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Statement by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
at the
Closing of the General Debate of the 1988 Executive Board

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Statement by Mr. James P. Grant

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

at the close of the General Debate of the 1988 Executive Board

Madam Chairman,

You can understand, I'm sure, that in these past two days there have been moments, as I know there will be again, that my mind has drifted from listening to the speaker to gazing off to the back of the room, to that seat that is no longer occupied. Indeed, some would say that Ethel was always the most attentive observer of Board proceedings ... listening to every word ... sometimes nodding in gentle agreement ... sometimes shaking her head in frustration. I think that this year, her head would have shaken often in frustration ... insisting that she should not be the object of so much attention, as delegate after delegate spoke of her so warmly, affectionately, and respectfully. But she would also have nodded in almost constant agreement with the substantive content of this General Debate, comfortably approving of the breadth, depth and fullness of agreement which has characterized these two days of interventions dominated by the spirit in the words of the distinguished delegate from Algeria a few minutes ago of "offering children the best which mankind has to give".

On Ethel's behalf, and for myself and my family, I express deepest appreciation to the members of the Board for your kind and comforting expressions. And on behalf of my colleagues of the Secretariat, I express deepest appreciation for your warm words of respect and encouragement.

I am particularly pleased, of course, that so many delegations found my opening statement on Monday to be so useful - in providing answers to certain questions, in providing explanation of broader themes, and in setting a tone demonstrative of the Secretariat's absolute interest in working collaboratively and collegially with members of the Board.

Let me now, Madam Chairman, review the further issues and questions which members of the Board raised in the General Debate. But I should say at the outset that, while some of our responses - both in my statement now and during the course of the Board's debate in committee and plenary - may necessarily be somewhat superficial given the limited time available, I would like to assure the Board that every point you have raised, and will raise in the days ahead, is registering. I intend to ensure that all topics are reviewed in our staff meetings following the Board session, and in our regular Secretariat processes. We are listening, and I expect us to be responsive. In the fine tradition of UNICEF, we shall all continue to work together as colleagues to arrive at the best conclusions, the best strategies, and the best policies for the service of children.

Board documentation

I regret very much that, as mentioned by the delegations of Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands, several important documents for this year's Board session were distributed only very recently. This has been partly due to circumstances beyond UNICEF's control, such as the timing of the expanded audit and the subsequent late closing of the 1987 accounts, as well as late-moment requests for financial information. Some of the delays are attributable to our desire not to postpone for another year discussions on important, timely subjects such as the Bamako Initiative, which were still being formulated. There have also been delays in the drafting stage, simply as a result of the heavy workload of several of the offices involved. I pledge that we shall make every effort to avoid these delays next year.

It should also be mentioned that we have achieved a substantial reduction in the volume of documentation in the past several years. However, the benefit of the reduction in the number of pages per document is offset by the growing tendency toward additional documents. I share the concerns in this regard expressed by the delegate of Austria, and would like to propose that we institute, during this Board session, a three-year rolling plan for major policy documents. Perhaps also a number of reports required annually at the moment could be provided only every other year.

Programme matters

Positive achievements

Listening to the statements made by the distinguished delegates of Algeria, Benin, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, League of Arab States, Lesotho, Mexico, Oman, Thailand, Turkey, and others, who reported on their countries' achievements in UCI, I was reminded of the same great sense of

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achievement that I felt at Talloires during the Bellagio III meeting, as Ministers and Secretaries of Health of so many developing countries described how they were succeeding in their efforts to achieve universal child immunisation against great odds. Many developing countries are showing to the world what can be achieved with strong political will and commitment, and with social mobilisation of all forces in the society. And they are demonstrating to donors, whose vision has encouraged them to support CSDR interventions so generously, that their resources are wisely invested. In many countries - including Algeria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, India, Indonesia, Oman, Senegal, Turkey and others - these efforts have already clearly contributed to the strengthening of primary health care systems and broadening of support for other elements of health care.

Many delegations including Australia, Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Norway, Turkey and USSR, have underlined the importance of sustainability of these achievements. I would like to assure the Board that concern for sustainability is fundamental to our programme planning and evaluation of UCI programmes - and comments on actual experience to date by several developing country delegations, beginning with Turkey and concluding late yesterday and this morning with those by Colombia and Algeria, respectively, should prove reassuring to all of us.

