

Chapter 6

Global Shifts

In December 1980, the UN General Assembly formally declared the 1980s the 'Third Development Decade'. Within a matter almost of months, as countries throughout the developing world began to feel the full chill of global recession, such a title already seemed a misnomer. In his 1981 *State of the World's Children* report, James Grant commented bleakly: 'Not for a generation have expectations of world development, and hopes for an end to life-denying mass poverty, been at such a low ebb.'

In industrialized countries, growth had slumped and unemployment risen to higher levels than at any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s¹, a state of misfortune bound to reverberate in countries heavily dependent on richer trading partners. Their problems were compounded by a precipitous rise in interest rates on the loans they had been persuaded to take out on easy terms during the oil-euphoric 1970s. In 1982, Mexico suspended interest payments on an accumulating mountain of debt and sparked off the debt crisis². In 1980, the debts of the developing world stood at \$660 billion; by 1990, they had more than doubled to \$1,540 billion, draining away some \$1,620 billion in interest and repayments over the period³. In the middle years of the decade, the industrialized economies began to recover; at the same time, some developing countries were experiencing growth—a few in spectacularly successful fashion. But the process was highly selective. No fewer than 60 developing countries experienced declining per capita income over the decade⁴. By its end, whatever the advances in child survival, the 1980s had become known in certain parts of the world—especially in Africa—as a lost decade, a decade of development reversal⁵.

It was also a decade in which the concept of an imagined community of nations undergoing an identical process called ‘development’—a process that by implication had already been achieved in its alternate, the industrialized world—began to unravel⁶. The concept of a ‘developing’ world had emerged in the 1950s during the rush for independence and was an entirely post-colonial construct. In the 1960s—the First Development Decade—it had made some sense to lump together countries from different continents on the basis of their common predicament—previous subjugation to European imperial domination, backwardness and widespread poverty—and to prescribe ‘development’ as their common means of escape.

For a mixture of reasons—paternalistic, philanthropic, strategic and to support business and trading interests—resources from the metropolitan powers were to be harnessed to this grand design: this was the ambiguous genesis of ‘aid’. The ‘developing’ world and ‘aid’ (or ODA, official development assistance) were therefore created as part of the new scheme of international relations associated with the post-imperial legacy. During the preparations for the Second Development Decade (the 1970s), an aid target of 0.7 per cent of the industrialized countries’ GNP was set. Although this target was formally accepted internationally, very few countries—Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden—reached it or, indeed, seriously attempted to do so.

By the advent of the ‘alternatives’ era of the 1970s, ‘development’ had accumulated an industry of government and intergovernmental institutions, university studies programmes and charitable initiatives. These had generated a lively debate about what ‘development’ actually consisted of, both as a means and as an end⁷. The essential dichotomy—which kept being restated in different versions from the 1970s on—boiled down to one of economic productivity versus social advance, or the creation of wealth versus the eradication of poverty. How did investment in the one interact with investment in the other? And what criteria—economic, as in the growth of GNP, or human, as in the extension of life expectancy—should be used to discover whether ‘development’ had taken place?

Jim Grant, then President of the Overseas Development Council in Washington, was at this time busy championing human yardsticks of ‘development’ rather than growth in per capita GNP: reductions in infant mortality, illiteracy and so on. At the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, UK, Richard Jolly—later to become Grant’s Deputy Executive Director for Programmes—was helping to articulate a different strategic convergence of economic development and anti-poverty targets: ‘Redistribution with growth’ and ‘Meeting

basic needs', with employment creation as the most important way of raising poor people's income.

As development analyses multiplied and grew more diffuse, so did economic and political experience in the newly created or newly defined states of the 'developing' world. As it retreated into the past, the common post-colonial inheritance became less cohesive a glue than it had been in the first flush of the development era. If it had not been for the cold war, which precipitated the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement at Bandung in 1955 as an umbrella for those countries that did not wish to ally with either superpower, the lack of communality between the countries, let alone the regions, of the 'developing' world would almost certainly have been exposed much earlier than it was. The cold war created the 'third world', a category that was neither the capitalist West (the 'first world') nor the communist East (the 'second'). This geopolitically defined 'world', whose most obvious common distinguishing feature was its poverty, not its non-alignment, was virtually interchangeable with the developing one. United Nations member countries developed a bloc known as the Group of 77 to attempt by weight of numbers to exert a third world political muscle of their own.

In 1973 came the successful OPEC cartel that hiked oil prices, held the oil-consumers to ransom and indicated that this other 'world' might be able to extort more on its behalf from the first and second worlds than the crumbs of 'aid' that were all rich countries were typically prepared to offer. The oil price hike also produced a body of suddenly super-wealthy third world states in the hitherto impoverished desert autocracies of Arabia. Even though all of these were backward according to most definitions of 'development', it no longer made much sense to classify the United Arab Emirates, with a per capita GNP of \$13,000 (1975), in the same bracket as Pakistan, with a per capita GNP of \$130⁸. Yet the UAE was still by many criteria a 'developing' country, even if it was resource-rich and could now join the club of 'donor' as opposed to 'recipient' nations (another version of the 'developed'/'developing' paradigm, couched in terms of 'aid').

After the mid-1970s, the Arab states, along with other oil-producing states such as Nigeria, Mexico and Indonesia, no longer strictly (or consistently) belonged to one 'world' or another. Accordingly, organizations involved in development cooperation began to refine their assistance criteria to take account of the new rich/poor country disparities. Unicef, whose overriding purpose was humanitarian, began to categorize the cooperation it offered according to relative per capita GNP, focusing the vast majority of material

support on programmes in the very poorest countries, including those most seriously affected by the higher costs of imported oil.

The OPEC success was the moment when both the construct of a coterminous 'developing' world first began to crack and the geopolitical concept of a third world reached its apotheosis⁹. By the end of the 1970s, the prospect of further shows of united political muscle had faded. The proposal for a New International Economic Order (NIEO)—a proposal set out in 1974 with the purpose of giving the developing world more of a say in world markets and monetary systems—drew all of its other than moral force from the OPEC shock. In spite of endorsement of the NIEO at a 1975 UN Special Session, when it became clear that commodity-based third world unity had been a one-off, the proposal sank below the international horizon.

By the late 1970s, a number of countries other than those that were oil-rich had begun to take on the nature and colouring of 'developed' economies. These became known as the NICs—the newly industrializing countries—and included the four Pacific 'Tigers': Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. Brazil and Mexico, in Latin America, also had 'developed' features, as did—arguably—Colombia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand¹⁰. Within a few more years, China would be included in this halfway category; with the end of the cold war, so would the ex-socialist states of Eastern Europe¹¹. Thus by the end of the 1980s, some of the countries of the second world were joining the 'developing' queue and seeking aid, while some in the third world that had industrialized in such a way as to precipitate and profit from the increasing globalization of the world economy were now becoming a new kind of first and third world hybrid.

These NICs might not yet have reached the level of GNP per capita that ensured their triumphant entry into the 'developed' community of nations, but their development needs, patterns and accomplishments had little in common with those of much poorer countries in their own continents—contrast Brazil with Bolivia in Latin America, Thailand or Korea with Nepal or Bangladesh in Asia—let alone in regions far across the world. Once again, donors and donor organizations had to readjust. In Unicef's case, this meant for NICs a shift from the direct provision of goods and training for basic services, and more emphasis on social policy formulation, advocacy and child rights and protection issues. In one or two—Korea and Brazil, for example—it also began to embrace fund-raising from the general public.

Just to complete the picture of increasing 'development' diversity (or confusion), some second and third world countries—Sri Lanka, Cuba—had by this time managed to achieve all but 'developed' status according to criteria of

human and social advance (low infant mortality rate, high life expectancy, high literacy, strong social service coverage), but still languished in the ranks of the poor and backward according to any application of standard economic criteria. During the 1980s, Unicef began to fashion its world perspective according to young child mortality rates and other social indicators. This was partly to help guide the level of programme expenditure, but was as much intended to draw attention to human values as the real measure and target of poverty reduction—with which, in Unicef's view, 'development' was synonymous. In the 1990s, Unicef even began to rank countries according to social performance indicators, thereby purportedly monitoring their governments' commitment to the goals of the World Summit for Children and to the principle of 'children first'. The results of this exercise were first issued in 1993 in an annual publication: *The Progress of Nations*¹².

Meanwhile, all the diverse examples of 'development' had little to show for themselves in the one region whose development conundrums were reasonably comparable: sub-Saharan Africa. Here, after two decades of rapid improvement, oil price increases, drought, rising debt, civil conflicts and other setbacks of the 1970s left many countries in a condition of disarray. Food production had failed to keep pace with population growth and, beset by environmental pressures and ill-conceived agricultural policies, was constantly falling further behind. In 1982-85, much of the continent suffered catastrophic drought; less catastrophically, drought hovered constantly over the Sahelian countries and in the Horn. Rare was the African country—Botswana was the outstanding example—that managed to maintain economic progress through such misfortune and provide stricken rural populations with any kind of effective safety net.

As the 1980s advanced, the situation in Africa drastically deteriorated, absolutely and in comparison with other parts of the world¹³. Commodity prices, tumbling since the 1970s, failed to recover; the price of oil and imports remained high, and many countries faced severe balance of payments problems. Their situation was worsened by a steep rise in interest rates, which forced them to spend much of their reduced export earnings on servicing their debts. From whichever direction it was examined, the overall result was profound and systemic crisis: declines in productivity, investment, health and nutritional well-being, and upsurges in conflict and social stress¹⁴.

As the new orthodoxy of market supremacy took hold and the world economy became increasingly globalized, investors turned their backs on a continent of replaceable agricultural commodities and negligible profit. The idea of 'development' as a process that allowed poor countries to catch up,

closing the gap between themselves and the rich, was abandoned in the case of Africa¹⁵. Where development should have been, an abyss was being created by the destruction of traditional economic and political systems and the failure to substitute viable alternatives. On top of all of this came AIDS, which spread faster and earlier in Africa than in any other region and whose impact was felt by men, women and children in all social classes. As tragedies compounded, the principal use of aid in Africa became to clear up the detritus of human pain¹⁶. From an early point in the decade, Africa was treated by Unicef and the international community as a continental 'special case'¹⁷. The Bamako Initiative to make health care systems functional (see Chapter 2) was one example of a special response to Africa's very special problems.

In his yearly *State of the World's Children* reports, Jim Grant always gave due recognition to movements in the international political and economic firmament affecting the development climate, which directly or indirectly affected the well-being of children. The 'child survival and development revolution' was itself conceived partly with an eye to its suitability for 'dark economic times' when social budgets in the developing world were under strain and donor countries were trimming 'aid'¹⁸. All the ingredients of the 'child survival and development revolution' were low-cost and technologically straightforward, as was the key strategy for getting them into widespread use: social mobilization or 'people power'. It was partly the very optimism of the 'child survival and development revolution'—an optimism uniquely created by Jim Grant's ability to infect a wide stratum of people and organizations with his enthusiasm, sometimes in apparent defiance of common sense—that carried its momentum forward. By 1990, around 3.5 million children's lives were being saved annually by mass immunization and diarrhoeal disease control¹⁹: for them the 1980s was not a 'lost' but a 'gained' decade.

