CHILDREN

Page 43



# 7

## SPACES FOR PARTICIPATION

Page 53



# 8

## AT THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

Page 61



# 9

## MOVING FORWARD

Page 69



### Maps

.....	73
1 What the children think .....	74
2 What the children want: Health, education, healthy environment .....	76
3 What the children want: Protection .....	78
General notes .....	80

### Tables

.....	81
1 Basic indicators.....	84
2 Nutrition.....	88
3 Health.....	92
4 Education.....	96
5 Demographic indicators .....	100
6 Economic indicators .....	104
7 Women .....	108
8 HIV/AIDS and malaria .....	112
9 The rate of progress .....	116

### Index

.....	120
-------	-----

### Glossary

.....	123
-------	-----

“They brought us  
their ideas, hopes  
and dreams.”

Kofi A. Annan

# FOREWORD



The focus of this year's *The State of the World's Children* – child participation – is intended to remind adults of their obligation to elicit and consider the views of children and young people when decisions are being made that affect their lives.

The report's theme is true to the spirit of the historic General Assembly Special Session on Children, held in May 2002. For the first time, the General Assembly met to discuss exclusively children's issues; and for the first time, large numbers of children were included as official members of delegations, representing governments and non-governmental organizations.

The children's presence transformed the atmosphere of the United Nations. Into our usually measured and diplomatic discussions, they introduced their passions, questions, fears, challenges, enthusiasm and optimism. They brought us their ideas, hopes and dreams. They gave life to the values of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And they contributed something only they could know: the experience of being young in the 21st century – in a time when HIV/AIDS continues to grow at a devastating rate; in a time when unprecedented wealth coexists with extreme poverty; in a time when the rights of children, while almost universally recognized, are abused systematically and daily throughout the world.

In the outcome document of the Special Session, Governments declared their commitment to changing the world for and **with** children – to build a world fit for children in the 21st century. We will achieve this only if Governments fulfil their promise that the voices of children and young people will be heard loud and clear; if we ensure the full participation of children in the work to build a better future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan'.

Kofi A. Annan  
Secretary-General of the United Nations