



Istanbul, October 4, 2021

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Honorable President of UNICEF,  
**Henrietta Fore**

Greetings,

In his poem "Hello Children," our poet Nâzm Hikmet addressed the children, saying, "We are such perfect friends that we can get along without speaking and writing..." Allow "Hello" to be something along these lines for us.

I send greetings to you and the children of the world you represent on behalf of UNICEF, with two lines from the most exquisite children's poet of our Turkish language, Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca: "Sensing life, like the skies, from afar / Greeting all children."

Without becoming lost in the maze of words, I'd like to make my point by presenting verses from some Turkish poets and offering four simple ideas. Why do I wish to share poets' verses? There are several names given to poets 1500 years ago in our poetry, one of them is "play." Every task assigned to children is treated seriously, and children do not eat until their game is completely finished. Millions of children today scrounge in the trash, let alone play. When a third of the world's population lives in poverty, how do we swim in the same ocean?

**Dear President,**

Solving children's difficulties would be achievable with the growth of intercultural relations, according to ideas made during the 1979 World Year of the Child. When the Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed in November 1989, we had optimism for the first time. For the past forty years, our worries have been raised that the status of the world's children is no better than it was before the Convention; and lately, we have been caught in the COVID-19 epidemic.

Why haven't we been able to reach out to every child, regardless of where they were born, in order to achieve UNICEF's goal of "a better future for all"? Children make up one-third of the world's population, yet we haven't given them their fair part of the earth's benefits. We haven't spun cocoons of the common good for both the born and yet-to-be-born infants.

Since the Convention, neither justice for children nor the world system's spiral of inequality has been rectified. "Where will children's problems be fixed first?" the youngsters inquired, and they were right! Their burning question still applies today: "When will the wars end and will there never be a time for brotherhood?"

Today is International Children's Day. Children realize that it is the same rising sun for everyone. "Children smell the air," said poet Cahit Zarifoğlu. "Is the blue sky there?" he inquired, as if he were a child.

Yes, the sky is there, but it, too, is suffering from climate change. The way things stand, we won't even be able to sew imaginary clothes from the clouds for all of the world's children.



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Who can stare at the sky with the same sincerity and decency as a child? Who can distribute the ink that determines the boundaries of an atlas, beyond measure, as a child can do?

Will all of humanity's geographies be like poetry that lacks joy? Should children in Africa, Asia, South America, China, India, Tibet, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Palestine, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda, Myanmar, East Turkistan, Iraq, Syria, perish as a result of their suffering? Should children grow up without enjoying their childhood, hundreds of millions of them suffering as a result of malnourishment, unable to attend school, abused, made to work in exploitative conditions? Must tens of thousands of refugee children die in their attempts to flee?

**Dear President,**

"War among people is like the fighting of children," poet Mevlana, one of humanity's common sages, remarked. "Both are meaningless and pointless."

To put an end to these pointless battles and pointless wars, humanity requires a new understanding of children. We required a new children's philosophy before the Declarations and Conventions. "An old flame unique to children for children about children," wrote the great poet Sezai Karakoç, and this philosophy was founded on childhood. As Socrates remarked, this new philosophy must have been founded by people for whom "An honest person is always a child."

"Always be like a child!" exclaims Tolstoy. Only those who are able to listen to and understand the child, as well as those who respect children, can pave the way for brotherhood and peace, by weaving the cocoon of this child-centered philosophy.

We have reached a point when we must make a choice: unless the most fundamental and primary duty of mankind is to defend children for the sake of the world's well-being and to make the world beautiful, neither the world or its children will benefit. To go on a journey towards goodness, being on the side of the child and making hope the key to love and peace is the way to go. Our hope is not in politicians or in this exploitative system; it is in our children, who were and will be born as God's human love and gift.

With the globe is on its way to a new reality in the midst of the pandemic, we cannot be satisfied with the unresolved questions we had before the outbreak. Will we be able to take the first steps towards the Age of Question, which will begin with the world's bolder and bigger inquiries, and in days when children and adults collaborate?

Before taking these measures, the Convention on the Rights of the Child must be revised to reflect the contributions of all civilizations. UN conventions on children's rights and UN institutions have failed to protect children from the most heinous abuses of their rights, such as war and armed conflict, since the signing of the Convention. The implication is clear: the United Nations Organization has lost its trust and credibility.



The United Nations deficit is one of many that have occurred as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. In this context, in addition to the renewal of UNICEF and the Convention, there is a need for an organization that will carry out the functions of this institution and related Conventions, strengthen the defense of children's rights, and safeguard children from states. In order for mankind to "be a party to the child" and achieve World Child Peace, I believe it is more vital for humanity to sign a new contract with the "child" than it is to renew the Convention.

Dear President,

"Nobody knows what tomorrow will bring: Only God knows the truths of tomorrow," reads an ancient Egyptian poem. Those of us who are on the side of the child, have more tasks and responsibilities increasing every day. Here are some suggestions for UNICEF to assist the globe in moving toward children with children:

*Take the perspectives of children in every society to update the aim, criteria, principles, and function of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

*Revise and restructure UNICEF's mission as a model for children and adults to work with.*

*Initiate the World Child Peace Movement, led by children, for a world where all born and will be born children in current and future times, can live in peace.*

*Establish an effective global monitoring and inspection system, with active participation from child-related NGOs, in which every child, born or yet to be born, will be a natural member.*

We'd like to see these four ideas turn into reality.

I'd like to state that we're all prepared to host the World Child Peace Declaration. Why not, since hope is the blossoming of dreams?

With our best wishes for health, goodness, and well-being, as well as our heartfelt regards, from Istanbul, which is also a children's city.

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