The child survival progress was the more striking given that the efforts to achieve it took place during a period characterized by doubt, scepticism, economic set-back, retrenchment and the anti-internationalism of the Reagan-Thatcher years. The hope and the invigoration of the 'child survival revolution' came at a time in which 'development' both as a concept and as a crusade was at a nadir. Many of its practitioners were in deep despair, and as the Third Development Decade drew to its end, the international community had not the heart to declare a Fourth. By contrast, Unicef was busier than it had ever been, articulating goals and strategies for children in the 1990s, pushing countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, elaborating the doctrine of 'first call' for children and wondering how to bring off the supreme coup of a World Summit on their behalf.

If in their different ways the special concern for Africa and the 'child survival and development revolution' were both responses to the exigencies of 'dark times', there was a third way in which Unicef responded to the challenge of the 'lost decade'. In the tradition established back in the 1960s by Dick Heyward, then its Senior Deputy Executive Director, Unicef in the early 1980s again took on the task of analysing and bringing to the world's attention the way in which trends far beyond the control of Unicef were affecting the world's most vulnerable human beings. In the 1960s, the need had been to position efforts on behalf of children within the great development crusade. Now, the focus shifted to a need to protect efforts on behalf of children from the great development debacle.

In the face of the world recession and the subsequent crises of debt and adjustment, economic and fiscal considerations had thrust social concerns to one side. In contrast with their preoccupation during the 1970s with 'poverty alleviation' and 'basic needs', the Bretton Woods institutions—the World Bank and IMF—had ceased to be interested in how incomes and services for people in the lowest echelons of society were to be minimally protected²⁰. This trend was reinforced by the increasing hegemony of market forces within the Western political and economic system. Not only children, but the whole social agenda was under threat—a threat which could easily derail the 'child survival and development revolution'. It was therefore extremely opportune that Jim Grant brought into Unicef as his new Deputy Executive Director for Programmes a person well suited to initiate an international salvage operation on behalf of human-centred values: a development economist of the anti-poverty tendency, Dr. Richard Jolly.

Richard Jolly was known to Jim Grant through their common participation in many international fora, including the Society for International Development (SID) and the North-South Roundtable, an independent intellectual forum established by SID. Jolly began his career as a young community development officer in colonial Africa. But it was as an economic thinker that he rapidly gained a reputation, becoming a protégé of Dudley Seers, a pioneer of development theory—the new academic look for the post-colonial age. In the 1960s, Seers helped establish one of development theory's most prestigious think-tanks, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex University (UK). When Seers retired in 1972, Jolly took over.

Under Jolly's leadership, IDS was in the vanguard of 'alternative' thinking on development and was a mecca for development researchers. He helped

some of the most important contemporary development creeds come into being: 'basic needs' (to which 'basic services' emerged as the programmatic response) and 'redistribution with growth'. Both of these critiqued the notion that the fruits of economic growth automatically trickled down to the poor and argued the need to build into development policy affirmative action on their behalf. Jolly wrote and travelled widely to promote debate around this theme. He was a regular adviser to the British Government on aid-related issues during the 1970s, but aid, development and everything related to them suffered political eclipse under the post-1979 Thatcher administration. The invitation from Jim Grant to join Unicef came at this time, triggered by the retirement of the previous generation of senior Unicef statesmen, notably the two Deputy Executive Directors, Dick Heyward (Operations) and Charles Egger (Programmes) at the end of 1981.

The first study commissioned by Jolly on behalf of Unicef was entitled 'The impact of world recession on children' and was published in 1983²¹. Its analysis was based on case studies from countries around the world including Brazil, Cuba, Chile, India and Sri Lanka. The study's purpose was to present factual data to show that the poor of the world, and among the poor the children, were suffering the worst effects of the current recession. Phenomena normally described in narrowly economic terms—inflation and interest rates, debt and deficit—were revisited from the perspective of nutrition levels, educational enrolment, child labour and abandonment. This was no easy undertaking because so few countries had information-gathering systems that permitted this kind of analysis, especially ones from which it was possible to extrapolate trends; and the less developed the country—as in Africa—the less developed the data collection system and the less complete a picture it produced.

The study focused principally on the two regions—Africa and Latin America—where earnings had been most eroded and spiralling interest rates had exacerbated the burden of debts contracted during the loan-addicted 1970s. In many countries, per capita output had significantly fallen between 1980 and 1982; data would later show that in 17 out of 23 countries in Latin America, and in 24 out of 32 countries in Africa, average incomes fell between 1980 and 1985²². Governments were being forced to retrench, cutting back on social services expenditure and allowing the prices of basic necessities—especially food—to rise. A country's poorest citizens found their survival margins painfully reduced. Labour market contraction meant that work was more difficult to find and earnings lower, while the smaller amounts of cash gleaned by petty trading or casual hire bought much less. Since the poor had less purchase on the means of subsistence, and since services were becoming scarcer

and more expensive to use, their health and nutritional status were declining. Since families of the poor tended to have more children, their children were inevitably the hardest hit of all.

Although hard information about the hidden casualties of the recession was difficult to unearth, the report found clear evidence in some countries that the *minds and bodies of young children were taking a disproportionate strain*. In northern Zambia, the average height-for-age of children had declined; in parts of Brazil, average birth weight was going down; in Costa Rica, the number of children being treated for severe malnutrition had trebled over the past three years. These findings were nothing more or less than what had been regarded previously as strong supposition; but their documentation, and their presentation in economic form—and, in due course, in economic fora—was an important innovation. Unicef made two basic recommendations: adjustment policies must not neglect the need to preserve minimum levels of nutrition and household income; and countries should place a safety net under child health and basic education by concentrating resources on low-cost, high-effect interventions. Thus was the recommended response bracketed closely to the call for a ‘child survival revolution’ and to its successor, the principle of ‘first call’.

At this time an increasing number of countries were becoming obliged to initiate ‘structural adjustment programmes’ (SAPs) as a condition of loans from the International Monetary Fund. In the 1970s, the number of countries undertaking adjustment or stabilization programmes, usually with IMF assistance, had been in the region of 15 a year; between 1980 and 1985, the average was 47²³. Unable to pay for imports, and finding that a high proportion of export earnings was haemorrhaging away on debt repayment, countries had few other choices than to resort to these IMF rescue packages, whatever the Draconian nature of the SAP preconditions. Balancing the national books, no matter what the human cost, was the name of the policy-making game. By the mid-1980s, the enforced austerity of SAPs, especially in Africa, was attracting humanitarian outrage in both North and South. President Nyerere of Tanzania demanded: ‘Must we starve our children to pay our debts?’²⁴

The problem with the standard recipe for adjustment was that it had the effect of discriminating against the poor and vulnerable. Thus, not only the recession but the remedies for the havoc it had wreaked on vulnerable economies were compounding the miseries experienced by people at the bottom of the ladder. That structural adjustment programmes were leading to austerity, reducing economic activity and ruining custom was understood even by the most modest itinerant vendor: ‘We are SAPped,’ complained the women in a West African market town²⁵. And independently of

their contribution to the rise of the numbers of people in poverty, many of the adjustment programmes had failed even in their own terms. In a number of 'SAPped' countries, there had been no resumption of growth; balances of payments were no healthier; governments were looking increasingly shaky and services increasingly threadbare²⁶.

Consensus was gradually gathering around the view that Unicef and the like-minded on the academic and NGO network were working hard to promote: the need for a broader approach to adjustment policy in which the protection of women, children and vulnerable groups was accepted as an integral part of its operation—ideally, of its objective. There were encouraging signals from some in the mainstream of international policy-making, including members of Unicef's Executive Board. At the request of the IMF and the World Bank, a policy dialogue started²⁷. Unicef consultants and country representatives began to be invited to interact with World Bank missions to discuss the parameters of adjustment packages. The first occasion was in Ghana in 1985²⁸, after which measures to ease the burden of adjustment on the most vulnerable groups as well as to involve small producers—male and female cultivators and traders—in the regeneration of growth were introduced into the adjustment planning process for the first time.

Gradually, mainstream economic opinion began to shift. In July 1986, addressing the UN Economic and Social Council, the Managing Director of the IMF, Jacques de Larosière, conceded: 'Programmes of adjustment cannot be effective unless they command the support of governments and of public opinion. Yet this support will be progressively harder to maintain the longer adjustment continues without some pay-off in terms of growth and while human conditions are deteriorating. Likewise, it is hard to visualize how a viable external position can be achieved if large segments of the workforce lack the vocational skills—or even worse, the basic nutritional and health standards—to produce goods that are competitive in world markets. *Human capital* is after all the most important factor of production in developing and industrial countries alike.'²⁹

Other resolutions and statements in international fora followed. To capitalize on this momentum, Jolly organized a larger and more significant study whose title, when it was published in 1987, quickly took on the force of a slogan: *Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth*. Once again, a number of case studies from countries involved in adjustment were commissioned; once again, the main emphasis was on Africa and Latin America. Although the study was conducted under Jolly's overall direction, its main authors were two development economists: Giovanni

Andrea Cornia, then Senior Planning Officer at Unicef, and Frances Stewart of the University of Oxford. The report was divided into two parts: a review of the impact of recession and adjustment on child welfare, and the presentation of a policy framework for 'adjustment with a human face' covering both economic policy areas and social sectors.

The first part confirmed the findings of the previous study: namely, that standards of health, nutrition and education among children—as measured by changes in IMRs, birth-weight trends, school enrolment and completion rates and the re-emergence of epidemic diseases—were stagnating or deteriorating in a number of countries. (Once again, these findings were necessarily limited by the shortage of data from many of the hardest-hit countries, a problem that itself demanded political and strategic redress.) The second part of the report spelt out the range of economic and other policy measures comprising 'adjustment with a human face'. Drawing on the country case studies, the report illustrated that letting the poor and vulnerable go to the wall was not a *sine qua non* of reducing public expenditures, controlling domestic inflation and balancing the books. The assumption underlying the SAPs of the early 1980s had been that if a short, sharp shock could be delivered, the resultant stabilization would naturally lead to a resumption of growth. In a number of cases, the short, sharp shock had been so devastating that productivity had plummeted, leaving the patient even flatter on its back.

The report was unequivocal in stating that programmes of adjustment were necessary. At this time some international NGOs were condemning structural adjustment as yet another form of neo-colonial aggression against countries that had been dealt a bad hand both by history and by contemporary economic trends. This was a position from which Unicef carefully disassociated itself. While supporting the need for adjustment, it argued that balance of payments stabilization should be sought within a much broader and longer-term framework, within which the use of short, sharp and potentially devastating shocks was avoided. The two other key elements of the approach were to promote conditions that favoured economic growth (by maintaining investment flows and by using constrained resources with the kind of efficiency uncommon in the spendthrift 1970s) and to operate adjustment policies in such a way as to preserve ordinary people's well-being. This could be managed by reallocations within the social sector (for example, from high-tech hospitals to primary health care) and by providing the kind of short-term relief usual in the case of humanitarian disaster: food supplements and public works employment. After all, if the whole purpose of development was to promote human well-being, it

was an act of contrariness verging on the absurd to leave human well-being out of all policy calculations.

In the not-so-distant past, deep distress among society's least well-off following an economic downturn had been regarded as inevitable, almost a part of natural law. Now Jolly, Cornia and Stewart were claiming that principles that had been established in the industrialized world during the post-Depression 1930s and with the creation of the European welfare state should be equally applicable to international adjustment policies in the late 20th century. This was an argument already partially won in the international political sphere, where a degree of international responsibility for the welfare of the victims of wars and natural disasters was accepted—perhaps not always willingly or generously, but at least accepted. 'Adjustment with a human face' applied the same argument in the economic sphere. By contemporary moral standards, it could not be acceptable for those drawing up the terms of adjustment packages to treat national balance sheets as if tidying them up had nothing to do with the human condition, or as if such 'soft' considerations were outside the range of their responsibilities.