I would also mention in this connection the Bamako Initiative, which logically will strengthen UCI in Africa, with its tragic economic circumstances, by providing support for its sustainability through reviving, revitalising and extending the MCH/PHC structures, while at the same time creating a continuing demand for services and a means of providing them, including the necessary vaccines, ORS packets and other essential drugs. It is interesting to note from the statements of the distinguished delegates of Benin, Lesotho and Mali, that in different ways elements of the Bamako Initiative are already being implemented in their countries, among others such as Tanzania and Kenya. Members of the Board will have further opportunities in the Programme Committee to discuss this important initiative of the African Health Ministers, and to address the concerns raised by Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Switzerland. But I do think that the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Halfdan Mahler, in calling for enthusiastic support for the Bamako Initiative, truly captured its spirit by his summons to restore faith in development through "moral re-hydration" and fostering self-reliance through increased resource mobilization at the local level.

The distinguished delegates of Finland and the USA have mentioned the timeliness of "Facts for Life" which is being developed in collaboration with WHO, as a means of empowering parents and people in all walks of life with knowledge which is essential for survival and leading a healthy life. We are encouraged by this support. I believe this publication is a venture with great potential. We will be experimenting as we proceed to identify and develop the best means for promoting and disseminating these ideas.

Economic crisis & Adjustment with a Human Face

Madame Chairperson, the distinguished delegate of Denmark has rightly pointed out that we continue to live in difficult times, as the economic crisis continues. The deteriorating severity of the crisis in Africa has been underlined by many delegations. Belgium, Benin, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lesotho, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K., Uruguay and others have urged us to continue UNICEF's work for Adjustment with a Human Face. As stated by the distinguished delegate of the Philippines, the concept is now generally accepted, and the challenge is how to ensure its operationalisation. In this context, may I state that UNICEF is now actively pursuing it in a number of countries, often in collaboration with our sister agencies. Mexico, Indonesia and Ghana provide illustrious examples. In Mexico the reallocation of the health budget was undertaken by reducing the administrative budget by 30 per cent and the cessation of building any new hospitals, but retaining the level of support for preventive and other low-cost measures like EPI, ORT, etc. The greatly increased Indonesian Government support to massive expansion of the "posyandus", which increased from 120,000 to nearly 200,000 in the past 18 months during a period of overall budget retrenchment, came largely from a drastic reduction in the building of new hospitals. I was grateful to the Netherlands for referring to the Ghana adjustment programme as a triumph of adjustment with a human face ideas - and certainly we treat that programme as having many lessons for adjustment programmes in other countries

Several delegations from the Americas felt that document ICEF/L.6 ("UNICEF priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean") did not fully reflect the dramatic economic deterioration which affects the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. UNICEF is well aware of this deterioration. As shown in the graph contained in my Report of the Executive Director (ICEF/1988/2 Part I, Figure 1), which I repeated in my opening statement on Monday, Latin America and the Caribbean closely follow sub-Saharan Africa in terms of dramatic economic decline in the 1980s. This decline has had a serious impact in sustaining advances in the social sectors in which many countries of Latin America had a record of good performance in the 1960s and 1970s. This is well documented in several UNICEF documents. I am happy to note that all countries of Latin America and the Caribbean find the recommendations contained in the policy paper to be an adequate, though modest, response from UNICEF, with its limited means, to this crisis. Besides this recommendation, UNICEF is responding to the crisis through country programmes, sub-regional projects such as the Andean project on poverty and basic services presented to this Executive Board, the Child Survival and Development project in Central America, and other regional and sub-regional initiatives.

The situation in Africa continues to haunt us all, as mentioned by many delegations, including Benin, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Japan, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Lesotho, Mali, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and the USA. I agree, course, that Africa will remain our priority region of concern at least for the next decade. For the immediate future, we will also need to pay special attention to southern Africa. We are convinced that the Bamako Initiative will, if fully supported by the Executive Board, make an important contribution towards solving some of

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the major health problems in Africa, at least for its most vulnerable population - children and women. Even so, Africa will never be restored to the position of growth and development it needs until it receives financial support on a far greater scale than the world community is presently providing. Perhaps the Board may wish to speak of this and its human consequences for mothers and children in a resolution addressed to the General Assembly.

I am pleased to note that many delegations, including Bangladesh, Denmark, Ethiopia, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Norway and the USA have commented positively on the document on recurrent costs which, together with the closely related Bamako Initiative, will be further discussed in the Programme Committee. The concerns raised by Belgium will, of course, also be subject to discussion at that time.

