



PRIME MINISTER

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UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

More than 110 nations join in observing Universal Children's Day on 23 October. It is 20 years since the day was first proclaimed by the United Nations.

The special theme of this year's day is "A Future for Every Child". UNICEF and the International Union for Child Welfare, the International Co-sponsors of the day, have chosen this theme to emphasise the individual importance of every child, even in a crowded world.

In the next 30 years, according to the best estimates, the world's population of more than 3,500,000,000 will almost double. Already the majority of the world's children are deprived of many basic needs. Some 30% under the age of five are seriously malnourished.

When problems of sheer global survival confront the human race it is important to redouble our efforts on behalf of the world's children. There are more children suffering from extreme privation today than there were 20 years ago.

About 70% of UNICEF money goes to equip health centres, schools, day-care and community centres, directly benefiting millions of infants and children. Nearly 30% goes to training nurses, midwives, health and nutrition field workers, primary school teachers and supervisors, child welfare and day-care workers.

In observing Universal Children's Day we should keep in mind the well-being of all children, the enhancement of the quality of their lives and the promotion of equality of opportunity for both children and their parents. We in Australia may hope to provide a model for the rest of the world in the care of our own children, but we must bear in mind our responsibility to all children, wherever they may live. "A Future for Every Child" means no less than a future for our planet.