



Children's Appeal

"Tapori, friendship triumphs over poverty!" was the title of the International Children's Forum which took place in November 1999 in Switzerland.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, almost a hundred children came together in Geneva. They came from 5 continents and acted as delegates from their communities, their neighbourhoods, their schools.

During the Forum, the delegates thought hard, they played and sang. They prepared what they said to Mrs Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as to the other adults who are concerned about the future of children.

Children's Appeal

on the occasion of the 10th anniversary
of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Geneva, November 20, 1999

We are 86 children from 37 delegations and we are coming from 24 countries. We are representing children that we know from all over the world and with whom we have worked very hard to prepare this gathering. We are thinking especially of those who have not been able to come because of the situation they are living in.

We believe that it is very important that all children be able to gather together and learn from each other. We need to allow this to happen.

A lot of people say that children are the future. If everyone really believed this, there would be less and even no more misery in the world. Today, fighting poverty is the most important thing.

All around us, in certain countries, there has been war these past 10 years. Many children lost their fathers. Hardship and poverty have entered our houses. It's very hard for us, but refugees have even more problems. Some children no longer have their parents or their homes.

Some children don't go to school. They are always in the street and sometimes we see them asking passersby for money. For those of us who are around this every day, it's very hard to look at.

Many among us live in very poor neighborhoods where there are a lot of drugs being sold. Some people go there just to buy drugs. They shoot up in front of the children and this makes them afraid.

They are also afraid to get stuck by needles which have been left lying around on the ground. Parents are afraid for themselves and for their children; it's becoming dangerous.

Too many children live in poverty. Because of this poverty, they are often lost in life, lost in the world.

For us, the family is the most important thing. Without families, we can't live; we can't grow up. But families can't live in homes or communities without friendship. Without friendship, there is no life.

Many families are chased away and have to hide; all alone with no friends. Yet, the earth and the sun are for everyone.

All children should have a house and should live with their family; there should be no more children in the streets. Children living in the streets suffer a great deal.

We have to do everything we can so that children live with their parents.

Sometimes there are fathers who don't have enough money to raise their families. They travel very far to find whatever they can to feed their families. Sometimes they don't come back because they were unable to find anything, and then people accuse them of not loving their children. What these people don't know is that they love their children with all of their hearts.

All parents want to send their children to school but are unable to do so because they don't have any money. They are forced to let their children work in order to keep the family alive and so that the younger ones are able to go to school. Our parents already do all that they can, and we have to help them. We know children like Augustine, who goes with his mom each morning, before going to school, to sell things at the market. She's always late to school. Once school is out, she goes back to the market to sell, often without having eaten anything since the morning.

We want to say that the world would be better if all families were happy and would help each other. We want our mothers and fathers to be happy.

"Adults must help us, please!"

We, the children, need to stay strong, hand in hand. We need to demand respect, the right to peace, friendship, and the right to have normal lives.

We would like for it if our imaginations could fly free like a dove of peace and that our dreams could become reality.

We want all children to be able to come together so that not one child has to endure poverty.

All children should have places to go like our Tapori groups where we can meet together and do things together, even if our lives are very different. When we take the time to know each other, we can be friends and be stronger.

We believe that all children should have the same chances. One thing that everyone absolutely deserves is to be protected. This is what makes love possible and gives the hope and the courage to continue.

We believe that all children should be able to go to school for free and learn. The ability to know

how to read and write can make them want to learn a trade which could help them get their family out of poverty.

For each child to learn, they need to be respected and for no one to make fun of them. Adults need to need to make it possible for children to respect and to help each other. Everyone needs to work on this; children need grownups to set the example.

It's important for parents to have jobs to help their children grow up properly and to get a good education.

We want children to be able to help out with certain tasks, but not to do have to do too much or to do work that is more than their strength can manage.

Children need to be able to play even if they are lacking many things. Children love to play. At school, we can play with a lot of other children. Playing together is important in learning to show respect to other children and adults. We demand that people show concern for this for all of the children of the world.

No more violence! We need to do all we can to protect peace in the family and in the world. Most importantly, no more selling guns! Children want to live in peace. If we have peace, we'll have friends.

We would like land mines to turn into shoes We would like bullets to turn into candy and cannons into tractors.

We don't have solutions, but we want everyone to understand the situation of children who have problems, that these children no longer feel lonely and that, in the end, we find a solution to give them a better life. We are asking the United Nations to understand poor children and to learn from them all that they already do with their friends to make things better...

We, as Taporí children, want to be friends with everyone. It's important to get together for the world to change and to be fairer to people who suffer. If everyone could convince people to believe in Taporí and in the new generation, the world would be a better place.

Adults must help us make this happen, please.

International Children's Forum
Taporí: Friendship Wins Over Poverty
on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the
Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Geneva, November 20, 1999

www.taporí.org/site/en

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