Medium-Term Plan

I was happy to note the continuing support expressed by many delegations, including France, the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Turkey and the USA for the four basic goals of the Medium-Term Plan. Several delegations, including Denmark, Hungary, Lesotho and Oman, mentioned the need for broadening the scope of CSDR programmes to include nutrition and family planning. In this regard, I think that last year's Board resolution (1987/17) defining the broad parameters of child survival, development and protection, remains fully valid. ORT/CDD will remain a priority, while other major child killers in each country context will receive increasing attention.

In this connection, may I report that we are working to develop models of highly cost-effective operations for Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), particularly in Gambia, Sri Lanka and Turkey, as well as in several other countries. The need to support education and literacy expressed by several delegations - including Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Guyana, Indonesia, Norway and USSR - is well taken, as ultimately it is education, especially female education, which will sustain all our efforts in child survival and development. Being literate may not necessarily lead to development, but development will not take place without literacy and education and empowerment of the poor majority with such knowledge as that exemplified in Facts for Life. In February, UNICEF convened an important policy consultation on Education and Literacy involving UNESCO, the World Bank and several bilateral agencies and specialists, to look ahead in the field of education and literacy for the 1990s. We hope to report to the Board further developments next year.

The subject of water and environmental sanitation was discussed by a number of delegations, including Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, India, Japan, Mali, Mexico, Netherlands, Sweden, Thailand and the USA. Many of these observations expressed concern about a perceived reduction of UNICEF input in this sector. Actually, the volume of UNICEF input has remained broadly constant, and indeed increased 10 per cent last year with increased supplementary funding. We would welcome increased support for water projects, and in particular, funding for the \$219 million in supplementary funded projects presented at this Board session. I believe, however, that the new policy review paper has clearly indicated our resolve to strengthen UNICEF involvement through the end of the 1990s.

It is noteworthy that UNICEF is still the largest contributor to small-scale drinking water projects, and its cost-effective techniques are being adopted in a major way by other larger programmes of national governments and international agencies.

Role of women

The fundamental role of women in both CSD and in the development process has been mentioned by almost all delegations. I appreciate the many expressions of confidence in UNICEF's new policy on women with respect to UNICEF programming, and for the seriousness with which we are putting it into practice. We strongly believe that without elevating the role, status and education of women, neither CSD nor any development effort will fully succeed. It is imperative, therefore, that we educate, empower, help improve the health and social status, support the productive capacity and reduce the workload of women. In this context, the suggestion made by the distinguished delegate of Finland about the importance of small-scale industry and credit is noted. This approach is, in fact, being carried out in several countries as indicated in our 1988 report on women. But we need to do more. Now that most offices are sensitized and are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of looking at the women's dimensions in all programmes, we need to take the next step - namely, to vigorously pursue the approach in all country programmes.

Looking Ahead

In looking ahead, I agree with the distinguished delegate of the USA that we need to achieve our 1990 goals and build further on the momentum and experience of the 1980s. I am struck by the suggestions made by the distinguished delegates of Finland and the USA on developing our future roles. I would like to call them two strengths and three methods as the Chinese would call them. Finland suggested that UNICEF build upon its two strengths: advocacy and field structure. The United States urged us to follow three methods: "to continue active participation in regional, subregional and thematic fora; pursue more actively collaborative initiatives within the UN family; and more and stronger partnerships with NGOs". These are all valuable suggestions indeed.

Strategy for the 1990s

A number of delegations and observers, including Guyana, Indonesia, the Nordic countries, Switzerland and the USA, have offered very helpful suggestions regarding both the process and the substance of strategies and goal-setting in UNICEF for the 1990s. Switzerland has specifically urged UNICEF to participate actively in helping to design a strategy for the coming decade to deal broadly with the basic needs of children, the most serious risks children will be facing during the coming years, and feasible ways to address these risks within the constraints of available resources.

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We indeed need to turn the 1990s into a "decade for the child" and to develop a strategy for children encompassing child survival, protection and development. Switzerland surely captured a truth in declaring that "most of the suffering of the children of today is not an inevitable fate; it is caused by mankind". It is our duty to make every effort to ensure that this unnecessary suffering - be it loud emergency or silent emergency - be minimised. In this light, I think that the distinguished delegate of Switzerland has made a useful proposal in suggesting that the Secretariat prepare a paper for the 1989 Board on a strategy for children in the 1990s. In fact, it would be a timely input to the UN General Assembly in developing goals and strategy for the Fourth Development Decade. And perhaps the Board ought to declare the final decade of this century as a "Decade for Children".