The authors of *Adjustment with a Human Face* went further. Theirs was not simply a pious plea, an exercise in hand-wringing by the well-intentioned, but a realistic proposition backed up by solid examples of workability. Brazil and Zimbabwe were cited as examples of countries whose recession had been relatively short because their economies had not been allowed to contract. Zimbabwe had also pursued other 'human face' tactics, targeting agricultural credit specifically at the small farmer, as a result of which the volume of marketed maize and cotton had soared³⁰. The success of this policy was cited to show (as were some other examples from Bangladesh and India) that to target public and private investment towards small-timers, male and female, was sound from the growth point of view as well as from the perspective of poverty redress.

A number of examples from the 'child survival and development revolution' were quoted to indicate that the spread of basic services was compatible with retrenchment: Indonesia's *posyandu* programme (see Chapter 3), which supplied preventive health to the country's under-fives at a cost of only \$5-6 per child per year; Tanzania's basic drugs programme, whereby a core list of essential drugs were procured in generic form with funds from DANIDA via a WHO- and Unicef-sponsored scheme at a cost of only \$0.45 per head of population. And as safety-net examples, public works employment schemes, usually on the basis of food-for-work, were cited: the deployment of landless or marginal farmers on road building and irrigation in India; a temporary in-

come-support programme for 150,000 marginal urban dwellers in Peru. In drought-ridden Botswana, the same safety-net objective was met by supplementary feeding for preschool and primary-age children. The Botswana example was striking because of the nationwide nutritional surveillance that allowed the food supplementation programme to be focused on those in need at any particular time. Putting an effective information-gathering system in place to monitor fluctuations in the well-being of vulnerable groups, especially children, was the last element in the 'human face' package.

The publication of *Adjustment with a Human Face*, coupled with strenuous promotion of its theme³¹, made a significant international impact. Unicef's level of dialogue with arbiters of national economic and financial policy rose, and the organization began to be treated with more respect in non-welfare contexts. Although when it came down to it there was little real willingness to undertake a fundamental redesign of SAPs according to different first principles, the notion that there must be some cushioning of the poor and vulnerable was at least accepted. In many cases this merely meant that a safety-net provision was added to an existing SAP: the same set of antidotes was prescribed for the problems of the ship of state, but a lifeboat would be provided to pick up drowning passengers. But that there was an appreciation for the need for safety nets was a significant change. The report and the publicity surrounding it also won Unicef allies in the anti-SAP non-governmental movement now seeking—for example—rescheduling or outright cancellation of debts on behalf of the worst-affected countries³².

In 1990, the re-emergence of gross poverty as a serious issue for the Bretton Woods institutions to address was signalled in the annual *World Development Report* of the World Bank, which took poverty as its central theme. The report paid tribute to Unicef for having steered adjustment in new directions: 'Many observers called attention to [evidence of declines in incomes and cut-backs in social services], but Unicef first brought the issues into the centre of the debate on the design and impact of adjustment. By the end of the decade the issue had become important for all agencies; it is now examined in many adjustment programmes financed by the World Bank. As Unicef advocated, attention is focused both on the effect of adjustment policies on the poor and on specific measures to cushion the short-term costs.'³³ In spite of the continued supremacy of free-market orthodoxies and trade liberalization, poverty alleviation was beginning to re-emerge as a necessary as well as a humanitarian target of development policy.

The *State of the World's Children* reports annually revisited 'adjustment with a human face'. But Unicef's own role at the cutting edge of adjustment

research declined as the issue became more widely owned. In the context of Africa, Unicef continued to conduct an independent and vocal analysis of the structural adjustment process and the prospects of recovery; adding, after the watershed year of 1989, analysis of economies in a different kind of transition, in Central and Eastern Europe. In the field, operational support for 'adjustment with a human face' grew, and increasing numbers of Unicef country offices took part in initiatives by government and the World Bank to include safety-net measures for the vulnerable within adjustment packages. Meanwhile, at the global level, Unicef began to shift its advocacy message from 'adjustment with a human face' to 'development with a human face'. This provided an intellectual scaffolding within which the goals for children in the 1990s, eventually endorsed at the World Summit for Children, could be positioned.

In 1990, UNDP issued the first of its *Human Development Reports* under the supervision of Mahbub ul Haq, previously Minister of Finance and Planning in Pakistan and a long-time member of the international development aristocracy. His report took on to the next stage what Unicef had begun: a reassertion of humanity as both lodestar and pilot of the development process. The 'human development index' it presented contained an echo of the 'PQLI'—the Physical Quality of Life Index developed by Jim Grant and his ODC colleagues during the 1970s. Fifteen years later, a full member of the international economic establishment had produced a set of indicators that embraced the social (and political) dimensions of life. These formally articulated a vision of development—in a phrase of E. F. Schumacher's from the alternative 1970s—'as if people mattered'. What had once been alternative had, after several reworkings and a strong dose of officialization, become mainstream.

As the 1990s arrived, the twin crises of adjustment and debt rumbled on. And as the Asian 'Tigers' forged ahead and certain Latin American economies began to recover and grow rapidly—albeit unreliably—the crisis location narrowed. It became more or less confined to that ill-starred continent that had come to symbolize all the misery that the term 'third world' could conjure: Africa.

The problems of sub-Saharan Africa had already begun to merit extreme concern by the early 1980s. A seemingly endless succession of emergencies—mostly caused by or at least associated with drought—emanated from what was becoming a regional special case. In Sahelian West Africa, pastoral societies were being destroyed by the remorseless advance of the desert; in the Horn and in Angola, Chad, Mozambique, the Sudan and Uganda, drought intermingled

with civil disruption and warfare to produce a tide of human misery and displacement. Only in a few southern countries, notably Zimbabwe, whose long state of insurrection finally ceded to majority rule and independence in 1980, did the new decade bring markedly better prospects than the old.

A watershed came in 1984. Throughout that year, drought deepened in its familiar transcontinental path across the Sahel and into the Horn, as well as in countries far to the south. In spite of a great ringing of international alarm bells, food relief was not activated on an even remotely appropriate scale. The result was famine of the biblical variety. In what had become the mode for the exposure of mass tragedy in the late 20th century, a televised news report from northern Ethiopia finally managed to bring home to the world the fact that starvation was engulfing millions of people. The BBC news item broadcast on 23 October 1984 and subsequently screened throughout the world had an impact that must rank as one of the most far-reaching in television history, both in its immediate effect—producing massive assistance for sick and dying people—and in triggering sustained public and official scrutiny of Africa's immense problems³⁴.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar set up a special Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA). This initiative owed much to Jim Grant, who was anxious to come up with a creative way for the UN to respond to humanitarian crises without depending on Unicef or another UN body to become lead agency for the entire UN system. This had the effect of diverting immense amounts of time and energy away from the main task currently within an organization's mandate—in Unicef's case, the 'child survival revolution'. The OEOA proved very effective, and in time, paved the way for a restructuring of the manner in which the United Nations system responded to emergency relief³⁵. In Ethiopia itself, 7 million people were provided with rations via an effectively coordinated UN and NGO operation in which Unicef was an active participant. A huge outflow of food aid, funds and supplies was also sent to 19 other countries throughout the African continent³⁶.

But the impact of the Ethiopian famine did more than launch a thousand mercy ships. Mainly thanks to a remarkable effort led by the popular singer Bob Geldof, it brought consciousness of the African continent to a generation who had not been born at the time when the cause of African freedom had inspired the world. By rallying his colleagues from the music industry and launching 'Band Aid' (a rock industry charity), 'Live Aid' (a global television concert event) and 'Sport Aid' (a fund-raising drive among athletes), Geldof and a number of celebrities from the worlds of show business and sport helped

to raise large sums of charitable money and put the saving of lives in Africa onto the popular political agenda.

From early in the 1980s, sub-Saharan Africa had been singled out by Unicef's Executive Board as requiring priority attention. New country offices opened and activity expanded continuously, up to the end of the decade and beyond. By 1990, over one third of Unicef's human and financial resources were deployed in Africa³⁷. But in spite of their rhetorical concern, many governments did not dedicate serious resources to Africa's predicament until the public outcry in the 'donor' world surrounding the crisis of 1984-85. The popularity of Geldof's mega-events suggested that, in the era of celebrity and media power, there were new heights of public attention and action to be commanded on behalf of the developing world if the right buttons could be pushed.

This diagnosis of the public mood appealed strongly to Jim Grant, who saw in these portents an opportunity for 'social mobilization' on a larger scale—not just for operationalizing immunization but for expressing global solidarity with the poor, especially with children. The network of Unicef National Committees, whose financial contribution Grant had not previously regarded as justifying a claim to major organizational significance, now came into their own. The Africa emergencies gave the Committees an opportunity for visibility and fund-raising that they took with both hands, boosted by the visits of Unicef's Goodwill Ambassadors—notably Harry Belafonte, Liv Ullmann and later Audrey Hepburn—to disaster-stricken countries. In the early 1980s, the Committees provided around 17 per cent of Unicef's income; by the early 1990s, the amount was to surpass 25 per cent³⁸. In the case of Sport Aid, the Unicef tie-up through the National Committees (and field offices) helped to transform the event into a worldwide success involving 83 countries and raising \$30 million³⁹.

Unicef was also improving its links with the highly professional NGO coalitions burgeoning in both North and South. In the wider world, 'people power' was beginning to make its muscle felt not only on behalf of the victims of drought and disaster in Africa, but on behalf of environmental issues and in political contexts: 'democratization' had become a force in the Philippines, in Central America and in Africa itself, where it was even beginning to snap at the heels of apartheid. Unicef now set itself the task of enlisting 'people power' into a 'Grand Alliance for Children'⁴⁰.

'People power' in the form of NGOs, trades unions, mothers' clubs and youth associations represented only one stratum of allies, however. The 'Grand Alliance' also needed figures of national importance and those occupying the seat of power. Mechanisms and special campaigns were developed for enlisting

all conceivable species of the influential: artists, writers and intellectuals; the media; parliamentarians; mayors; church and spiritual leaders, and—of course—Heads of State. Much of the pace-setting for this new chapter in Unicef external relations was pioneered in Africa. The reason was partly because of the continent's immense human need and the priority attached to Africa by Unicef; it was also because of the need and the popular sympathy it evoked.

Within Africa itself, initiatives that were upbeat and hopeful provided a breath of fresh air amidst the prevailing gloom. In early 1987 came the first of a series of symposia for different groups: a meeting for African artists, writers and intellectuals in Dakar⁴¹. Such meetings provided a recruitment ground for new adherents to the cause of child survival and new members of the 'Grand Alliance'. The Dakar meeting, with its 'Dakar Declaration' on behalf of the African child, was the curtain-raiser to a more ambitious stroke. This took place at the annual Assembly for the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Addis Ababa in July 1987. Through the mediation of President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, the OAU adopted a resolution proclaiming 1988 the 'Year for the Protection, Survival and Development of the African Child,' with the target of 75 per cent immunization of infants by 1990. This led to an invitation to Grant to address the 25th anniversary meeting of the OAU in Addis Ababa in July 1988, an occasion on which he dumbfounded his audience by bringing to the rostrum to speak on his behalf a young Ethiopian girl, Selamawee⁴². As a four-year-old, Selamawee's face had adorned a Unicef poster calling for child survival, and now she spoke as witness to the benefits of Unicef's campaign.

