



6 Children's Rights and International Development

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) announced a new strategy entitled *Securing the Future of Children and Youth* in May 2010. It replaced the five-year *Action Plan on Child Protection*, which expired in 2005. (This previous plan is highlighted in Canada's combined *Third and Fourth Reports*). The new strategy provides a rationale for focusing on children/youth and identifies three priority areas for CIDA: improving child and maternal health, quality education, and safe and secure futures for children and youth.

While the Convention includes provision rights, which relate equally to the sectors of health and education, the CIDA strategy relegates children's rights to the protection sector alone. Children's rights should be taken into consideration in all three priority areas.

Missing from the strategy is an explicit focus on child and youth participation in the development and delivery of development programming. This is a lost opportunity because CIDA's earlier *Action Plan* identified good participation practices that could have been scaled up in the next phase. Children are viewed primarily as recipients of services, not as development actors. There is no specific mention of strengthening mechanisms for implementing children's rights in target countries.

As well as missing a systemic approach, the listed actions and outcomes in the strategy are very general. In order to achieve effective accountability, one of the primary features of rights-based approaches, the strategy requires more defined targets and mechanisms for on-going monitoring of progress.