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Déar Dr. Clyde Hertzman,

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has highly appreciated the meeting with members of WHO Early Child Development Knowledge Network, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, the Aga Khan Foundation, UNICEF, and the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Development held on September 28, 2006 in Geneva. We would like to thank all participants for engaging in a very productive discussion in which it was made clear how deeply we all share the intention to strengthen the awareness, the implementation, and the monitoring of the rights of the child in early childhood. This meeting found an inspiring continuation in a seminar on Early Child Development on October 29 in the UNICEF building in New York. Again the need and the will for intensified partnership was expressed by the participants representing UNICEF, WHO, and the CRC.

Our recent discussions were stimulated by two important steps: The Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted the General Comment no. 7 Implementing child rights in early childhood in October 2005, which stresses the entitlement of the young and the very young child to the rights enshrined in the Convention and demands from State Parties to the Convention "to construct a positive agenda for rights in early childhood" (para. 5), which encompasses all aspects of the young child's well-being and development. The WHO Early Child Development Knowledge Network started to compile a comprehensive set of indicators for the state of child development across the various developmental domains. This undertaking corresponds to the request of the Committee underlined in Paragraph 39 of the General Comment by which State Parties are urged "to develop a system of data collection and indicators consistent with the Convention". If such a list of indicators would be established and used by the State Parties, the monitoring task of the Committee would be massively assisted.

By this letter, I would like to encourage the above mentioned group of involved persons and organization to establish regular close cooperation. I would like to propose that we come together in a workshop in near future in order to work out effective ways of mutual support in our joined endeavour to implement the rights of the young child.

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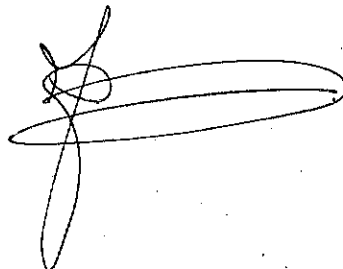
In particular, the topics to be discussed in the workshop should include:

- (1) dissemination of the General Comment no. 7 so that it can best be used for the implementation of the rights of the young child, especially with regard to the most vulnerable groups of young children;
- (2) priorities which should be considered by State Parties when they construct the demanded positive agenda for rights in early childhood;
- (3) monitoring systems by which the activities initiated by these agendas should be controlled;
and
- (4) data collection and indicator systems which allow to comprehensively analyse the well-being and the state of children's development in given social contexts.

At the September meeting in Geneva the participants expressed the hope that such a list of indicators could be presented in the Committee's session in May/June 2007. In order to make progress the Committee would like to suggest that we plan a workshop to be held in the first months of the coming year at which we discuss the topics listed above. If you agree we should carefully prepare the workshop in an informal meeting of WHO, UNICEF and CRC members during the January/February session of the Committee.

We look forward to your response and to our strengthened collaboration for improved implementation of child rights and Early Child Development programming in all countries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the typed name.

Jakob Egbert Doek
Chairperson
Committee on the Rights of the Child