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Statement by H.E. Major-General Joseph N. Garba, CFR, fss, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at the Special Session of the UNICEF Executive Board on the World Summit for Children (1989: 18 December)

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THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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STATEMENT BY

H.E. MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH N. GARBA, CFR, fss
President of the General Assembly of the United Nations

At The

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD
ON THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

New York, December 18, 1989

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to congratulate the six initiators (Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden) for proposing that a world Summit for Children be convened at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 1990. This is an optimal time for such a meeting which will enhance commitment, at the highest political level, for child survival, protection and development, nationally and internationally.

My own country, Nigeria, was among the first to endorse the concept of a World Summit for Children. I have since noted with pleasure how the suggestion of such a Summit for Children gained momentum. Many world leaders have spoken in its favour and collective endorsements have been made by the Heads of State or Government participating in the Francophone Summit in May 1989 in Dakar, Senegal, the OAU Summit of July 1989, the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in September and the Commonwealth Summit in October. I also understand that the majority of the membership of the UNICEF Executive Board expressed support and encouragement during the 1989 session in April.

For Africans and for other Third World nations, the Summit presents an unprecedented opportunity to mobilize all sectors of society for the improved survival, protection and development of children. We are encouraged by the commitments of these countries to organize, in the months leading to the Summit, activities to mobilize traditional allies, reach out to new ones, as well as enlist more sustained involvement in the implementation of programmes for the well-being of children.

I am very appreciative that initiators have chosen to associate this independent meeting so closely with the United Nations, so that the international system can be strengthened. Not only will the Summit attract a much greater number of Heads of State or Government to participate in the General Assembly than usual, but the two sessions are surely complementary to each other. This, of course, will make for a very fitting and productive working celebration of the 45th anniversary of the United Nations.

Finally, I intend to express to my successor, as President of the General Assembly, my belief that all necessary steps ~~should~~^{must} be taken to ensure that the Summit takes place in optimal conditions next September. I do not foresee any problems in coordinating the work of the Summit and the General Assembly at that time - on the contrary, they should reinforce each other, with some of the leaders attending the Summit also participating in the General Assembly.

I thank you.