The distinguished delegates of Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Norway and Pakistan mentioned programme balance. The difficult questions of balance, choices among competing priorities, judgements about the sequencing of new developmental initiatives, and financial support from donors are matters of national choice and often sensitive topics. We expect to continue to take full advantage of UNICEF's country programming approach and our decentralized organizational structure to enable a constructive and sensitive interaction between the broad policy guidelines adopted by UNICEF's Executive Board and the planning targets and development strategies worked out on a country-by-country basis through the country programming approach, always, of course, respecting and supporting each government's own national planning and priorities.

Environmental concerns

Links between environmental concerns and other areas of UNICEF's work, especially water and sanitation and women's roles in development, have been noted by a number of delegations. Several delegations, including Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands and Norway, have requested UNICEF to play an active role during the coming years in meeting the multiple challenges of achieving sustainable development, as recommended by the Brundtland Report. I think the highest return is likely to be made from education which inculcates in young people values which treasure and protect the environment. The opinion expressed by one delegation, that environment should not be a major concern of UNICEF, is also noted, though I would say that UNICEF must be concerned about "sustainable development" and must take into account the environmental consequences of the programmes it supports. Fortunately, UNICEF programmes, with their relatively low use of capital resources and high reliance on community participation, cost-effectiveness and appropriate technology, are already largely compatible with and supportive of the approaches recommended by the Brundtland Commission.

The distinguished delegate of Finland suggested that UNICEF might use its social mobilization techniques for afforestation and other environmental measures. I have frequently spoken of the social communications and mobilization techniques which have been pioneered in child survival as a model for replication in other fields of development, and surely, helping to

motivate people to conserve and replenish the environment is a prime area to benefit from this experience. In this connection, may I report that only a month ago the Director of our Programme Division joined Algeria's Minister for Forests and Environment in launching a forest for children of the world in Algeria - a conscious effort to educate and involve young people in environmental protection and enhancement.

AIDS

Several delegations, including Belgium, Benin, Canada, Congo, Finland, Norway, the UK and the USA, have stressed the need for UNICEF to contribute programme support to the fight against AIDS, particularly as it affects women and children. UNICEF is actively developing programmes in its areas of competence and within the framework of country plans developed in accordance with WHO's Global Programme on AIDS. UNICEF is, of course, working closely with WHO and UNDP to develop our involvement at the global, regional and country levels. Uganda is an excellent example, with a major UNICEF-supported village-level AIDS education programme already underway, one of the first major programmes of its kind in Africa.

Innocenti

Various delegations, including Bulgaria, Colombia, France, India, Poland, Thailand and Turkey, have referred to the UNICEF International Child Development Centre in Florence in generally supportive terms. I very much appreciate these words of encouragement and helpful advice, especially recalling the somewhat too lively debate on this subject last year. Please be assured of my personal commitment to UNICEF's achieving the important training, research and advocacy goals of this exciting new initiative in Florence, and our firm intention to avoid the pitfalls, including the challenge referred to by Belgium of preventing duplications of effort, which could keep this Centre from fulfilling its full potential. We look forward to further review of this important topic in the Programme Committee.

Children in especially difficult circumstances

The distinguished delegates of Denmark, Italy, League of Arab States, Mexico, Pakistan, Sweden, the UK and the USA, amongst others, mentioned the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances. Our commitment to the problems of street children remains strong. We share the intense concern for children caught in conflict situations as was so vividly described by the delegate of Sweden. I agree with Sweden's appeal that UNICEF should further strengthen our preparation to assist in every phase of repatriation, rehabilitation and reconstruction together with other concerned agencies. UNICEF, of course, is actively exploring how we can respond with our sister agencies to the new situation in Afghanistan, and is preparing contingency plans to help the women and children of Afghanistan, following upon the important country-wide immunization initiative which we began last year and is now beginning to reach every major area in that country..

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Evaluation

The distinguished delegate of Belgium has commented on the need to give increased attention to evaluation. I can assure the Board, as was already commended by the delegations of Australia, China, Federal Republic of Germany and the UK, and others, that the Evaluation Office has been strengthened with more staff and has in fact doubled its scope of work in both thematic evaluations and joint evaluations with donor participation. It has also increased the number of training workshops and publications.

