

File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1986-0042

Statement by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
upon the launching of the
First Earth Run

United Nations – New York
16 September 1986



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Item # **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1998-01975**

ExR/Code: **CF/EXD/SP/1986-0042**

Launching of the First Earth Run. Statement by James Grant
Date Label Printed 17-Jan-2002

cover + 2pp + 86

Statement by Mr. James P. Grant

Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

upon the launching of the

FIRST EARTH RUN

United Nations - New York

16 September 1986

Today, a great journey begins. A journey of hope; a journey of commitment; a journey of action. A journey around the world, linking neighbor with neighbor, and nation with nation.

Today a torch leaves this center of the world's hopes for a different future for its children. That torch, carried along its journey by citizens of each country, carries itself their message: "Give the world a chance. Children need peace".

For UNICEF, this great journey offers the possibility of involving tens of millions of people in the Child Survival and Development Revolution - the very real capacity of the world to, in just a few short years and at very low cost, reduce by half the current daily toll of 40,000 needless child deaths - the only war we want.

For the leaders of the world's nations, the First Earth Run offers the opportunity to visibly reaffirm their commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the welfare of children. Indeed, just as the torch will draw its flame from the traditions of an ancient culture - the Native American Indians who created the flame this morning, the Earth Run evokes another Indian tradition - that of tribal leaders passing the peace pipe around their circle, affirming their own pledge to peace.

And for the people of the world, the First Earth Run offers an opportunity to collectively express their most fervent prayer - indeed, their demand - for a more peaceful, healthier world for their children. And it is in that expression that we invest our trust ... for in the long record of history, virtually every great change in the world's course - every great force for good - has originated among common citizens who said: "This is what we want; this is what we expect of our leaders".

14726

Cover + 2pp + 8b /...

1946-1986

The abolition of slavery; the rights of suffrage; the prohibition of child labour; the end of colonialism; the environmental movement; the unacceptability of mass starvation...in Biafra, in Kampuchea, throughout Africa; and many other changes - each traces its origin to individual citizens who said: "Enough!"

It is to the world's citizens of today that we appeal: Is it not time to say "enough" of constant hostilities? Is it not time to say "enough" of cataclysmic danger to the survival of the planet? And is it not time to say "enough" of needless child deaths which could be readily prevented?

Is it not time to say "We want a different world for our children"?

This torch, I believe, will carry that message. From community to community; from capital to capital; from country to country. From people, to people, to people. "Our children need peace."