For a UN organization to develop a sophisticated lobbying technique for regular use at intergovernmental fora was unprecedented. Unicef's contacts with delegations and the secretariat before and at OAU meetings led to the tabling of such proposals as the setting of dates for immunization targets, the banning of trade in non-iodized salt or the termination of advertising for breastmilk substitutes. Grant used the meetings to consolidate his personal relations with Heads of State as well as to ease the path of his country representatives to the topmost echelons of government once they returned home⁴³. Unicef's investment in this kind of 'summit' advocacy was justified less by its measurable benefits for programme delivery than by the way in which it brought issues affecting children into the common parlance of regular international discourse. Statesmen who might initially be surprised to find themselves examining immunization tallies and becoming conversant in the virtues of mother's milk began to accept such conference items as a normal part of the agenda.

Unicef efforts to affect debates at intergovernmental meetings were not confined to Africa; in fact, they originally grew out of Asia. The creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) provided an opportunity to place children on its first Summit agenda, at Bangalore in November 1986; this was the first time Heads of State had addressed such an item in such a gathering⁴⁴. The second SAARC Summit in Nepal in October 1987 endorsed the acceleration of expanded programmes on immunization⁴⁵. Many other regional initiatives took shape over the late 1980s: there were resolutions at Islamic conferences, at the Organization of American States, even at a Gorbachev-Reagan summit—all of which helped to legitimize the presence of children's concerns in international affairs. Without this preparation, the seed of the Summit might well have fallen on stonier ground. And Grant was correct in believing that Africa—whose myriad cultures had a common trait of child-centredness—would be especially receptive to a children's agenda. He had a knack of heartening Africa's leaders with his message of 'doability' and the popular appeal of child-friendly policies. It was at a West African Heads of State meeting that the idea of a World Summit for Children first saw formal expression, and it was the African delegates to the Unicef Executive Board who kept the idea on track⁴⁶.

As the decade progressed, the spate of climatic emergencies in Africa temporarily abated and there were even signs that economic growth might return. But in many countries the combined force of adverse terms of trade, debt, past debilities and economic stagnation was proving impossible to transcend. The prestige projects once so pleasing to international financiers and their African clients—show-piece buildings, cement factories, airports and highways—now littered the landscape as monuments to inappropriate investment and unpayable debt. And as the pillars gave way under a political economy that had chosen to leave out of its calculations the need to maintain the typical rural household, the reverberations of economic collapse and environmental depletion penetrated deep into the fabric of traditional life.

The multiple predicaments of Africa posed an acute challenge to development analysts, and Unicef was among the organizations to address the challenge. Jolly and his economist team's first contribution to the debate was published in 1985, under the title *Within Human Reach: A future for Africa's children*. The study pointed out that for women, above all, and for the children they bore and raised, the burdens of development failure were heavy. Women's key role in family food production having been consistently ignored by policy makers, the margins within which they were able to grow or procure such essentials as food, water and fuel were steadily eroding. In the rapidly expand-

ing urban areas, where unemployment was rising and the value of wages eroding fast, the situation was if anything worse than in the countryside. Women, young people wanting to enter the job market and children forced to drop out of school and enter 'street' employment were worst affected by the increasingly difficult task of putting food in the family pot and keeping a tin roof over the family head.

The ongoing Unicef analysis of Africa's predicament and the necessary policy reaction continued to echo and reinforce the thesis presented in *Adjustment with a Human Face*. The evidence that the 1980s represented a 'lost decade' for many of Africa's children continued to pile up. By 1990, the enrolment rate in primary education had fallen in 20 sub-Saharan countries. The regional average had dropped from 80 per cent to 70 per cent—often the outcome of SAP-induced expenditure cuts and impositions of fees that parents could not afford—in Tanzania, for example⁴⁷. The prevalence of underweight children had risen from 29 per cent to 31 per cent between 1980 and 1985 and stagnated for the rest of the decade—in contrast to every other region in the world⁴⁸. Close to half of Africa's population was still beyond the reach of even minimal health services, and resurgences in tuberculosis, yellow fever, cholera and chloroquine-resistant malaria were exerting extra pressures on weak and underfunded health infrastructures, bent to breaking under the growing burden of AIDS. Only in a few middle-income countries—Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Senegal, Zimbabwe—was the record less than acutely discouraging⁴⁹. Given the stresses they were enduring, the remarkable resilience of so many of Africa's people deserved profound admiration.

As if Africa's economic and social ills were not enough to bear, parts of the continent were experiencing a mounting toll of violence, as civil strife displaced drought as the mainspring of African distress. Ethnic conflict, dampened during the pre-independence nationalist struggle, had re-emerged progressively during the post-colonial aftermath. And the cold war battle for hearts and minds had not neglected to ply its discords and sell its guns along Africa's social fissures. In some countries—the Congo and Nigeria—the political clothing of nationhood had ripped apart soon after the national flag was unfurled. In others—Burundi, Rwanda, Chad, Uganda—upheaval came a little later. In the 1970s and early 1980s, ideological confrontation in the Horn both masked and hastened the disintegration of carefully constructed webs of kinship and dynastic alliance among the Ethiopian and Somali peoples. And away in the southern cone of the continent, the long struggle for majority rule continued. In the 1980s, the tactic of fomenting proxy wars among antipathetic neighbours Angola and

Mozambique was used by the white South African rearguard to postpone their own loss of power.

By 1989, a combination of apartheid, social and civil unrest, military incursions and cross-border engagements had created at least 6 million refugees and 35 million displaced people within their own countries, and caused untold suffering, dislocation and disability among millions more⁵⁰. Under the circumstances, Unicef country programmes were remarkable in managing to advance the child survival campaign as effectively as they did. Some interventions—measles vaccination, ORT and vitamin A, for example—were particularly appropriate as part of emergency relief measures since infectious diseases on top of nutritional deficiencies typically caused far more deaths in famine and refugee camps than did starvation. But beyond increased child survival programming and 'Grand Alliance' building, Unicef also began to move in other directions.

One initiative concerned children affected by war. Following the 1986 Executive Board review of 'children in especially difficult circumstances', Unicef representatives in the nine countries of Southern Africa—Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe—decided to take a stand on behalf of children affected by apartheid and destabilization. South African policies were impoverishing ordinary families caught in their backlash, and—as with recession, as with adjustment—their impact could be measured in terms of children's declining health and nutritional status. This was most marked in Angola and Mozambique, where the highest rates of young child mortality in the world now prevailed: between 325 and 375 per thousand live births⁵¹.

The underlying cause might well be underdevelopment, exacerbated by the usual litany of adverse terms of trade, rising debt and past mistakes in domestic policy. But of this death toll, as high a proportion as 45 per cent was attributable to South Africa's attempts to undermine these countries' political, economic and social fabric. Unicef's successive reports on *Children on the Front Line*, first published in 1987, represented an attempt to use the political neutrality of the children's issue to make a strong anti-war and anti-apartheid statement on their behalf⁵².

Another initiative was an attempt to help countries swamped by debt to discharge some of it by substituting, through Unicef, action on behalf of children⁵³. The scheme was based on the fact that some of this debt had become worth so little that the creditor bank had little to lose by writing it off as a charitable donation. This idea was originally proposed by Marco Vianello-Chiodo, Director of Unicef's Programme Funding Office⁵⁴. In exchange for an

agreed equivalent in local currency, which would be made over to an approved programme of Unicef cooperation, a commercial bank would cancel an amount of debt owed by a debtor government or sell it at a heavily discounted rate. Outstanding debt obligations would thereby be converted into local currency contributions for Unicef programmes. These programmes would, of necessity, have to be already approved and contain a high local cost component. Typically, they included programmes to support women's income generation, primary education and water supply and sanitation⁵⁵.

The country where this experiment was pioneered was the Sudan; the beneficiary programme was the water supply programme in southern Kordofan. By 1991, six commercial banks, two in the United Kingdom, two in Germany and two in the United States, had donated to Unicef outstanding debt obligations valued at \$20 million, in cooperation with the Bank of Sudan and the Unicef National Committees in the countries in question. In return, the Sudanese Government had contributed the equivalent of \$2 million in Sudanese pounds (an amount three times the value of the debt on the secondary market)⁵⁶. 'Debt relief for children' helped to generate more resources for social programming, and—as important—it also helped project children's issues into the extensive debt relief and cancellation debate. By late 1995, Unicef had carried out more than 20 separate debt conversion transactions in Madagascar, Senegal, the Sudan and Zambia (as well as in Bolivia, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and the Philippines). Debt with a face value of \$199 million had been converted into local currency worth \$53 million for an expenditure of \$29 million⁵⁷.

And then there was AIDS, whose impact on Africa was in a class by itself. By the late 1980s, it was becoming clear that AIDS—elsewhere associated almost exclusively with adult males engaging in particular high-risk sexual behaviours and with blood transfusion—would have an unexpectedly profound impact on African children⁵⁸. Sub-Saharan Africa was hit worse than any other region by the worldwide epidemic. In 10 countries of Eastern and Central Africa around 5 per cent of adults aged 19 to 45 were already thought to be infected with HIV; in some urban areas, the proportion was much higher—between one quarter and one third⁵⁹. The virus was being transmitted overwhelmingly by heterosexual relations and was as common in women as in men⁶⁰.

Some of these women—the probability was between 25 and 40 per cent—would transmit HIV to their newborns, in the womb or at delivery. But a high case-load of paediatric AIDS was only a part of the picture. Since all adults infected were in the prime not only of their reproductive but their economic life, and since birth rates in Africa tended to be high, dying parents were leaving behind large numbers of orphaned children. When Unicef first calcu-

lated in 1989 that within 10 years, 4 million African children would have been orphaned by AIDS, the figure was greeted with disbelief. Before long, WHO had upped the estimate to 10 million⁶¹. These children would all become dependent on the traditional African safety net: the extended family. How would their elderly relatives, deprived of their grown sons and daughters, conceivably manage the strain?

In the rest of the world, the turn of the decade was accompanied by the euphoria stemming from the end of the cold war. Unicef, like everyone else, envisaged the release of new resources from the relaxation of the long East-West confrontation and the end of the arms race. This 'peace dividend' could be applied, it was hoped, to the noble effort of building a more equitable, prosperous and healthy world, a world fit not just for the inheritance of some but of all the members of the coming generation.

Nowhere in the world was a latter-day Marshall Plan of investment in sustainable human and physical development more needed than in Africa. But any such hopes were quickly dashed. The resources released from reductions in arms and military expenditure found their way mostly into deficit reduction in industrialized countries. Meanwhile, it was the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, emerging from their own long subjugation to a rather different kind of colonial rule, to which 'development' attention now turned.

Between August 1989 and the end of that year, communist administrations that had held sway for over 40 years abdicated or ceased to exist in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania⁶². Soon afterwards, the regimes of Yugoslavia and Albania also collapsed. Except in the case of Romania, this extraordinary political shift—a virtual abandonment of power by what had appeared to be utterly entrenched systems—took place without a shot being fired. The USSR had, since 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev assumed its leadership, embarked on a liberalization and reform process. It had left the hard-liner regimes in its European orbit to do the same or perish. In 1989, most perished.

The resurgence of political freedoms and democratic rights in countries so long sequestered behind the iron curtain caused such celebration in the first world that the implications of such sweeping change were not at first apparent. So stunned was the world by the extraordinary implosion that felled one of its main network of alliances—the Warsaw Pact—and then the superpower at its centre that it took time for international institutions to take in what had happened. The conventional ordering of world affairs had been altered past

telling. As difficult to foresee were the effects on the well-being of citizens, including children, in the countries involved.