Inter-agency collaboration

Several delegations have mentioned the importance of inter-agency cooperation. I share the sentiments expressed and I wish to assure the Board that UNICEF is working increasingly closely not only with WHO, but also with UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, and IFAD. The JCGP has provided a forum for exploring means for closer collaboration, and, in fact, UNICEF has played a major role in JCGP task forces on the subjects of women in development, adjustment and harmonization of programmes within the framework of JCGP. With other agencies, UNICEF engages in regular exchanges of experience and co-operative programmes. With UNESCO, we shall be having a regular inter-secretariat meeting in two weeks. I have already had discussions with the new Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. Federico Mayor, and we will be meeting in New York on 9 May. In all our field programmes, it is a regular practice to involve and invite other agencies in the development and review of programmes, and often in programme evaluation. I can assure the Board that this practice will continue.

External Relations matters

Funding

Words of support and encouragement are, of course, always welcome. Deeds of support - especially when expressed through increasing contributions - are what keeps UNICEF moving forward. We are grateful, as I mentioned in my opening statement, for the many increases which we are receiving this year. But I must also underline the plea made by Norway and Sweden to potential donors to come forward with larger contributions, and particularly for general resources. A number of delegations, including China, Colombia, Gabon, Turkey and Uruguay, have referred to the financial value of strong linkages with a broad spectrum of allies.

Debt relief for child survival

The delegations of Finland, India, Liberia, the Philippines, Poland, Sweden and Yugoslavia have encouraged UNICEF to explore the possibility of donation of debt-equivalency in local funding for programmes benefitting children and women through UNICEF as part of the Adjustment with a Human Face approach, an effort which we refer to in short-hand as "debt relief for child survival".

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Let me clarify the scale of what we have in mind. This concept arose as a rather modest fundraising idea - a way of encouraging contributions from a few banks to child survival and development activities. Since then, UNICEF has had, in collaboration with some National Committees, exploratory discussions with several commercial banks, a few governments, and informally with the World Bank and the IMF. It is still only an idea, built on our analysis and on parallel experience of one or two NGOs who have secured successful debt relief for the environment. IFAD has also proposed a measure of debt relief for agricultural support.

We hope that these discussions will provide the direction and support that the secretariat will need for further action, meeting the concerns raised by the delegations of Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the UK, and USSR, that UNICEF may be involving itself in an area beyond its proper role.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

A large number of delegations, including Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, German Democratic Republic, Guyana, Hungary, Japan, Lesotho, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, the U.S., Yugoslavia and the National Committees for UNICEF have noted with satisfaction the progress made towards completing the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many delegations also expressed approval of the role that UNICEF has played in facilitating this process. The National Committees for UNICEF and the NGO Committee on UNICEF have been very active in their support of the Convention and, as the Chairman of the Standing Group has noted, the best celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the IYC would be the approval of the Convention by the Assembly in 1989.

The delegations of Colombia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden have raised the question of a role for UNICEF in the implementation of the Convention. Hungary requested UNICEF to examine this in a small working group before the next session of the Executive Board. The Secretariat will consult extensively with field offices and governments on this issue. A technical group meeting later this year will examine ways in which UNICEF can respond to requests for technical assistance within the framework of country programmes, and the report will be shared with members of the Executive Board.

We have noted Pakistan's word of caution on the question of implementation and wish to assure all delegates that UNICEF and the government members of the United Nations Working Group drafting the Convention have made it clear that the reference to UNICEF in Article 24 relates to technical co-operation with states requesting assistance and to the provision of information of a generic nature on issues affecting children globally. As regards monitoring of specific implementation, UNICEF will in general look to others.

Global events

Several delegations commented on the "Guidelines for UNICEF Participation in Global Events" during the general debate. In particular, Australia, Austria, Belgium and Norway pointed out the need to ensure that the balance between public relations activities (including global events) and programme work is monitored closely to minimize disruptions to programme delivery. The United States expressed appreciation for the methodical approach to planning and implementing global events presented in this paper.

The Secretariat would like to assure the Board, and the distinguished delegates of Austria and FRG in particular, that the purpose of the Guidelines is to carefully select, plan and implement events in such a way as to allow flexibility in planning, ensure minimum disruption to programmes, be financed by commercial income and be selected in consultation with National Committees to ensure consistency with their workplans. As outlined in the document, detailed guidelines on advocacy, fund-raising and management logistics of an event would be provided to all National Committees and country offices to assist in the implementation of each specific event. The representatives of Austria and the FRG have asked for additional information on the global event which was mentioned for mid-1989, and several delegations have requested that all proposals for global events be presented to the Board for prior approval. While a specific proposal was shared with National Committees and Secretariat staff late last year, and, unfortunately, it is even mentioned in the UNICEF Annual Report 1988, we decided earlier this year not to pursue that proposal for the time being, pending the Board's discussion of the Guidelines, particularly given the ACABQ's recommendation against the establishment of a revolving fund to provide working capital for special activities.

