

UNESCO summit targets violence, racism, edn

PARIS, June 12: Violence, racism, education, the environment and Mickey Mouse were all on the agenda on Wednesday at the fourth-annual UNESCO Children's Summit held at Disney land Paris, reports AP.

The five-day conference assembled 700 children from 39 countries, chosen for their creative ideas.

The purpose is "that the kids have fun, that their voice is heard, and that they form concrete projects," said Pierre Sissmann, president of Disney Consumer Products in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Sissmann said Disney and UNESCO have plans to set up a Summit Fund to finance projects proposed by the children, ages 8-12, during the conference that ends Friday.

National panels selected the most creative entries from each

country. The winners were then flown to Paris, spent a day at Disneyland Paris, discussed their visions of families, cities and schools in the future.

As at other conferences sponsored by the United Nations, the participants hammered out a "Charter for Society" to be formally presented to UNESCO chief Federico Mayor at a ceremony on Thursday.

One winning team from the United States had never met in person before the trip of Paris. The two young Disney fans, Matt Soerens of Neenah, Wisconsin and Justin Alexander of Boca Raton, Florida, met over the Internet and proposed an on-line school.

Soerens explained that such a school would enable kids "to meet people around the world" and would have "no gangs and no race problems."