

# hear us again!

## children's views and voices

### on the 5-year review of

# A world fit for children

#### Time to listen to children

Five years ago, more than 7,000 people participated in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS), at which the nations of the world committed themselves to a series of goals to improve the well-being of children. Everyone agreed to prioritise, protect and listen to children. Five years later, it is time to re-evaluate our progress toward these goals.

As a child-focused humanitarian organisation, World Vision is deeply committed to the well-being of children and the realisation of their rights. We believe that no child should go hungry, be abused or be denied opportunities. All of our work is dedicated to tackling the problems that children face. And we are committed to listening to children and encouraging their participation in their own development.

This brochure captures the voices of children from around the world as they reflect on their own well-being. The clarity of their perspectives and dreams is striking, and we would do well to listen. These children are doing their part to build a better world for all of us, and they rightfully expect their governments to do their part. Although the issues affecting children are not simple, they are vitally important and we need to do everything we can to help build a world fit for children.



Dean Hirsch,  
World Vision International President

In 2002, the UNGASS on Children was held to review progress against the Plan of Action from the 1990 World Summit for Children, and to set a new course of action. The assessment revealed a deplorable failure on the part of adults to protect the rights of children. In view of the enormous gaps, the 180 nations that took part in UNGASS committed themselves to build “a world fit for children”, and set a new agenda for the following decade on four key priorities:

1. promoting healthy lives;
2. providing quality education for all;
3. protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and
4. combating HIV and AIDS.

As active participants in the UNGASS meetings, children laid out their own vision for a world fit for everyone, which included:

- respect for the rights of the child;
- an end to exploitation, abuse and violence;
- an end to war;
- the provision of health care;
- the eradication of HIV and AIDS;
- the protection of the environment;
- an end to the vicious cycle of poverty;
- the provision of education; and
- the active participation of children.

In 2007, it's time to take stock of progress. Once again, children are calling on parents, teachers, government leaders, the private sector, NGOs, and others to use their power and resources to work together to meet A world fit for children's goals and targets.

These children have faith in the goodwill and accountability of the world's leaders. The children have pledged to be equal partners in building a world that is fit for all of us. They are speaking out boldly and demand that their voices be taken into account.



Artwork: "Youth for a Common Goal"  
by Jaylord Langbayon, the Philippines



Billy Arya, Indonesia  
photo: World Vision Indonesia





*Wilmar, 17  
PERU*

“During the rainy season, pupils are not able to attend schools as the roofs leak. The number of children in each classroom is very high. Most pupils are tightly packed in classrooms. Teachers are not well paid. They are not motivated to deliver a good service. There is no provision for recreational activities in schools.” Christelle is also outspoken on the abuse of children; “I will not remain silent when a child is abused!”

*Christelle Binti Lutala is a member of a Children’s Parliament, where she acts as the spokesperson on gender. She is a champion for child rights, and fights against sexual abuse and all types of discrimination. She has exposed cases of child abuse in her community, and helped ensure that perpetrators were brought to justice.*

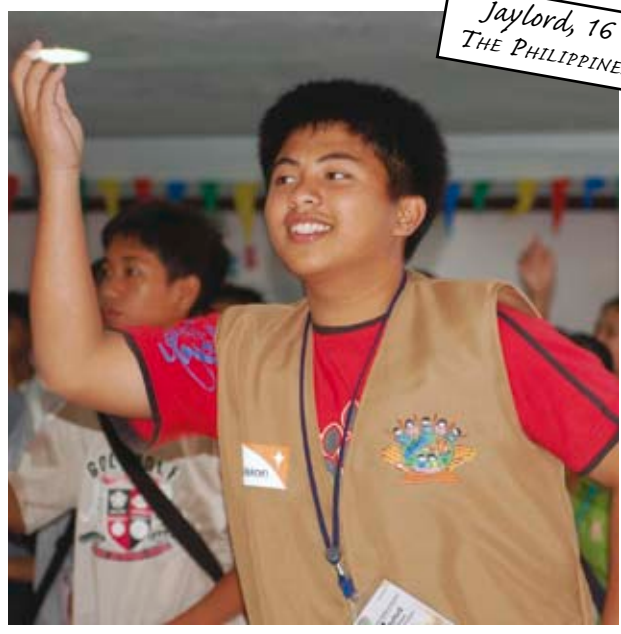


*Christelle, 17  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO*

### Listen to me

You don't know the sound of my voice because I am afraid to speak and you don't listen to me. In my eyes you can see what I am going through. Your eyes pass me through and I can't say what I feel because my greatest fear is that you don't listen to me. This fear gets to my soul and breaks my innocent heart. You don't listen to the words of my mouth nor the ones of my heart. But my endless desire and longing to change the world extend beyond language. I beg you for a better present and from my side I promise to give you a better future.