Many delegations including Turkey, the U.S. and the National Committees for UNICEF have welcomed the appointment of new Ambassadors for UNICEF, Ms. Audrey Hepburn and Sir Richard Attenborough.

The Harare Symposium

I have noted the encouraging comments of the delegations of Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Lesotho, Mali and Sweden on the successful outcome of the Harare Symposium. This African initiative has enabled us to bring into sharper focus the terrible situation afflicting the children of Southern Africa. The next step, as defined by the participants themselves, is to translate the goodwill and momentum gathered in Dakar and Harare into concrete action plans at national levels. We are hopeful that this initiative will be supported by artists and intellectuals around the world.

National Committees

The importance of the work of the National Committees for UNICEF and their invaluable contribution to the organization was recognized by many delegations, who encouraged ever-stronger collaboration between the National Committees and the Secretariat.

The FRG delegation has asked the Secretariat to facilitate the National Committee's efforts to raise increasing funds for general resources. This goal will be discussed at the forthcoming National Committees Fundraising Workshop to be held next June.

External Relations structure

Many delegations, including Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and Yugoslavia have commented on the function and structure of External Relations. Further discussion on this issue will take place later in the Board session, and a clear picture of the Board's views will emerge at that time.

But I am glad that many delegations including the Chairman of the Standing Group of National Committees agreed on the need for UNICEF to strengthen its policy-making structures in New York Headquarters. Many including the National Committees have also emphasized the need to maintain the special position and importance of the Geneva Office. Let me assure the Board that we do not intend to reduce the capacity of Geneva nor change its role as far as servicing the European National Committees are concerned. Our intent is quite the contrary. By moving policy formulation for all National Committees to New York and by allocating responsibilities for National Committees outside Europe to other appropriate offices, we are actually seeking to sharpen the focus of the Geneva office in its task of better serving European National Committees. This will also enable us to better support new National Committees and groups in newly industrialized and developing countries.

The distinguished delegate of Turkey underlined the established authority of the Executive Director to make necessary administrative changes within the existing pyramid of posts. I appreciate the delegate's endorsement of early action by the Executive Director to restructure and strengthen the central policy role regarding National Committees. Board members can surely appreciate that continuing questions about the location and structure of any secretariat functions necessarily undermine the morale and the ability of an office to concentrate full attention on its responsibilities, as emphasized by the Chairman of the Standing Group. It is important that we move rapidly to complete the centralizing of policy-making functions which the Board called for last year.

Advocacy and the "Grand Alliance"

A number of delegations commented on UNICEF's advocacy role. While all delegations recognized the importance and value of UNICEF's advocacy work, a number of delegations suggested that more of a balance need be struck, either between themes within our advocacy work, or between the advocacy role and programme delivery. I should point out that our advocacy is in fact designed to encourage programme action by allies and partners at the local level; such action of course develops and mobilizes capacity at the country level for the benefit of children and mothers.

A number of delegations - Australia, Belgium, China, Congo, Ethiopia, Federal Republic of Germany, France, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Japan, Liberia, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the USSR - commented on the emerging "grand alliance", expressing concern and questions as well as support. As the Netherlands delegation pointed out, working with others is not a new concept - it has always been a hallmark of UNICEF's programme approach and as noted by the NGO Committee on UNICEF, joint initiatives are shown to be more prolific than generally believed. The "emerging grand alliance" is really little more than a statement of fact - that more and more forces are joining together - or working separately, but in common purpose - in active effort for the benefit of children. Our appeal for an ever greater Grand Alliance is simply encouragement of the "snow-ball effect". Of course - as the USSR delegate pointed out in his thoughtful intervention - we must be careful not to assume that words will automatically lead to action. I have carefully considered that aspect, and the delegate of Philippines noted very clearly the kind of evolution necessary for success. Several delegations objected to the way this advocacy concept was presented in our documentation to the Board itself, and we have taken that point.

We have been glad to note several positive comments on our publications - particularly The State of the World's Children, Children on the Front Line and our new initiative, the Facts for Life project.

