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Remarks by Mr. James P. Grant  
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
at the  
Opening of the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual United Nations Art Exhibition

New York  
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Mr. James P. Grant's Remarks at the Opening of the 35th Annual  
United Nations Art Exhibition, 5 May 1986

It is a great pleasure to be here with you this afternoon to open the 35th Annual Art Exhibition sponsored by the United Nations Art Club.

It is wonderful to know that many colleagues from the United Nations community are not only contributing to global understanding and development through their dedicated service to this great organization, but are also enriching us culturally and esthetically by dedicating themselves to the arts.

It is even more wonderful to know that by participating in the Annual UN Art Exhibition, these colleagues may be saving the life of a child or preventing a child from losing his eye sight.

This year, proceeds from the United Nations Art Exhibition will go to UNICEF projects to prevent blindness in young children. Each year, approximately 250,000 children lose their eye sight from xerophthalmia, a disease brought on by severe deficiency of Vitamin A. At a cost of less than 20 cents per year, a child can be provided with enough Vitamin A supplement to prevent blindness. Recent studies have shown that by ensuring sufficient Vitamin A intake, we can significantly increase a child's resistance against other life-threatening infections and thus help children survive. Vitamin A provision thus becomes important element in the child survival and development revolution.

UNICEF is assisting blindness prevention and nutrition programmes through Vitamin A distribution in many countries, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and elsewhere. Vitamin A provision has been an important component of our relief and development efforts in Africa, where Vitamin A deficiency has been especially serious among the population affected by the famine. In addition to providing capsules, UNICEF assists many communities around the world to increase their local production of foods rich in Vitamin A, such as dark green leafy vegetables.

In co-operation with WHO, UNICEF assists countries to prevent and cure trachoma, the other major disease leading to blindness, which is caused by unsanitary conditions. UNICEF contributes to the reduction of trachoma through our water and sanitation projects which provide communities with clean water supply and sanitary facilities and training. Our programmes to provide health clinics with basic drugs assist communities to treat trachoma by supplying the simple antibiotics needed for such treatment.

I would like to thank the artists and the volunteers who made this exhibit possible for your generous offering of time, energy, talent and creativity. You can be very proud to be part of a large and growing movement of people who are working for the well-being of children and saving children's lives.

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They include not only teachers, nurses, pediatricians, midwives and mothers, but also many artists like yourselves, performing school children, movie stars, runners, soccer and tennis players, even soldiers and policemen.

I wish to express my gratitude to the UN Art Club for its continued annual support for UNICEF. May this beautiful staff tradition continue successfully at the United Nations for many years to come.

Thank You.

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