

**NEWS, REPORTS, CONFERENCES.
OMEP at UNESCO & UNICEF.**

!! ATTENTION !! Regional Vice Presidents, Presidents of National Committees, Journal Representatives and interested subscribers- Please send your information to **Dorothy Sailor, 2255 Skyline Drive, Fullerton, CA 92631, USA** to reach her not later than **1st February & 30th June** in order to allow time for processing for publication in the **May & October Journals** respectively.

NEWS from UN: abstracted from information supplied by Gordon Klopff, OMEP Delegate to UN, at, 700 LaSalle St., Apt. 4, New York, NY 10027, USA. At the Annual General Meeting of the NGO Committee of UNICEF on 28th April 1994, Fay Chung, UNICEF Chief of Education, spoke about the role of NGO's and the benefits to be derived from a close association with governmental, multilateral and bilateral agencies as well as local communities in the process of development. The position of the NGO allows both an immediate response in a crisis and, because of their attachment to grassroots situations, also new insights into possible solutions to the problems which beset the modern world.

Three Conferences will allow the international community, as well as individual nations, to examine world problems and try to envisage their solutions. These will be :

The International Conference on Population and Development - Sept 1994:

The World Summit for Social Development, March, 1995:

which will bring together Heads of State and Government for five days. They will focus on three core issues:

- alleviating & reducing poverty;***
- expanding productive employment;***
- enhancing social integration:***

The Fourth World Conference on Women Sept. 1995.

The main problems confronting the world are ***fission - the breakdown into small ethnic groups which has resulted in wars; the serious problem of poverty and the related***

debt crisis.

It is envisaged that the three conferences will examine ways in which the problems might be tackled, like fertility control linked to increased economic well-being and a more sensible use of human resources.

What's good for women is good for the family.

Writing of the Malta conference reported in our last issue, Sara Ann Friedman tells that the role of women as central to the family is not new. In both developing and industrialised countries women are faced with increasingly hard burdens, which are difficult to overcome, and because of traditions, lack of stable economic conditions or from choice the pace of change is slow. The only way forward ***' is the simple but difficult task of ensuring gender equality at birth, and equality of opportunity for men and women outside the family and partnership within it'.***

Focus on Children, Fact Sheet 3- April 1994, (available from the Working Group on the Rights of the Child of the NGO Committee on UNICEF, C/O UNICEF House, 6th Floor, 3 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA) addresses the subject of the ***Right of Children to Participate.***

The Child's best interest: Their Rights related to participation: Meaningful Participation: Levels of Participation: Social and Cultural Obstacles and Concerns: Proper Placement of Responsibility are examined and some ways of developing these rights are suggested. One difficulty which gets in the way of

implementing the Convention is the concept of children as active partners in the defence of their rights. This is difficult for adults to accept.

First Call for Children April-June 1994, available free from UNICEF Publications, 3 UN Plaza, RPPL DH-49B New York 10017, contains much information about the effects of war on children. 40 armed conflicts are claiming lives and damaging children both physically and psychologically - in the past decade 1.5 million children have been killed, 4 million handicapped, more than 1 million orphaned, 12 million made homeless and an estimated 10 million have suffered psychological trauma.

A new UNICEF book *I dream of Peace* has been produced, which shows us how children feel about their lives in the former Yugoslavia

*"Stop the war and the fighting
for a smile on a child's face
Stop the planes and the shells
for a smile on a child's face.
Stop all the army vehicles
for a smile on a child's face.
Stop everything that kills and destroys
for a smile on a child's face.*

Ivana, 11 from Cegin.

All the earnings from the sale of the book will go to the **I Dream of Peace Fund** to support programmes for children affected by war throughout the world. *I dream of Peace: Images of war by children of former Yugoslavia*. (US\$ 12.95) is available from book stores or through local UNICEF National Committees or field offices.

In the midst of sadness pain evoked by details of the book, a light of hope emerges for some 16000 children living on the streets of Salvador (Brazil). Since 1990, Projecto Axé has taught children through 'wish pedagogy' to plan for the future. Stimulated to dream of a life off

the streets, the children are given opportunities to learn and to work, through the small businesses run by the project. Through games they learn to express their emotions and start to plan for the future.

8th International Vatican Conference.

Our World President Candide Pineault, was invited to attend this Conference which took place in Vatican City in November 1993. Sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers, the Conference was a reflection of the high priority placed by the Roman Catholic Church on the survival, protection and development of children. Some 6000 delegates heard presentations by more than 90 religious leaders, government representatives, scientists and scholars from a variety of fields. They discussed a broad range of issues related to children's health and future. His Holiness the Pope, spoke of the need to reduce poverty and give priority to reducing illiteracy, and to supporting children who are the victims of war and painful migration. He called for solidarity and effective commitment for the defence and advancement of children. In summary he said it was the right of children to be loved, and called on all who deal with them to do so with authentic love. Copies of the Papal address in French, English and Spanish are available.



World President at the Vatican Conference

The World Council Meeting and Seminar, hastily rearranged after communication difficulties in South Africa, was held at University of Warwick, UK from 8th -11th August. Delegates from 27 National Committees were joined by representatives from UNICEF and UNESCO, New York.

Tricia David, UK. welcomed delegates to the Council and the campus. Once again Vital Didonet set the scene by reading a "letter" - *'What does it mean to us, the children, to celebrate THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY'. Certainly much hope. It ends - 'It is said that children symbolise so much in life, (future, hope, the promise of a better world...) Given that, I would ask that you do your best to allow the family to be a haven of peace wherein can be found a favourable climate for a healthy and happy development.'*

Reports from the World President and the regions followed. The Commissions met to discuss the future of the Organisation as we approach the 50th Anniversary in 1998. In a free and frank evaluation of the position, financial, philosophical and practical issues were faced. A small sub-committee was formed and met during the meeting, to try to formulate proposals for improving the way in which the aims were to be met in future years. The need to examine the relationship of the Regions to the Organisation as a whole in the current financial climate was an issue which needed to be addressed.

There were elections for two officers, the World Treasurer and the Vice President for Europe. Susanna Harttung was thanked for her long service as Treasurer. Her place has been taken by Ulla Grob-Menges of Switzerland. In the absence of a formal acceptance of nomination from the Spanish candidate for the office of Regional Vice-President Europe, Audrey Curtis was

reelected

Members of the Council were joined on August 10th & 11th by UK members and friends for the Seminar entitled *Families and Children: Rights now!*

It is hoped to publish in full in the next issues some of the major keynote papers, which examined the Rights of Children and Families from a variety of different aspects. Candide Pineault looked on a world basis, at the realities of trying to bring up children in today's world, where for many, just to exist is difficult. Professor John Tomlinson spoke of the importance of children in social policy, in a society where the population is ageing at a greater rate than the birthrate. Professor Kathy Sylva looked through current research, at the inequalities of opportunity brought about by the differences in types of provision and the level of training of the care-givers. Mapitso Malepa and Ntuthu Ngobeni of South Africa, spoke of the tremendous strides being made in their country, of the spirit of optimism which prevails and of the tremendous responsibility and challenge presented by the need to meet the aspirations of the people for a better life.

In a series of free papers, a wide range of issues were addressed. A practical paper told of how the message about their rights had been prepared for children. In other papers it became clear that the major preoccupation on a world scale, is how best to integrate services, train workers and help parents to understand their role in the education of children.

As it began, the meeting closed with a moving paper from Vital Didonet, in which he outlined 10 points which needed to be addressed if all children's rights were to be met.