NGOs

The United States and Australian delegations referred to proposals for meetings with NGO partners and the Executive Board. Board members are aware of the continuing evolution, and growth of the NGO Forum held in association with Executive Board sessions - as demonstrated by this year's dramatically greater success. We will continue to encourage the NGO Forum, and similar activities which facilitate NGO representatives and influential individuals to meet together, to express themselves, and to develop strategies for action in behalf of children in cooperation with UNICEF and our National Committees. We particularly share with both the NGO Committee on UNICEF and our National Committees - and, of course, with members of the Board - the desire to ever expand the circle of forces working for children, trying always to reach and involve new partners.

10th anniversary of IYC

A number of delegations, including Hungary, Indonesia, Sweden and Turkey expressed support for the Chairman's initiative regarding the forthcoming tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Child. The NGO Committee on UNICEF has likewise assured us of the full support of the NGO community if the Executive Board wishes to encourage special concern and heightened activity for children during 1989. The 10th anniversary does seem an appropriate time to encourage both reflection on the progress and difficulties of the decade past, and commitment and strategies to move forward in the decade ahead to take advantage of the major new world capacity to dramatically improve the situation of children and mothers.

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Financial and administrative matters

Income

The distinguished delegate from Japan noted that UNICEF income was in excess of \$570 million for 1987. As it was well stated by the distinguished delegate of Italy, UNICEF has indeed "grown-up". It is hard to believe that, at the Executive Board in 1979, when I was appointed Executive Director, UNICEF's total income was only \$211 million.

In my opening statement, I mentioned several countries whose levels of support have grown substantially. However, it is the support of all donors, large and small, which has made our growth possible. In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to the governments of Angola, Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Romania, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe who pledged contributions to UNICEF for 1988 after having been unable to do so last year.

I cannot mention all the other significant donors at this time. But let me just point out that there are 30 countries whose 1988 pledges exceeded their 1987 contributions by more than 10 per cent.

Our challenge for the future was voiced by the distinguished delegate of the Netherlands, who asserted that we should strive to be a flexible, operational agency able to respond to changing needs, while maintaining transparent, consistent and accountable financial management.

Expanded audit

Several delegations, including Denmark, Indonesia, Japan, Liberia, the National Committee representative and others, made note of the expanded audit of the 1986 accounts and the subsequent clean opinion of the UN Board of Auditors. We thank these delegations for their words of support and encouragement. However, as I pointed out in my opening remarks, and as noted by the delegations of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany and Norway, much still remains to be done, not only to improve our management and financial controls, but to be seen as having made major improvements in this area. We are grateful to the distinguished delegate from the United States who noted UNICEF's serious efforts over the past year in this regard. We intend to make clear that UNICEF lives by, to use the phrase offered by the distinguished delegate of Australia, a "culture of cost effectiveness".

We agree fully with the delegations of Denmark, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom that the newly promulgated financial regulations and rules will be of great value in enhancing UNICEF's future management performance.

Supplementary funding

Many delegations raised the issue of UNICEF's supplementary funding, with respect to both the size of such contributions and the need for more coherent policies and procedures.

Some delegations such as Japan, the Netherlands and Pakistan feel that supplementary funds should not become too large a percentage of total UNICEF income because this may alter the multilateral character of UNICEF. Other delegations such as Canada feel that no limitations should be established because supplementary funds allow UNICEF to receive bilateral and other funds which would not otherwise be available for UNICEF programmes, and which provide a multilateral co-ordination mechanism through which certain core programme goals can be achieved. Our programme needs are increasing; consequently, the need for resources is also increasing. There is no doubt that supplementary funded projects have become an important element in UNICEF's overall programme delivery. However, excluding emergencies, supplementary funded expenditures in 1987 increased only to 35 per cent of total expenditures.

UNICEF's preference is definitely for increased general resources, but our ability to encourage donors to significantly increase their general resources contributions is limited. If, ultimately, the choice is between receiving additional resources as Supplementary Funds, or not receiving significant additional resources at all, I trust that the Executive Board would agree that UNICEF has an obligation to receive and use all funds donated in the best way possible.

With regard to the need for clear Supplementary Funding guidelines, as requested by the delegations of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, and others, I would like to emphasize that the Secretariat is in full agreement with these views. Delegates will recall that the Executive Board has considered papers on various aspects of supplementary funding in 1983, 1985, 1986 and, now, 1988. As we informed the ACABQ, it is our intention, following the decisions taken by this year's Executive Board, to consolidate all relevant existing procedures into one comprehensive document. We look forward to having the Board's position on the remaining issues clearly settled during the deliberations of the Committee on Finance and Administration.