*Wilmar Vargas is the President of the Committee of Children and Adolescents for the Participatory Budget of Santiago District, and is a Representative of Children and Adolescents in the National Commission for Child Rights. He is actively working to create spaces for children to participate fully in their communities and in influencing decisions that affect their lives. He is also committed to the prevention of HIV and AIDS, particularly for rural and semi-rural areas.*



*Jaylord, 16  
THE PHILIPPINES*

“I know my rights and I often speak about it in public... Children's voices have to be heard... There is wisdom in our innocence. Given the opportunities to express ourselves and participate on issues that affect us, we can help bring hope and transformation in our communities.”

*Jaylord Langbayon is the chairperson of the Luzon Coalition of Children’s Associations in the Philippines, and he represents his peers in the National Coalition of Children’s Associations in the Philippines. He fights against child labour, works to promote child participation in education, and challenges ethnic discrimination.*



*Alicia, 14  
PERU*

“I believe that the government and local municipalities should be more interested in the health of children, giving more money but also coordinating with the population, with leaders and with other organisations like World Vision.”

*Alicia Varela Losa is a member of the National Children’s Congress of Peru, and is dedicated to promoting equal access to education and other essential services.*



"We aim to raise children's awareness on their rights... I am pushing for stronger partnership between the local government, the NGOs, schools and churches in initiating projects... that encourage wider participation of children in their communities."

*Rima Joy Aringo is an Officer of the Children's Association in her village, and represents children from her province in the National Anti-Poverty Council-Children Basic Sector. She helps to raise the voices of children, helping them achieve their full potential.*

Yusupova Inqilob Tursunovna / World Vision



*Dilfuza, 14  
UZBEKISTAN*

"[The Convention on the Rights of the Child] is of major importance for us, it ensures that children are respected, treated appropriately and not humiliated. As a member of a Children's Parliament, I know my rights and duties and can participate in decisions regarding my life. I pass my knowledge on to my peers, who do not know them yet. All of us participate together in actions on preserving the environment, defending children's rights and so on. Having rights means first of all having responsibilities too. I feel responsible for the children who selected me."

*Dilfuza Samandarova is a member of the Children's Parliament of Uzbekistan. She is a passionate advocate of children's rights, particularly the rights of girls, and is committed to ensuring the protection of children in schools.*

Diwa Gacosta / World Vision



*Rima Joy, 17  
THE PHILIPPINES*

### A bright future

Ooh War.  
In a war life is lost and not reborn,  
Animals, property destroyed  
gained not,  
Families displaced, poor education,  
ill health services  
And fears are all surrounding.  
Ooh Peace.  
In a peace life is born and lost not,  
Animals and properties are never  
destroyed,  
Families are never displaced, better  
education, satisfactory health services.  
Freedom and democracy are all  
surrounding.  
Ooh Education.  
Education is the light of the darkness,  
Education is the way to a bright future,  
Education is the key to success in life.

Ahmed Ibril Tawakal / World Vision



*Mahd, 14  
SOMALIA*

*Mahd Iman Dubad has contributed to community mobilisation activities with his peer group and as group team leader. Mahd also participates during community council discussions on children's issues, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and has helped build child-friendly spaces.*

"Children should be allowed to face their parents and talk to them freely because parents will get to feel the issues that affect children. Children often have no time to play – boys look after cattle and girls do all the housework. Yet there is hope for the future through education!"