Yet these were bound to be severe. At the heart of the process of change was the long falling behind of the economic performance of the USSR and its satellites, which had been in train since the early 1970s⁶³. The abrupt dismissal of long-cherished command economies and socialist safety nets came not from a political movement riding a crest of success, but as a statement of lost confidence in a system of economic and social management that had conspicuously failed to produce the decent quality of life for all on which its legitimacy depended.

In the 20 years before the post-1989 reforms, life expectancy in many countries was declining and poverty was increasing⁶⁴. Thus, as in the case of the developing world's deteriorating fortunes in the early 1980s, in the period of post-communist transition the people of the second world had to face both the effects of a poor economic record and the dose of medicine now required to put it right. Here was a familiar recipe for hardship, especially among the vulnerable: children, women, the disabled, the elderly, large families, the unemployed—those whose condition it had been a principle of socialist regimes to cushion and protect.

Although as ill-prepared as everyone else for the transformation of the international landscape, Unicef had long-standing ties with countries in the Eastern bloc, some of which were historically deep-rooted. Following the creation of the UN International Children's Emergency Fund in December 1946, the destination of much of its help for children still suffering the aftermath of the Second World War had been the countries of Central and Eastern Europe⁶⁵.

The first four countries ever to receive Unicef supplies—3 million pounds of powdered milk dispatched by sea from New York in mid-1947—were Austria, Greece, Poland and Yugoslavia. Longer-term assistance had followed: campaigns for disease prevention, including BCG vaccination; paediatric equipment and training fellowships for MCH health professionals; milk conservation equipment for the incipient dairy industry in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. With Poland, in particular, Unicef always had a special relationship. Unicef's founder and father figure, Dr. Ludwik Rajchman, was Polish; Maurice Pate, the first Executive Director, spent many years in Poland between the wars.

Before long, the growing antagonism of the cold war had closed Unicef's offices in Eastern Europe, and with their closure came the end of most programmatic assistance. But already a new type of relationship had begun. In

1947, the first Unicef National Committee in Europe was formed in Yugoslavia. In the same year, the first Unicef greeting card was produced from a picture drawn by a Czechoslovakian child. After the Polish Unicef Committee was set up in 1962, its chairman, Dr. Boguslaw Kozusznik, toured Central and Eastern Europe to export the idea of establishing such Committees, and by 1974, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania had followed suit⁶⁶. The Committees were sponsored officially and attached either to a ministry or to a mass organization, but in other ways they operated like typical National Committees: raising money by selling Unicef greeting cards and running information campaigns on the needs of children in the developing world.

After 1989, most Eastern European Committees regrouped and assumed the character of independent NGOs. As with other Unicef National Committees, the newly passed UN Convention on the Rights of the Child became a platform from which the Committees of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe could champion the cause of children not only in the developing world but within their own shell-shocked societies. These two events—the passage of the Convention and the sudden collapse of the three-world divide of the cold war period—hastened Unicef's own gradual organizational transition from exclusive concern with children of the 'developing' or third world, to concern with child victims of mass deprivation—especially that attendant on development failure—in whatever 'world' it was found. The 1991 (post-Summit) *State of the World's Children* report for the first time included a commentary on the children of the industrialized world. The cause of children was beginning to transcend not only the political but the 'development' divide. And the reverberations all over the world of the movement for democratization meant that 'development' and 'rights' perspectives were also beginning to merge.

Unicef's first post-cold war involvement in the problems of children in Eastern Europe was precipitated by the downfall of the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania at the end of 1989⁶⁷. This revealed to a horrified world the fallout of state policies emanating from a twisted mind-set towards families and child care. The regime had been pronatalist in the extreme—banning contraception and taxing the childless, but at the same time it had pursued policies that curbed household incomes, dislocated extended family networks and allowed the price of food to soar. It had virtually forced parents to bring into the world children they did not want and could not support. Many mothers resorted to abortion: around 40 per cent of Romanian pregnancies (1985) were illegally terminated in spite of the high risks of complication, even death, and of punitive state reprisal. Others handed over their newborns to dreadfully inadequate state 'orphanages'. As a result, 150,000 children were living in appalling

conditions, without proper food, warmth, clothing, medical care or affection. Over 1,000 of the youngest had contracted AIDS from transfusions with HIV-contaminated blood⁶⁸.

Television footage of these children's misery caused a spontaneous outpouring of public sympathy from around the world. Unicef was among the earliest international organizations to respond to what was palpably a child emergency⁶⁹. In collaboration with the Romanian Unicef Committee, supplies of basic drugs and medical equipment were provided for 200 children's institutions and hospitals, as were disposable syringes for use throughout the child health care system. But questions quickly began to arise about longer-term Unicef involvement on behalf of children in countries long considered 'developed'. The 1990 Executive Board decided that programmes of assistance for Central and Eastern European countries would have to be funded out of special contributions. In the case of Romania, \$4 million was provided by two governmental donors and seven National Committees and a programme was launched in 1991; in the same year Albania—by far the poorest country in Europe—also became a Unicef recipient. Former Yugoslavia also began to receive emergency help from Unicef as part of the UN humanitarian response to the outbreak of war in late 1991⁷⁰.

The components of these programmes—even where practical in war-torn ex-Yugoslavia—were similar to approaches evolving in some of the 'newly industrializing' countries of the developing world: technical assistance for training health and social workers; surveys into the situation of children; the establishment of nutritional monitoring surveillance systems and other data-gathering mechanisms to facilitate analysis of children's well-being; help in developing national programmes of action (NPAs) to meet the goals pledged at the World Summit for Children; policy discussion on street children or other children in especially difficult circumstances; information exchange and coordination to make good the lack of it between NGOs (local and international) and government bodies; promotion of the substance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of its ratification⁷¹.

In Romania the programme was supported by a reorganized National Committee, which undertook fund-raising and advocacy on behalf of children's rights and needs domestically and internationally. This was the first occasion in which a Unicef programme and a National Committee functioned alongside one another in the same country. Here, as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the time of transition was seen as an opportunity to etch into the post-communist order the idea that children are entitled to 'first call' on society's resources⁷².

As the new decade got under way, misgivings that the course of the social and economic transition would not come easy gave way to downright alarm. Warfare in the former Yugoslavia and its threat elsewhere were the most visible problems. But there were terrible strains almost everywhere. Adherence to a communist development model might well have been an obstacle to political and economic health, but destroying it did not on its own repair the structural faults in the system—rather the reverse. The free market orthodoxies that were substituted, sometimes traumatically, had effects similar to the ‘SAPping’ of Latin America and Africa in the 1980s. And just as, in the 1980s, Unicef had taken upon itself the measuring and the publicizing of the impact of macro-economic policies in the developing world on the well-being of children, now in the 1990s it was to undertake the same role vis-à-vis the transition in Central and Eastern Europe⁷³.

The International Child Development Centre (ICDC) in Florence began to assemble data and instigate inquiries into the social fallout of countries’ transition to the market economy⁷⁴. This activity took place along lines parallel to the continuing inquiry into crisis and adjustment in Africa and elsewhere. The work involved economists, social statisticians and policy specialists from countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and was designed to help countries emerging from the long socialist experiment to develop tools for social analysis in the new policy formulation climate. The first product of the inquiry—*Children and the Transition to the Market Economy: Safety Nets and Social Policies in Central and Eastern Europe*—was published in 1991. In 1992, the ICDC set up a special project, called ‘MONEE’, to monitor the transition on a continuing basis, in partnership with statistical offices and policy centres.

The ‘MONEE’ project began to publish regular reports in 1993, and the overall picture it painted was grim. As in so many countries of the developing world, the ‘therapy’ of adjustment to bring balance of payments deficits into line—wage control, price rises, exchange rate devaluation, the elimination of inefficient industry, and cuts in social services—had acted less as a spur to economic renewal than as a blanket stifling the embers of economic life. Prices for food and other essentials spiralled upward as subsidies were removed; meanwhile, jobs—previously universally guaranteed—vanished as ex-state-monopoly industries went under, unable to compete in the brutal world of open markets and advanced Western technology. Families facing the double shock of runaway inflation and loss of earnings found themselves hopelessly worse off. In Bulgaria, for example, the purchasing power of wages fell by 40 per cent in 1991. In Poland and Hungary, the share of family income spent on food rose by 50 to 60 per cent. In most countries, well over 20 per cent of the

Based on the principle that children are above politics, UNICEF was created to provide food, clothing and other support to children in both victorious and defeated countries devastated by World War II.



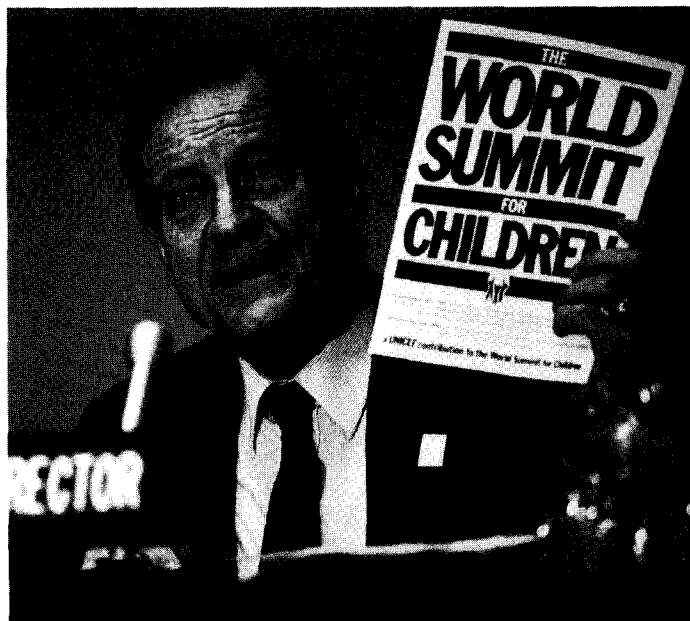
UNICEF/ICEF-0244

In the 1950s, school children in Athens, Greece, were among the millions of children whose nutrition was improved by UNICEF's distribution of dried milk.



UNICEF/ICEF-0355

UNICEF's third Executive Director, James P. Grant, addresses a press conference at the start of the World Summit for Children, the unprecedented gathering of 71 Heads of State or Government, who met at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 1990 to commit themselves to meet basic health and education goals for children by the year 2000.



UNICEF/David Barbour



UNICEF/David Barbour

Unicef Goodwill Ambassadors Sir Peter Ustinov, Liv Ullman, Audrey Hepburn and Julio Iglesias pause for a moment after the official closing of the World Summit for Children.



A UNICEF-trained village health worker in Nigeria demonstrates how to filter water to prevent guinea worm disease.

UNICEF/92-0090/Giacomo Pirozzi

A girl with goitre, caused by lack of iodine, is examined in her classroom in Bangladesh, through a UNICEF-assisted programme promoting the use of iodized salt to eliminate iodine deficiency disorders.



