

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age has increased by 1.2 billion, from 1.1 billion in 1980 to 2.3 billion in 1999. The number of children under 15 years of age in the world is projected to increase to 3.1 billion by 2015 (United Nations, 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of children in the world. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. It sets out the rights of children and the responsibilities of governments to protect and promote these rights. The Convention has been ratified by 112 countries, including all of the member states of the United Nations.

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