

Prayer of the World's Children

We are the world's children.

We are the victims of exploitation and abuse.

We are street children.

We are the children of war.

We are victims and orphans of HIV and AIDS.

We are denied quality education and health care.

We are victims of political, economic, cultural, religious, and environmental discrimination.

We are children whose voices are not being heard.

We pray for a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone.

We pray for respect for the rights of the child:

We pray for governments and adults having a real and effective commitment to the principle of children's rights outlined in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* to all children,

We pray for safe, secure, and healthy environments for children in families, communities, and nations.

We pray for an end to exploitation, abuse, and violence:

We pray for laws that protect children from exploitation and abuse being implemented and respected by all,

We pray for programs that help to rebuild the lives of victimized children.

We pray for an end to war:

We pray that world leaders resolve conflict through peaceful dialogue instead of through force,

We pray that child refugees and child victims of war are protected in every way and have the same opportunities as all other children,

We pray for disarmament, the elimination of the arms trade, and an end to the use of child soldiers.

We pray for health care:

We pray for affordable and accessible life-saving drugs and treatment for all children,

We pray for strong and accountable partnerships established among all to promote better health for children.

We pray for the eradication of HIV and AIDS:

We pray for educational systems that include HIV prevention programs,

We pray for available and accessible medical treatment for HIV and AIDS,

We pray for orphans of AIDS,

We pray that children living with HIV and AIDS are well cared for and enjoy the same opportunities as all other children.

Prayer of the World's Children (continued)

We pray for an end to the vicious cycle of poverty:
 We pray for anti-poverty programs that bring about transparency in expenditure and give attention to the needs of all children,
 We pray for cancellation of countries' debts so that all countries can invest in progress for children.

We pray for education:
 We pray for equal opportunities and access to quality education that is free and compulsory,
 We pray for school environments in which children feel happy about learning,
 We pray for education for life that goes beyond the academic and includes lessons in understanding, human rights, peace, acceptance, and active citizenship.

We pray for the active participation of children:
 We pray for raised awareness and respect among people of all ages about every child's right to full and meaningful participation, in the spirit of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*,
 We pray that children are actively involved in decision making at all levels and in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating all matters affecting the rights of the child,
 We pray for an equal partnership in this work for children's rights,
 We pray for adults' commitment and support.

We know, O Lord, we the children are not the sources of problems; we are the resources that are needed to solve them.
 We are not expenses; we are investments.
 We are not just young people; we are people and citizens of this world.
 We pray that as adults we will defend children's rights with the same passion we have now as children.
 We pray that we will treat each other with dignity and respect.
 We pray that we are open and sensitive to our differences.

We are the children of the world, and despite our different backgrounds, we share a common reality, O Lord.
 We are all your children, uniting to make the world reflect your mercy and your justice.
 Hear our cries, O Lord, and let our bodies and souls be healed as the world is healed.

Amen.

(Adapted from a document prepared by the children of the world and delivered to the United Nations General Assembly at the Special Session on Children, May 2002.)

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