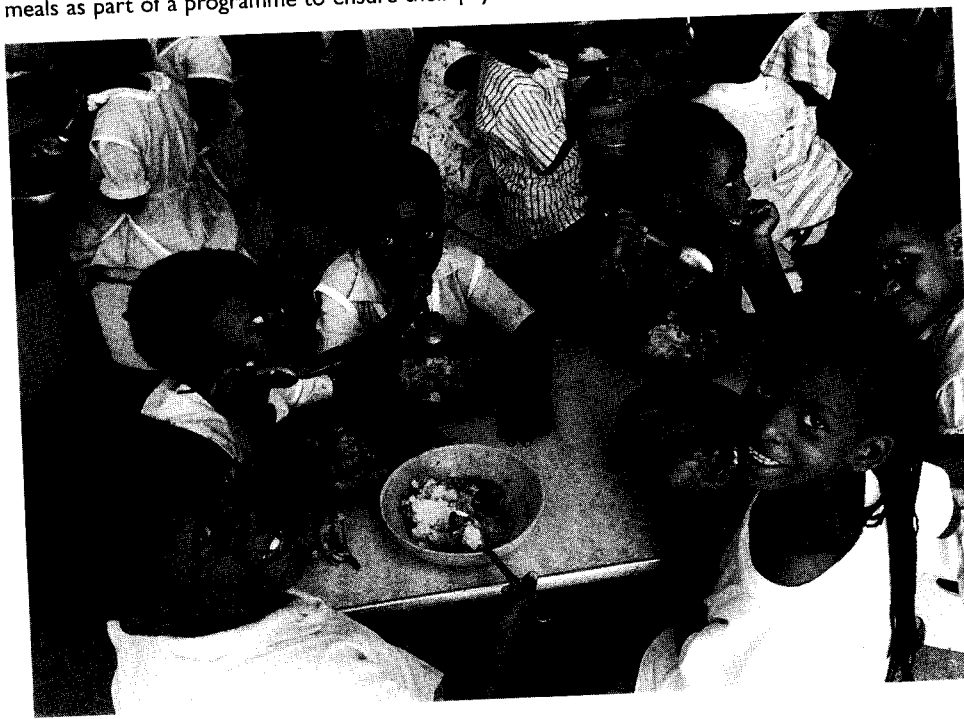
UNICEF/93-0050/Maggie Murray-Lee

A baby receives a regular check-up at a health centre in Bogota, Colombia. Monitoring of a child's growth is a vital tool for detecting early signs of malnutrition and preventing other health problems.



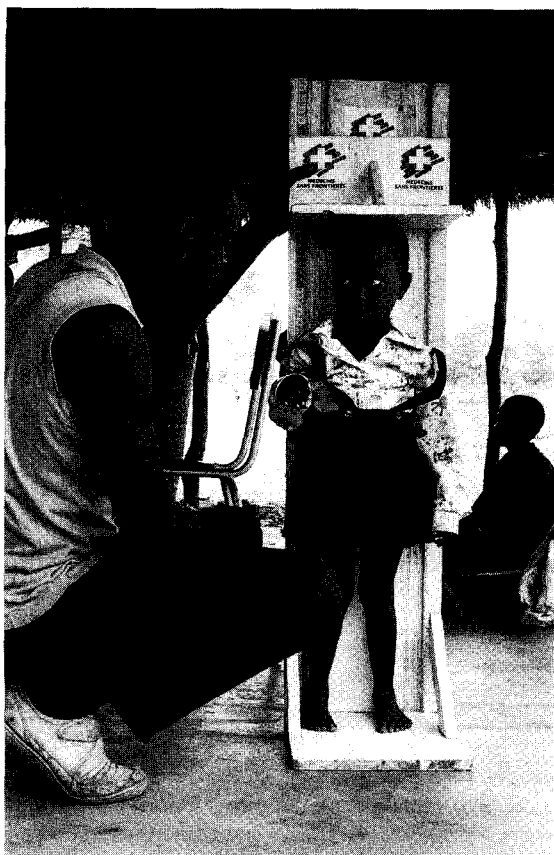
UNICEF/88-0006/Ellen Talmie

Children at a UNICEF-assisted daycare in Harare, Zimbabwe, receive nutritionally balanced meals as part of a programme to ensure their physical, emotional and social development.



UNICEF/4974/Jorgen Schlytte

UNICEF partners with such non-governmental organizations as Médecins sans Frontières to deliver basic health services to children in all situations, including this Mozambican refugee girl who had her height measured in a camp in Zambia in 1989.



UNICEF/2621/Carolyn Watson

A Nigerian mobile health team staffed by women health workers travels to the south-western village of Odolan to deliver basic health services for children and women.



UNICEF/92-0088/Giacomo Pirozzi

In 1985, Turkey's national immunization drive vaccinated 80% of the country's children under five years old against TB, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles and polio. By 1990 the global goal of immunizing 80% of the world's children under one against the six diseases had been achieved.



UNICEF/1302/John Isaac

A woman breastfeeds her newborn at a maternity hospital in Shanghai, China, one of thousands of hospitals throughout the world certified as 'Baby-friendly'—meaning that they follow the 'Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding', encouraging mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants for at least the first six months.



UNICEF/93.176/Roger Lemoyne

UNICEF assists with the provision of safe water and sanitation in China, especially in distant or disadvantaged rural communities.



UNICEF/93-1710/Roger Lemoyne

Safe water is collected at a UNICEF-supported conservation project near Mauritania's capital. Upgrading water points in poor neighbourhoods, training communities in maintenance and providing hygiene education are components of comprehensive water and sanitation programmes throughout the developing world.



UNICEF/5750/Lauren Goodsmith

174 (b)

Girls learn to write in an informal class held in a squatter community where there is no primary school in Bogota, Colombia.



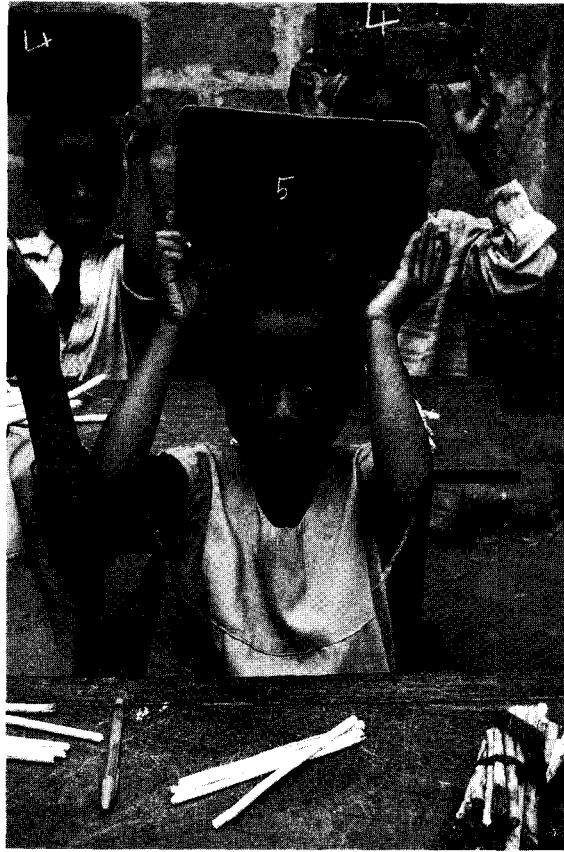
UNICEF/87-0005/Ellen Toime

A girl helps with the household chores at her home in the Lebanese village of Akroum—many other children in the country have had their lives disrupted by war.



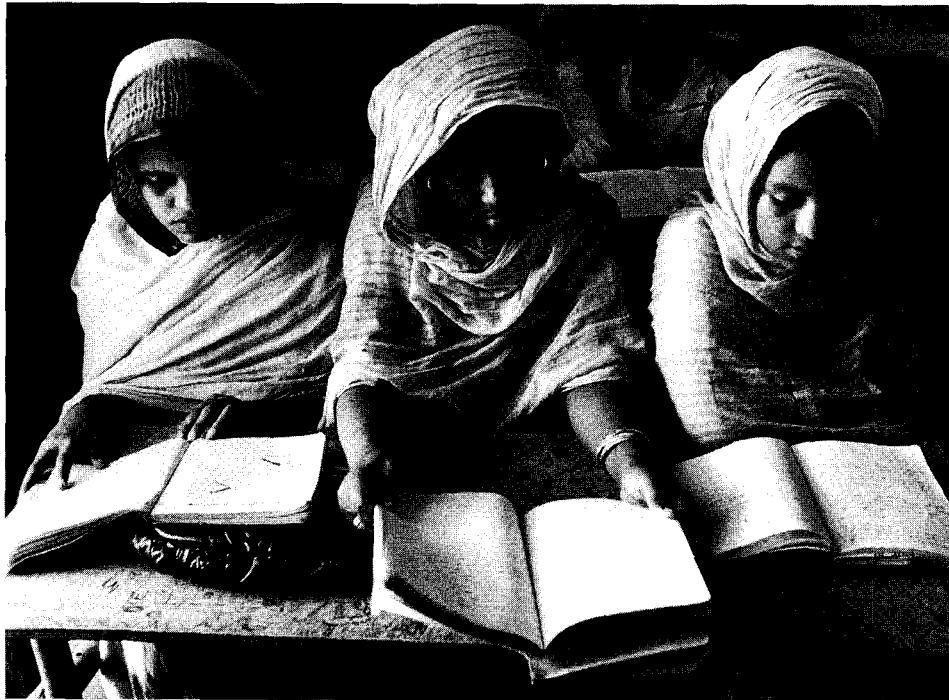
UNICEF/5234/Nicole Tourounji

Girls and boys share rudimentary desks and writing materials in an outdoor class at a village school in Benin. In 1993, only 65% of eligible children were enrolled in primary schools in Benin, one of the world's poorest countries.

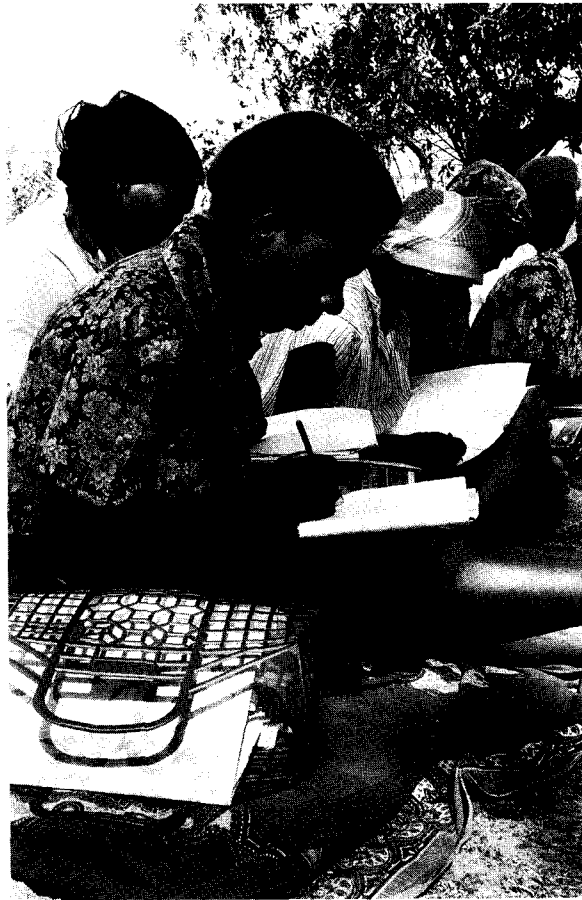


UNICEF/93-1992/Giacomo Prozzi

Educating girls is a good social investment. Increased national economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality rates, reduced fertility and increased life expectancy have all been linked to higher educational achievements by women.



