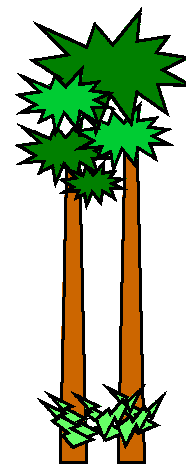
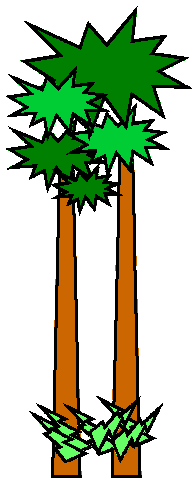


THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD

JUNE 2003 AT ESSENCE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, KADUNA, NIGERIA



Children from the African Heritage Village at Essence International School perform a Kanuri dance.

Message from the UNICEF Assistant Representative, Mrs. Mahera Khatun

Very distinguished parents, teachers, and children, I bring you warm greetings from my colleagues in the UNICEF Field Office, Kaduna.

The Day of the African Child (DAC) as we are all aware is a day set aside to commemorate the massacre of our young brothers and sisters in South Africa 27 years ago. They spoke up against the injustice of apartheid and paid with their dear lives. Today they are not alive, but the fruit of their labour lives on. We salute their courage and call on all children in Africa and worldwide to emulate this example of patriotism, vision, and justice.

At this time of celebration, children should reflect on their past achievements and failures and together chart a course for the way forward on issues concerning their survival, development, protection, and participation.

This year, the Day of the African Child theme is "Birth Registration." And as you are all aware, the child who is not registered at birth is in danger of being shut out of the society, denied the right to an official identity, a recognized name, and nationality. You all know that unregistered children are almost inevitably the children of the poor and the excluded. Lack of registration exacerbates their poverty and underscores their marginalization. While birth registration does not guarantee health, protection, or participation, its absence can put these fundamental rights beyond the reach of those already on the margins of

society. Any country without a good system of registering children at birth or even at a later stage, will not have reliable data to plan for services and meet the needs and welfare of its people.

Birth registration is fundamental to the realization of key aspects of Children's Rights, such as...

- Securing the child's right to a nationality
- Ensuring that children enroll in school at the right age
- Providing access to immunization in particular and health care in general
- Ensuring that children in conflict with the law are provided with special protection measures and not handled like adults

Protecting children who are trafficked

This year UNICEF is working in collaboration with the government to train **birth registration notifiers** at the grassroots. This, we are sure, will increase the number of children who are registered in Nigeria, and therefore help in protecting their rights.

I call on all parents, school teachers, religious and community leaders, health workers, the media, and children all over Nigeria to advocate and ensure that each and every child we come across henceforth is duly registered.

Essence Children Select Appropriate Theme

Essence International School celebrates the Day of the African Child every year. Students are aware that this is their day and their program. They are enjoined to make a plan and to organize themselves for their presentation.

This year students from primary 6 performed a play about **child trafficking**. The focus was on the unsavory practice of child exploitation for the purpose of attaining wealth. Once again, it was the poor children who bore the brunt of this nefarious crime. They were supposed to be rounded up by a village head and delivered to a child trafficker at a certain price "per head". Some of their parents were enticed into believing that the children were going to find lucrative jobs in the city so that they could send money back to help their families.

Luckily for the children in question, some police officers and detectives posed as intermediaries in a "sting operation" and apprehended the culprits in the act!

Children are now aware that in order to protect themselves they must eschew negative and unlawful behavior, and that they must be very careful of strangers.



Children from the HDFN Model School for Children in Difficult Circumstances perform for the occasion.

Many Parents and Dignitaries Attended the Occasionand supported the children



Take time for the children

Care of the Children

Children!

Respect and obey your parents

