

## - San Rossore 2007 Conference explores a new global vision for children and women

Contributed by Author  
Thursday, 19 July 2007

SAN ROSSORE PARK, Tuscany, Italy, 19 July 2007 &ndash; UNICEF joined forces with the Tuscany Region today at a conference in San Rossore under the theme: &ldquo;Children and Women: Fulfilling their rights, developing their talents, advancing the Millennium Agenda.&rdquo; More than 1,000 people, including children and young people, local and national government officials, international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), converged on the sprawling grounds of the park, located a few kilometers from Pisa. Participants came from Italy, other parts of Europe and the developing world &ndash; who at the end of the day would present a San Rossore Declaration on Children, expressing their commitment to advancing the rights of children.

During the opening session, Claudio Martini, President of the Tuscany Region, thanked UNICEF for its collaboration in the meeting. &ldquo;The conditions under which children live are very clearly linked to the conditions under which women live,&rdquo; he said, stressing that &ldquo;opportunities for the expression of the talents of children&rdquo; must be provided.

San Rossore 2007 is a high-level policy and advocacy meeting bringing together government representatives and decision-makers with the goal of placing children at the centre of the policy and public agenda. The ideas and proposals coming out of today&rsquo;s meeting will be shared with world leaders at the UN General Assembly five-year review of the Special Session on Children to be held in December 2007.

&ldquo;We look forward to hearing from the participants at this conference what your countries and communities are doing to protect the rights of children and maximize their well-being,&rdquo; said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Kul Gautam, in a video tribute.

Keynote speakers during the plenary sessions at today&rsquo;s event included representatives from the Council of Europe, African Child Policy Forum, World Organization of the Scout Movement, World Conference of Religions for Peace and other advocates for children. A video tribute from Enrique V. Iglesias, Secretary-General of the Ibero-American Secretariat was also shown.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Director, Marta Santos Pais, shared a preliminary report card in advance of the Special Session review, citing positive changes for children that have been introduced in Europe and elsewhere, such as new national legislation, improvements in data, incorporation of child rights in school curricula and other advances. Yet despite progress, &ldquo;the lives of millions of children continue to be marked by poverty, marginalization, exclusion and exploitation,&rdquo; she said.

UNICEF reports and studies by the Innocenti Research Centre have documented that there is an unacceptable level of child poverty and deprivation in parts of Europe and other industrialized countries, as in developing countries.

&ldquo;In a world of unprecedented prosperity &hellip; we don&rsquo;t seem to find enough resources to save the lives of 10 million children who die every year unnecessarily,&rdquo; said Kul Gautam.

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