*Teresa Cheptoo is a member of the Children's Parliament, and actively promotes improvements to children's situation in relation to sexual abuse, discrimination of girls and boys, exploitation, violence and all forms of abuses, including the recruitment of child soldiers. Teresa was recently awarded the prestigious World of Children Award.*



*Teresa, 16  
KENYA*

John Kabuu / World Vision

### Acknowledgements

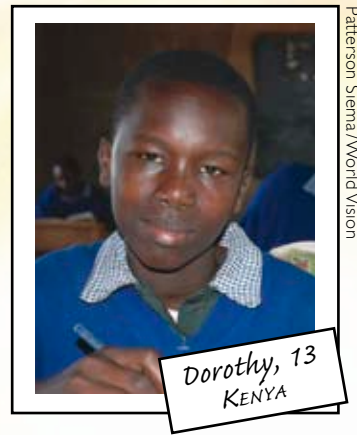
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- World Vision UK
- World Vision Switzerland
- World Vision Finland
- World Vision Canada
- World Vision Australia
- World Vision Asia Pacific Regional Office
- World Vision International



"Some decisions on important issues like marriage are decided for the girl by the father. For example, many parents will forcefully marry their girls off to other men within the community. This could result from the father wanting to be paid dowry. If the girl refuses she is rebuked by the parents. The girl can even be sent away from home. Children should take it upon themselves to report any decision especially on early marriages to the local authorities and the chief in order to stop this practice. We need to enforce the laws that protect the children world-wide. These laws are important because the children are our future and we need to protect our future."

*Dorothy Boit lives in a semi-pastoral area where gender discrimination against girls is high. As an orphan, she knows that access to a healthy life is one of the greatest achievements for those in a community. As a member of the Children's Parliament and peer educator in her district, she represents the poorest and shows them how to access knowledge on their own health issues.*



Dorothy, 13  
KENYA

Patterson Siema/World Vision

"Children's participation in decision making in Armenia is almost non-existent. This is not surprising; children don't know about their rights, they are never even thinking about suggesting their ideas or making their voice heard to the adults. All the decisions about us are made without us. There are rare exceptions, though. In school, we had many classrooms that had no blackboards; children were writing on wooden boards. We decided to approach the administration and ask to buy new blackboards. They said they are lacking funds to do this. Then we, the students, collected money and finally bought several blackboards. No teacher was expecting our initiative would be successful. That was our small victory."

*Armen Stepanyan has been involved in raising awareness amongst his peers about child protection issues, and promoting the rights of children.*



Armen, 16  
ARMENIA

Maria Sadoyan/World Vision

"I have actively shared my knowledge about child rights with my [peers] in my village and in other neighbouring areas. I tell them that we have the right to develop our potential and we are not inferior to [people] living in big cities. I have helped the establishment of the... children's self-help group in my village. Our team goes from one community group to the other group to create greater awareness among the people about the importance of giving better protection to their children, to improve their nutrition and other children issues. We also warn the people about the threat of HIV and AIDS."

*Kristina Awom is a member of the National Children's Forum in Indonesia, and organises children's self-help groups to address abuse and exploitation.*



Kristina, 17  
INDONESIA

Ety Tukayo/World Vision

"In our society, parents think that when they address sexual issues with their children, they might be giving them ideas and opening their eyes to things that they should not be doing. So to protect us, they keep quiet. But I, as well as many kids of my generation, are now convinced that this particular silence is not a healthy one, and that a sincere and open discussion between parents and their children is the best preventive tool towards HIV and AIDS."

*Sara Ajami has been actively involved in raising the awareness of child rights in Lebanon, and participated in national and regional consultations for the UN Study on Violence Against Children.*



Sara, 18  
LEBANON

Diwa Gacosta/World Vision

**These children have been actively pursuing their vision for a world that is fit for everyone. In their homes, schools and communities, they have spoken out against the violations of their rights, and have actively pursued solutions to the problems that they and their peers face each day. They have done their part, and they have the right to expect that the 193 States that ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 180 nations that committed to A world fit for children, will fulfill their obligations.**

**Will their voices be heard? Will adults do their part? Let us not come to the end of the decade and find that once again we have failed children. As we review five years of progress, it is time to find the necessary resources and political will to build a world that is truly fit for all of us.**

**Further information:**

Here we stand, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2007, World Vision International

[www.child-rights.org](http://www.child-rights.org)

[www.wvi.org](http://www.wvi.org)

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Artwork: "Youth for a Common Goal" by Jaylord Langbayon, the Philippines