



Universal Declaration of Child Protection unveiled

Art of Living and UNICEF join hands to work for child rights

The Art of Living and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on October 1, 2007 unveiled a joint declaration to further the cause of child rights and protection. The 'Universal Declaration of Child Protection' was unveiled by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and UNICEF's India representative Cecilio Adorna at an event held at the India Islamic Cultural Centre in New Delhi.

The declaration envisages that the two organisations will strive to:

- identify and change attitudes, traditions, customs, behaviour and practices that violate the rights
- advocate for governmental commitment to fulfilling protection of child rights
- stimulate, encourage and sustain open discussion and engagement on child protection issues
- lobby for protective legislation and enforcement
- supplement and enhance the capacity of those around children
- improve and upgrade children's life skills, knowledge and participation
- act as watchdog and monitor and report on child protection issues
- promote and run services for recovery and reintegration

The event was attended by many prominent personalities including celebrated cricketer Kapil Dev, social activist Nafisa Ali, chairperson for the Commission of Protection of Rights of Children Shantha Sinha president of Rama Krishna Mission Swami Shantanandaji.

Later, the gathering took a pledge to create a violence-free, stress-free world for children everywhere.

Speaking on the occasion, Sri Sri said, "Unfortunately, pride has got associated with violence. We need to reverse this. For this, we will need to impart some special education to the children and training to the teachers."

He said it would be crucial to teach our children that it is wiser to turn the other cheek rather than being violent. Saying that the media have an important role to play, he said people we should work to ensure that television and cinema don't portray too much violence.





Echoing Sri Sri's views, Kapil Dev said the media has a key role as sometimes they focus on negative issues. "This partnership is the most beautiful thing and it gives us strength," he added.

Emphasising the need for making schools more child-friendly, Adorna said, "Each one of us is a voice that represents the protector of children's rights. Those of us in positions of influence must exercise this influence. The voice of the Art of Living through His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and & his followers will be crucial."



His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and UNICEF's India representative Cecilio Adorna exchanging the Universal Declaration of Child Protection



Former cricketer Kapil Dev, chairperson for the Commission of Protection of Rights of Children Shantha Sinha and His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



President of Rama Krishna Mission Swami Shantanandaji, former cricketer Kapil Dev, chairperson for the Commission of Protection of Rights of Children Shantha Sinha, His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, UNICEF's India representative Cecilio Adorna, CPO of UNICEF Victoria Ralph and social activist Nafisa Ali join hands to take the pledge to create a violence-free, stress-free world for children everywhere.