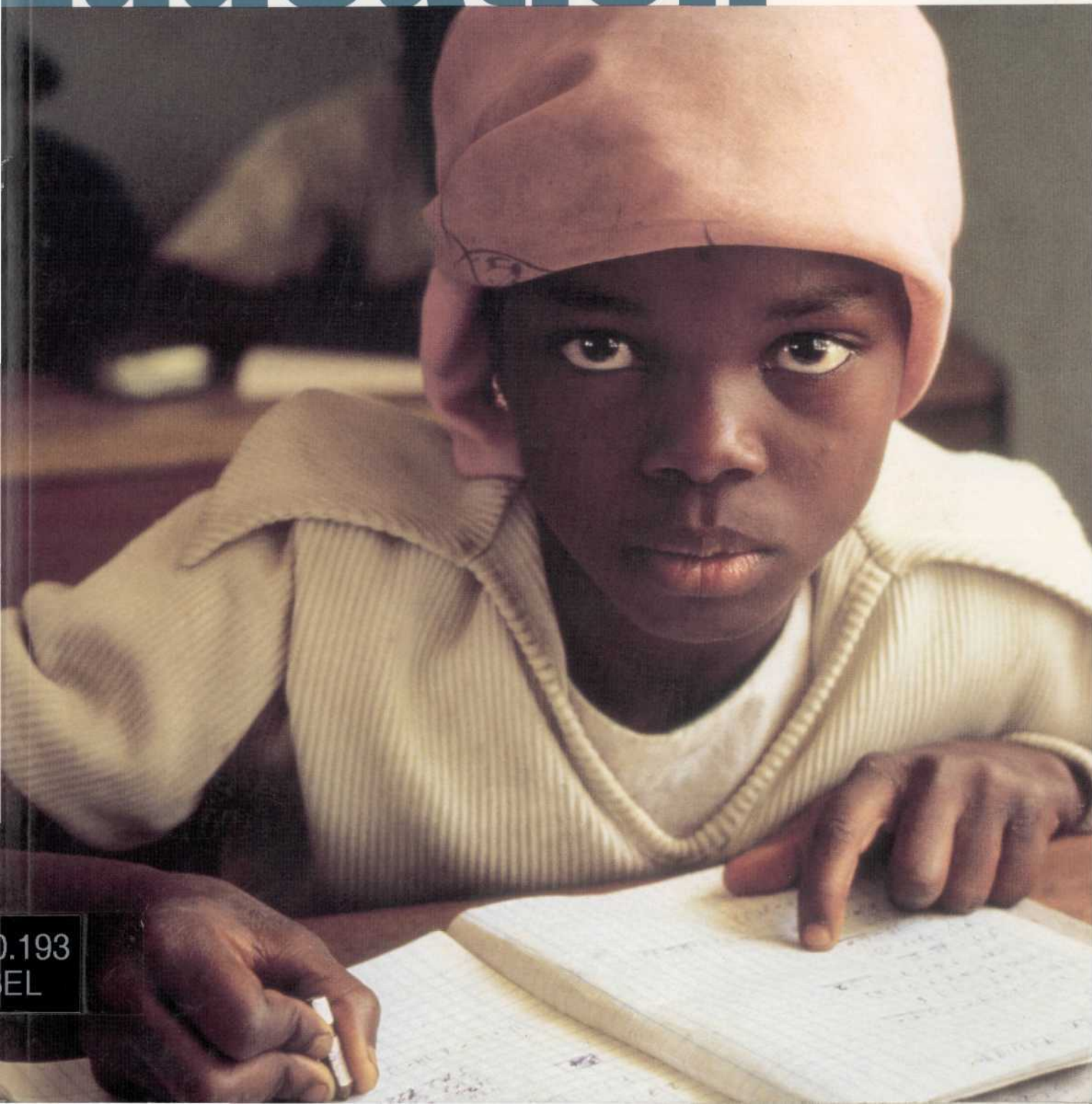


The State of the World's Children 1999



Education



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Contents

Foreword by Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations 4

Chapter I

Education For All: Making the right a reality

The State of the World's Children 1999 reports on the efforts of the international community to ensure that all its children enjoy their human right to a high-quality education — efforts that are resulting in an 'education revolution'. The goal of this worldwide movement: Education For All. 5

Towards that end, the work of governments, non-governmental organizations, educators, communities, parents and children is informed by a definition of education that includes, but goes far beyond, schooling. Within this definition, education is an essential human right, a force for social change — and the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth. Education is a path towards international peace and security.

This chapter includes examples of initiatives that meet the child's right to education at the international, regional, national and local levels. It is divided into three sections.

The right to education: This section explores the historical context in which children's right to education has been repeatedly affirmed, for example, in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1990 World Summit for Children and the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien (Thailand). 7

The education revolution: As the world's commitment to the principle of Education For All is put into practice at the local level, certain elements have emerged as necessary for its success: Schooling should provide the foundation for learning for life; it needs to be accessible, of high quality and flexible; it must be gender sensitive and emphasize girls' education; the State needs to be a key partner; and it should begin with care for the young child 21

Investing in human rights: Despite the progress of the last decade, the education revolution seems in danger of being cut short by an apparent dearth of resources and growing indebtedness in the developing world. This section argues that, despite these obstacles, education is one of the best investments a country can make in order to prosper. It calls for the political will necessary to make the vision of Education For All a global reality. 79

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Education is a multilinked variable in a country's statistical profile — connected not only to the obvious measure of literacy but also to a range of other indices including mortality, fertility and life expectancy rates, population growth, nutritional status and economic progress. The eight tables in this report profile 193 countries listed alphabetically. The countries are measured by basic indicators, nutritional status, health status, educational levels, demographics, economic indicators, the status of women and the rate of progress on major indicators since 1960. Countries are shown on page 93 in descending order of their estimated 1997 under-five mortality rates, which is also the first basic indicator in all tables.

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