With respect to the issue of the temporary use of general resources to begin implementation of a supplementary funded project based on a firm pledge by a donor, the delegations of Austria, China, Columbia, Indonesia and United Kingdom voiced support for this procedure while others felt that UNICEF should not establish such a procedure. As noted previously, I look forward to resolution of this issue in the Committee on Administration and Finance.

Procurement policies

The distinguished delegate from Bulgaria raised the issue of how UNICEF undertakes to procure vaccines worldwide. UNICEF, in close co-operation with WHO, is actively pursuing all possibilities to purchase vaccines from new sources. We are aware that the World Health Organization is discussing, with various National Institutes the modalities necessary to include new sources of vaccine in the Expanded Programme of Immunization.

Convertible currencies

We have noted the concern expressed by the distinguished delegate of Poland and others with respect to a build-up of UNICEF's holdings in some countries with non-convertible currencies. We share the expectation, as indicated by the distinguished delegate of Czechoslovakia, that the income anticipated to be raised in these countries during 1988 will be spent during this year. Both our offices in New York and Copenhagen are vigorously pursuing a variety of initiatives to spend the accumulated amounts of these currencies which are presently at a higher level than we would like. However, despite these vigorous efforts, we do not anticipate that this problem will be entirely resolved during 1988.

Role of the Executive Board

The delegations from Belgium and the Netherlands, while discussing various issues of relevance to UNICEF budgetary matters, have touched on the issue of the role of the Executive Board in financial and management issues.

This is, obviously, a sensitive issue on which I would welcome further clarification. I fully agree with the distinguished delegate of Belgium that the Executive Board is the final arbitrator in management policies. Issues will sometimes arise which require the Board to make the ultimate determination of UNICEF policy, considering UNICEF's own experience and practice as well as the advice of such external counsels as the ACABQ or the Board of Auditors within their areas of competence.

There is similarly no question that it is the Board's responsibility and authority to establish policy for new areas of activity as well as to set budgetary parameters. But, as noted by the distinguished delegate of Indonesia, Poland and others, the Executive Director should be entrusted with the micro-management of the organization, allowing the Board time to concentrate on policy and direction.

Other budgetary issues

In my statement at the close of the General Debate of the 1987 Executive Board, I noted that the Australian delegation supported our ambitions to achieve a target of 10 per cent of administrative costs to total expenditures. Today, I am happy to acknowledge that the United Kingdom commended UNICEF in reducing its administrative costs to 9.5 per cent and has expressed the view that "UNICEF must be well run". Thus, the decisions taken by the Executive Board on the 1986-1987 budget have yielded the intended results. I am also pleased to announce that the expenditures for 1986-1987, even after taking into account the adjustments made by the expanded audit, are within the appropriation levels and that all budget transfers have been made within the authority granted to me by the Executive Board.

Since biennium budget proposals are not on the agenda for this year, we do not have pressing budgetary issues to address in the Committee on Administration and Finance. A number of delegations have, however, identified concerns that may have implications in the very near future; these will be taken into account as the Secretariat begins our process of reviewing proposals for the 1988-1989 revised and 1990-1991 proposed budget.

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Madam Chairman, I hope that my quick comments on these many topics have satisfactorily answered questions, assured Board members on their concerns, or, at least, indicated that we will explain and discuss the issues in much greater detail in the committee meetings ahead.

I hope, especially, that these remarks have continued the dialogue in which Board members and we of the Secretariat have engaged and so well profited from, and that that dialogue will continue as well in the days, and in the months and years, ahead.

I particularly have appreciated the greater discussion on broad policy issues in the general debate, and the growing understanding of how UNICEF, with its handful of people with a handful of money, can make a much greater contribution to the well-being of children and mothers through increased working together with others than might be expected from the still modest level of UNICEF's financial resources - which, after all, are only 1 per cent of ODA financial flows and the equivalent of the cost of just 10 advanced fighter aircraft.

In conclusion, I have felt strongly in this General Debate the spirit exemplified in the statement of a distinguished delegate this morning, when he said, "We do not say to the Executive Director, 'Go with your God and fight, while we sit tight', but we say 'Go with your God and fight, and we will fight with you'".

Madam Chairman and distinguished delegates, I, and my colleagues in the Secretariat, look forward to the discussions in the days ahead. Thank you.