

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age has increased by 1.2 billion (United Nations 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of children in the 21st century. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) has been signed by 112 countries, and the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) has set out a commitment to 'ensure that all children, everywhere, have access to primary education by the year 2015'. The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1999) has called for 'a new global compact for children'.

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