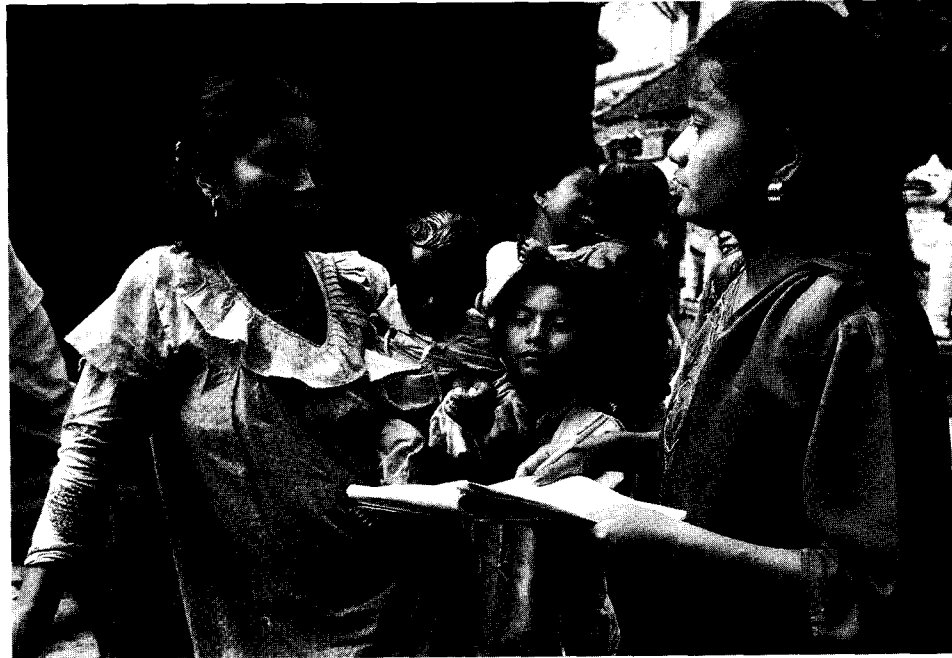
UNICEF/2243/Jorgen Schyrte



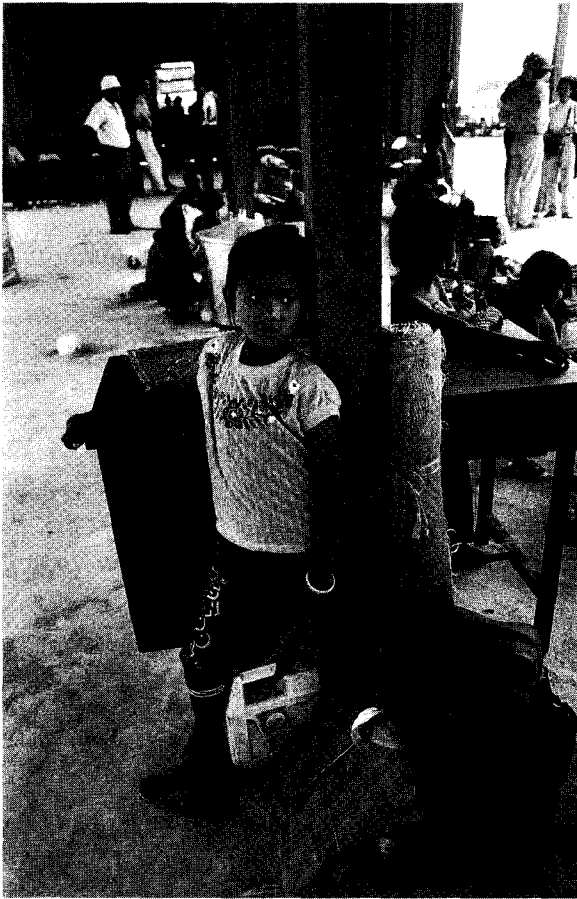
Women in Zimbabwe learn to read and write in their language, Shona, in a UNICEF-supported literacy programme for women.

UNICEF/3139/Carolyn Watson

A woman journalist interviews women in Nepal, during a journalism training course co-sponsored by UNICEF to increase knowledge about, and coverage of, development issues by the mass media.



UNICEF/93-1278/Maggie Murray-Lee



UNICEF/5879/Roger Lemoine

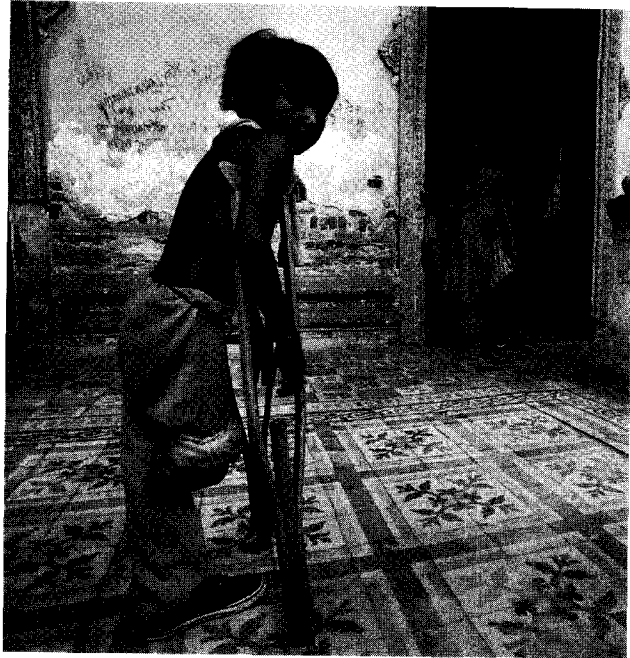
After years of exile in refugee camps in neighbouring Thailand, a girl waits in a repatriation centre, one of thousands of children returning with their families to Cambodia in 1992 in a massive UN-supported inter-agency effort to consolidate peace in that country.

Children open a shop gate under the watchful eye of a UN peacekeeper in Mogadiscio, Somalia in 1993. The continuing conflict in that country has highlighted the limits of effective emergency operations in the virtual absence of national government, forcing UNICEF and other relief organizations to find new ways of meeting the needs of children surrounded by war.



UNICEF/93-634/Betty Press

Since 1975, more than a million civilians, many of them children like this Cambodian boy, have been killed or maimed by land-mines, an estimated 110 million of which are now strewn across 64 countries. UNICEF's 1996 Anti-War Agenda calls for a global ban on the production, use, stockpiling, sale and export of anti-personnel mines.



UNICEF/590/Roger Lemoine

A family of Rwandan refugees arrives in Tanzania in April 1994, among the 300,000 fleeing the slaughter of hundreds of thousands in their country. Three months later, a million more Rwandans, including 100,000 unaccompanied children, crossed into Zaire in one week, creating an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and leaving a devastated and traumatized nation that will need generations to recover.



UNICEF/94-0065/Howard Davies

In the 1990s, war continues to be part of daily life for millions of children. Soldiers visit a kindergarten for displaced children in Croatia, where some 50% of the 1.2 million people displaced by the fighting that followed the break-up of former Yugoslavia, were temporarily settled.



UNICEF/5549/Darko Gorenak



UNICEF/94-0877/Roger Lemoyne

A boy in Sarajevo mourns the loss of his older brother, killed in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to emergency, health and education support, UNICEF has trained a network of health workers and teachers throughout former Yugoslavia to recognize and treat child trauma.

At a UNICEF-assisted centre for unaccompanied children in Rwanda, children act out the killings they have witnessed, part of a trauma treatment programme to help them cope with their war experience.



UNICEF/94-0588/Betty Press

A woman with AIDS embraces her daughter in Malawi, one of several African countries where the spread of HIV/AIDS now threatens the reduction of infant and child mortality—achieved over several decades—as well as leaving thousands of children orphaned when their parents succumb to the disease.



UNICEF/93-1229/Cindy Andrew

Two boys sleep on a street in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The plight of street children and others in need of special protection worldwide helped lead to the creation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which became international law on 2 September 1990.



UNICEF/5262/Jeremy Horner



UNICEF/011/Peter Tacon

The Convention states that children have the right to basic health and education, free expression and protection against exploitation. For thousands of children who must work to survive, UNICEF supports programmes to ensure their working conditions are safe and that they have access to education and other basic services.

In Bangladesh, UNICEF collaborates with the Government and employers to find alternatives to employing children in strenuous work such as breaking stones at brick factories, which threatens their physical, mental, emotional and social development.



UNICEF/93-0024/Maggie Murray-Lee

On assuming her position in 1995, UNICEF's newly appointed Executive Director Carol Bellamy visited several countries in Africa—and met these displaced children in Liberia—reasserting the organization's continuing priority attention to that continent.



UNICEF/95-0196/Giacomo Prozzi

Equal opportunities for all girls and women, especially in education, is another priority for UNICEF—as it continues its work as the international representative of children, guided and energized by the now almost universally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child.



UNICEF/93-0712/Jeremy Horner

population was living in poverty, rising to 40 per cent among large families and in the worst areas⁷⁵.

Those hardest hit by the process of economic and political change were children, pensioners, young (often single-parent) families with small children, and ethnic minorities—some of whom became the target of pent-up frustration stemming from the extraordinary upheaval that had brought people used to lifelong certainties face to face with deteriorating living standards and profound insecurity. Government spending on health, education and other social services had been severely cut. Families with working parents who depended on public nurseries were forced to withdraw their children due to prohibitive fees, and the provision of preschools dwindled. Charges for school meals became exorbitant. Infectious and vaccine-preventable diseases were rising. Drugs were increasingly scarce, and health and medical facilities were forced to close due to equipment failure. Although some countries introduced some cushions for vulnerable groups as part of the reform process, they did so half-heartedly; the scope of such cushions was limited and their value quickly became eroded.

In no way could the need for drastic social and economic reform in the ex-second world be challenged: there was even less choice than there had been for the adjustment process in the third. But the extent, the speed and the suddenness of the process within a whole geopolitical network of more than a score of states and aspirant national entities was unprecedented. Even the most prescient policy adviser could not have foreseen all the implications of not one, but a whole succession of leaps in the dark. It takes time to assume and grow into new political and economic clothing (as many ex-colonies had amply proved); to establish new institutions and reorient existing ones; to substitute individual rights for state control—in the case of property ownership, for example; to develop the rule of democratically constructed laws and administration; and to change individual outlooks and behaviours.

The trauma of the restructuring process was leading to high social costs. These showed up in infant mortality and child nutrition rates, as might have been expected, but their impact on families, especially on adult males and therefore on women family providers, was very much more severe. Death rates were escalating, marriage and birth rates falling, school enrolments decreasing and the mounting crime wave, especially among unemployed and disaffected young people, was becoming unstoppable. Such characteristics of the transition were themselves a threat to the reform process and to its public acceptability.

Unicef avoided describing its proposed remedy by the obvious term: 'transition with a human face'. But this was essentially what it once more suggested: a system of safety nets—unemployment benefits, minimum income guaran-

tees, child allowances, subsidized school meals, free maternity, health care and schooling—for vulnerable groups and careful monitoring of social policy. While accepting that it was right not to divert aid from developing regions, Unicef believed that the international community must show more support for social welfare activities connected with the transition⁷⁶.

Responding to its own dictum, in 1992 the Unicef Executive Board made a more vigorous commitment to react to 'worsening circumstances that have triggered acute human need'; this commitment included the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but in the forefront of minds were the 'new independent States' of the suddenly collapsed ex-USSR. Criteria were agreed (low per capita income, high IMR) whereby certain countries qualified for non-emergency programme assistance; in others, only policy advice and advocacy were to be offered. The 'qualifying' states were Albania in Europe and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the ex-USSR. However, technical assistance would be available to 'non-qualifying countries' in special circumstances, and extra resources—\$2 million in both 1993 and 1994—were provided to support the data-gathering and monitoring activity in the region and the social policy analysis into which it was feeding⁷⁷.

