



The United Nations Family

unicef  and unhcr 

A READING COMPREHENSION

1. Read the passage.

2. Read the following sentences and say if they are True (T) or False (F).

1. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was passed just after the Second World War.
2. UNICEF has received international recognition for its work.
3. UNICEF believes that education for children is a priority.
4. All children in the world receive immunization.
5. UNHCR was created a few years before UNICEF.
6. Over 6,000 people are involved in this organization.
7. Women refugees do not have as many problems as men.
8. All countries accept refugees.

3. Answer the following questions.

1. What is the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*?
2. Why was UNICEF established?
3. Why does UNICEF need to promote education?
4. Why do so many young children die every year?
5. Why do some people become refugees?
6. How does UNHCR try to help refugees?
7. What specific problems do women refugees face?
8. How did António Guterres describe refugees?

4. Give personal answers to these questions.

1. Even in rich countries, children can face problems. What kinds of problems do some children have in your country? Are there any organizations to help these children?
2. Why do you think it is difficult for a refugee to start a new life in a different country?

The aim of UNICEF, the *United Nations Children's Fund*, is to protect the rights of children all over the world. Together with other organizations, it works to solve problems caused by poverty, violence, disease and discrimination, and to put into practice the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This is an international convention, adopted in 1989, which describes the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. After the Second World War, many children faced famine and disease, and in 1946 UNICEF was created by the United Nations to help them. In 1965 the organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work. UNICEF now works in 190 different countries, where it organizes specific programmes. One of its main projects is the promotion of education; it wants to make sure that all children in the world complete primary education. At the moment there are 120 million children in the world who do not go to school. This problem is particularly serious for girls, because in many countries of the world, they are obliged to stay at home and work. Another important aim of UNICEF concerns health. Every year, 9.7 million children under the age of five die from causes which could be prevented. More than half of these deaths are the result of bad nutrition, unhygienic living conditions, or the fact that children do not have access to clean water. The aims of UNICEF include the immunization





Unicef believes that today about one billion children live in poverty.



of all children against the most common childhood diseases, the prevention of AIDS among young people, and the promotion of better living conditions.

The *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) was established in 1950. Its work is based on the *Geneva Refugee Convention*: the organization co-ordinates international action to protect refugees and to resolve refugee problems. In the last 50 years, millions of people have been forced to leave their homes to escape from war, violence or persecution: UNHCR has helped about 50 million of these people to start new lives.

Today, about 6,300 people work for the UNHCR in more than 110 countries. Sometimes, it helps civilians to return to their home; at other times it stops people from going back to countries where they will risk persecution. The problems for women refugees are particularly difficult, because they are extremely vulnerable. They have to look after their children during the long journeys to their new homes, and they sometimes risk sexual abuse. For this reason, UNHCR

promotes some special programmes to make sure that women have equal access to protection and basic services.

On *World Refugee Day*, 20th June, 2008, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres said that people are often sent away at the borders of countries where they hope to find safety. He commented that refugees show incredible courage and perseverance when they try to build new lives for their families, and they deserve protection.

B SUMMARY WRITING

Write a summary of the passage, mentioning the following points:

- when UNICEF and UNHCR were established
- what problems children face
- what problems refugees face
- what the two organizations do to help children and refugees

G E-MAIL - WRITTEN INTERACTION

You have just got an e-mail from a student at an English school as part of a cultural exchange. She tells you that her favourite subject is History and asks you these questions:

- Do you like History? Why/Why not?
- What do you know about the history of Britain?
- Can you tell me something about the history of your country (a famous event, a famous person)?

Write an e-mail to the student, answer her questions and then ask her some questions about Britain during the Second World War.