At the same Board meeting, it was agreed that Unicef National Committees in Central and Eastern Europe could from 1992 onward reserve all their proceeds from the sale of greeting cards and other fund-raising events and apply them to the benefit of children in their own countries. Many Committees were already playing a policy-influencing role, having been instrumental in organizing situation analyses of the condition of children. They had also successfully pressed for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the adoption of the 'Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative'⁷⁸. The Unicef determination to ensure that social policies affecting children would have a place on the transitional agenda was well on its way to being realized.

If 1992 was a critical year for the evolution of policies towards children in crumbling parts of the industrialized world, it was also an important year for children in the even more frangible states of Africa. Once again, parts of the continent—27 million people in 14 countries—were suffering severely from drought, and certain countries—Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia—were approaching the ultimate in post-colonial breakdown: the 'failed State'. The collapse of consolidated forms of authority and administration and their replacement by armed groups equipped with modern weaponry

presented a severe challenge to the forces of international humanitarianism, let alone development, in the late 20th century. This was a far cry from the arcadia of the 'new world order' that the end of the cold war was supposed to usher in.

Elsewhere the tide of democratization was not running smoothly. The implosion of the USSR and the growing ethnic and nationalist turmoil in former Yugoslavia and other 'new independent States' were unwelcome features of a world freed from the rigidities of superpower stand-off. The 'peace dividend', dented heavily by the Gulf War, was yielding little extra to invest in the fight against world poverty. As far as Africa was concerned, the industrialized powers no longer had any strategic purpose in cultivating allies on the continent. They began to hedge assistance packages with conditionalities concerning political and economic reform, often as a pretext for aid reduction. And if the politicians' and diplomats' interest was mostly absorbed elsewhere, the bankers' and businessmen's was virtually non-existent.

The long chapter of poor performance had landed all but a handful of Africa's economies in an investment desert as parched as the Sahara. Only the humanitarians—international and NGO—kept their energies and outlook tuned to Africa, and they were becoming dismayed by the degree to which they were devoting themselves to emergency relief and the maintenance of health and welfare services from which impoverished governments were retreating. Apart from a surprising degree of success in reaching vaccination targets—by 1992, two thirds of African countries had met the goal of 75 per cent immunization coverage⁷⁹—the health and nutritional condition of children appeared again to be deteriorating⁸⁰.

Having acted as a strong impetus behind the World Summit for Children, Africa's leaders looked to Unicef for a quid pro quo: help in remobilizing international concern behind their continuing battle with debt and decline. The result was Unicef's co-sponsorship of an OAU 'International Conference on Assistance to African Children'. The purpose of the meeting, held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1992, was to solicit new international resources and energize national political will behind policy reorientation towards women and children⁸¹. By September 1992, 44 African countries had signed the Children's Summit Declaration, but few had yet prepared national programmes of action (NPAs) to translate this commitment into policy and practice⁸². Unicef wanted the Conference to provide a framework within which African countries would work hard to develop NPAs and set their policies on a child-friendly track; in response, donor countries would, it was hoped, be willing to provide extra funds to put these programmes into effect. The imperative of meeting children's

needs and promoting their rights would help launch an optimism offensive to combat the prevailing Afro-gloom.

Optimism was sorely needed. There were a few promising political signs—democratic elections in Zambia, new-broom leadership in Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda, the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in South Africa—but not many equivalents on the economic front. Africa was still staggering under the cross of its external debt, which by 1992 approached \$200 billion⁸³. Each year, Africa struggled to pay around one third of the interest that fell due; the rest was simply added to a bill that no miraculous discovery of mineral wealth, no economic great leap forward on the Asian pattern, no transformation of the investment climate would ever enable Africa to pay. In spite of persistent calls to cancel the debts of the poorest countries, forgiveness exercises—the Toronto Agreement, the Brady Plan, the Trinidad Terms—had managed to wipe only \$7 billion off the African slate.

In October 1992, Unicef's ICDC in Florence published a follow-up study to *Adjustment with a Human Face*, this time focusing on Africa alone. The study was wishfully entitled: *Africa's Recovery in the 1990s: From Stagnation and Adjustment to Human Development*⁸⁴. The picture it constructed of the situation of Africa's children according to the usual social indicators offered little that was either encouraging or new; but, the study insisted, the 'adjustment decade', however painful and unpromising in many countries, had not been without its successes. Of the four SAP objectives—stabilization of balance of payments, removal of structural bottlenecks, economic growth, and protection for vulnerable groups—three had been achieved in five countries: Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal and Zambia. Most countries had met at least one or two. But no one could pretend that results had been better than 'limited'. Only Mauritius, a relatively small island State in the Indian Ocean, had managed a four-star performance.

Real and sustainable recovery, the analysis suggested, must come out of the evolution of a new development strategy for Africa. This must be 'food-led', based on investment in smallholder agriculture and smallholder manufacturing enterprise. A redistribution of resources—land title, training, credit—towards these groups was needed; so were favourable pricing policies for their goods and an infrastructure—roads, market-places, crop storage facilities—to serve them. There must be a determined abandonment of the prestige industrial installations and luxury buildings that had been the graveyard of African hopes. As well as increased international flows, funds for the rejuvenation and expansion of educational and health care services could be generated by do-

mestic reallocations, away from defence and from capital intensive schemes, towards activities that engaged the energies and creativity of—as well as served—people.

The International Conference on Assistance to African Children (ICAAC) also adopted an avowedly upbeat tone. Taking as its theme 'Africa's Children, Africa's Future', the Conference provided an opportunity to 'refocus the development dialogue between Africa and its development partners onto children and women'. In the 'Consensus of Dakar' adopted by the Conference, the 46 African countries represented not only recommitted themselves to the World Summit for Children's 27 goals, but also agreed to certain intermediate child health and nutritional goals by the mid-decade—1995. The Conference did succeed in catalysing the process of NPA preparation in Africa. By 1993, 23 sub-Saharan countries had finalized their NPAs, a proportion higher than in any other region except Latin America⁸⁵.

Worldwide, by this time 105 countries had either finalized or drafted their NPAs, covering a total of 88 per cent of the world's children⁸⁶. In many, the preparation of these NPAs had been an opportunity to bring together many different sectors of society—government and non-governmental, religious and secular, public and private, national, subnational and local—in a joint endeavour to plan and programme on behalf of children. In some large federal countries—Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines, Egypt and India, for example—this process was also being undertaken at state, and sometimes at municipal, level.

In September 1993, on the third anniversary of the Children's Summit, a round-table meeting entitled 'Keeping the Promise to Children' was held in New York⁸⁷. Heads of State or Government, Ministers, and representatives of 77 countries and many UN agencies met to reiterate their commitment to reduce child mortality by one third, malnutrition by one half, and to extend schooling to 80 per cent of children before the end of the century. They also undertook to speed up action on behalf of children by adopting a set of 10 'mid-decade goals', selected because they were thought to be achievable by 1995, or because they provided stepping-stones in terms of increased service coverage towards the goals for the year 2000.

Apart from universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, these 'mid-decade goals' were all related to the control of specific diseases and nutritional deficiencies: increased immunization coverage and use of ORT; elimination of neonatal tetanus, polio, and vitamin A deficiency; eradication of guinea worm disease; reduction of measles; universal iodization of salt; and promotion of 'baby-friendly' maternity facilities. The funding strategy outlined for the attainment of these goals was described as the '20/20

vision': a call for developing countries to allocate at least 20 per cent of their public expenditures to basic social sectors: primary education, primary health care, family planning, nutrition, water and sanitation; and for industrialized countries to earmark 20 per cent of their development assistance for the same purpose. The 20/20 idea—which was essentially the brainchild of Jim Grant, Richard Jolly and Mahbub ul Haq—was supported in a number of regional meetings over the next two years.

Three years after the World Summit for Children, the momentum it had generated was still continuing to build. And this had occurred in spite of the negative global climate and the insecurities of the 'new world disorder' that was now presenting such a contrast to the old certainties of East and West, North and South. The subsequent international summit agenda for the 1990s had already been distractingly crowded: environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and human rights (Vienna, 1993) had already occurred; population (Cairo, 1994), social development (Copenhagen, 1995), women (Beijing, 1995) and cities (Istanbul, 1996) were still upcoming. But in an important way the Children's Summit process differed from these much larger talking and negotiation shops.

In their cases, the UN system provided the opportunity and the organizational context in which international norms of principle and policy behaviour could be established, but its job then virtually ceased. Few UN organizations had an established capacity at country and sub-country level that enabled them to enjoy an instrumental role in ensuring that rhetorical pledges were translated into action. This was the task of sovereign governments, according to all internationalist principles. But however sincerely made on the rostrum at Rio or Vienna, Cairo or Copenhagen, promises were easily forgotten once the delegates went home. Some governments might not have the capacity or the will to pursue new commitments with urgency unless pushed into doing so by activist campaigns of 'organized shame'. Their promises might well not be revisited until whatever UN Commission entrusted by the Conference to pursue its follow-up agenda convened yet another international meeting.

The case of the World Summit for Children was unusual in that a UN organization—Unicef—with a strong field presence in almost every developing country, and a National Committee in many industrialized ones, existed to take the post-Summit agenda forward. Under Jim Grant's leadership, this network had developed a considerable capacity for mobilizing a wide range of partners within the countries concerned and a credibility at high levels of government. In the wake of the Summit, Unicef representatives were able to chase—politely, tactfully, expertly—senior government figures and provide

technical and financial assistance to enable national programmes of action to come into being. Never before had a national-level process stemming directly from an international meeting been facilitated to this extent by the local offshoots of a UN member organization. This was mainly because no other UN organization (with the exception of UNDP in the developing world) had the breadth and range of presence and governmental access; it was also because no other UN organizational head had conceived the idea or the strategy to promote his or her organizational mission in such a far-sighted and comprehensive way. Unicef's country-by-country support for the elaboration and implementation of NPAs not only helped accelerate action on behalf of children but offered a model of how an international body in the UN system could promote real grass-roots progress as an outcome of commitments achieved at the international level.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, at a time of international change more significant in historical terms than any period since the end of empire, Unicef had managed to establish the principle that how children's well-being was affected by macro-events was an important part of their observation and interpretation. The Summit had been the imprimatur, and its follow-up the reinforcement, of this idea. Within restructuring, adjustment and debt relief; within sustainable development and democratic reform; within the maelstrom of movements and 'isms' converging on the international agenda, Unicef had persistently asked: 'And what about children?' The task of examining their condition, it insisted, had to be undertaken in a scientific, not a sentimental, kind of way, and it helped to develop techniques for so doing.

The condition of children and their families had always been accepted as a barometer of change; now it was beginning to be seen as a determinant of policy, not a residual effect to be examined when the main task of adjustment, or political and legal reform, had been accomplished.

The elaboration during 1993 of the 10 mid-decade goals was a tactical manoeuvre to sustain the energy of the post-Summit process. Opening the Keeping the Promise round-table, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali declared: 'Of all the subjects of development, none has the acceptance, or the power to mobilize, as does the cause of children.' But children had not done it on their own. Many organizations, but especially Unicef, had been their instrument. Their well-being had become identified with a particular vision of sustainable, human-centred development. That vision was helping to keep the cause of development alive. In the name of children and under their cover, Unicef was playing its special part in keeping aloft a somewhat tattered development banner.

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