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DRAFT Speaking Points for an Address by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
to the
Harvard Institute for International Development
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Thirtieth Anniversary of the Edward S. Mason Program

"Putting Crises to Work People"

Cambridge, Massachusetts
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"Putting Crises to Work for People"

- I) Hard choices - Two areas of action have emerged in late 1980s as principal challenges before us.

As preface, 3 historic factors contribute to possibility of these challenges:

- 1) Progress of past 45 years not only stalled, but retrogressed, esp. in LA and Africa and among most vulnerable, including children and women.
- 2) New morality has evolved since WWII which fosters more holistic, sustainable approach to development.
Toynbee: "Our age is the first generation since the dawn of history in which in which mankind dared to believe it practical to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race."
 - morality must march with capacity
 - 40,000 unavoidable child deaths would be tragic; 40,000 preventable child deaths not only tragic but obscene.
- 3) Few of hard choices that have led to major advances in past century have been made without tragic crisis providing the tremendous energy required to overcome inertia of prevailing policies.
 - WWII -- UN and Bretton Woods
 - WWII -- end of colonialism
 - WWII and cold war -- Marshall Plan
 - Depression -- New Deal (but contributed to WWII)
 - Cold War -- economic assistance by both blocks (but contributes to arms race and externally supported regional conflicts)

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Challenge today is to determine:

(a) are present multiple crises sufficiently severe to stimulate a major new opportunity for creative approaches - can we make the hard choices to exploit new development opportunities without getting to point of catastrophic suffering?

(b) if so, can we present creative, do-able plans of action to take advantage of the new will to support opportunities for progress in overcoming poverty?

II) Darkness before the dawn - Have we reached point at which we have tolerated all that we will?

K.B. Lall - the wisdom of our ancient seers tells us that when the night is at its darkest the dawn is but moments away. "Is this so? or am I dreaming? Do you not detect some glimmer of dawn on the horizon?"

Evidence of darkness:

- Third World financial crisis. LA per capita down; Africa more so. Impact heaviest on poorest countries; within them, disproportionate suffering borne by most vulnerable.
- Nyerere - "Must we starve our children to pay our debts?" Actual practice has all too often answered with a "yes" and millions have died as a consequence. Response too little too late. At SID Stephen Lewis discussed prospects for Africa for 5 billion, yet even that too small for comprehensive minimum improvements.

Mike Faber, IDS Sussex, made case 1982-87 IMF strategy has failed - or succeeded in containing 3W external debt at cost of human suffering. Cost is appalling and cannot be sustained without catastrophic consequences.

Living standards down 15% LA; 25% SS Africa. Debt ratios in both worse in 1986 than 1982.

Sisyphus (Mike Faber) "The Third World debtor is the Sisyphus of the modern age - but with this difference from the tragic hero of antiquity: every time this Sisyphus' rock rolls down to the bottom of the mountain, he finds that it has become heavier, and each time that Sisyphus looks up at the top, behold, the mountain has become higher!"

- Front Line states confront apartheid - 140,000 children died Angola/Mozambique 1986.
- Arms expenditures still rising - now more than \$1 trillion.
- Environmental degradation - Brundtland report.
- AIDS - threat in itself; threat to existing programmes as funds diverted.

III Crises in North; solutions in South - Two areas of deterioration deserve more attention because of their potential to release creative pressure to overcome inertia of past policies. These two hold greater positive potential than other crises because they directly and significantly affect the well-being of North.

- 1) Emerging economic crisis of Western industrialized world.
 - US must reduce balance of payments deficit by \$100+ billion.
 - Japan and FRG must restructure economies to reduce surpluses.

US as "engine of growth" no longer sustainable - doubled national debt and shifted from largest creditor to largest debtor nation.

Two alternatives:

- US and partners foster changes in currency values and recession, causing massive suffering.
- Restructure in context of growth - global growth. Prospect formerly considered with restriction to Japan, Western Europe and US. Frankly it probably will not work within that limited framework. Structural response too slow.

Restructuring through growth could work if Third World is involved in major way. ODC AGENDA:88 found that for the economic well-being of the US and North, it is imperative to restore economic progress in South.

Dependence of North on South is new factor in calculations re: global interdependence (S dependence on N long acknowledged)

- 2) USSR and socialist countries of industrialized East (North-East) faced with necessity of massive change. ie: Gorbachev's initiatives. Consequences detectable:
 - arms race
 - areas of regional conflict
 - prospects for increased Soviet participation in UN (debts paid)
 - prospects for Soviet participation in Bretton Woods institutions

IV Prioritising what is do-able - Second aspect of challenge before us: Can we present creative, do-able plans to restore development momentum in social sectors?

"Silver lining" of economic crises is increased political will. Known for years that low income countries can overcome worst aspects of poverty if they have enough political will. Demonstrated 1950s and 1960s in China, Korea, Taiwan, Sri Lanka and Kerala, plus Cuba and Costa Rica.

- 1) Adjustment with a human face. Developing countries must modify structure to meet human needs while adapting to new circumstances - must protect human resource side while developing direct productive side.
- 2) Redoubled commitment to and acceleration of social sector programmes that work. Adapt successes of CSDR to new areas of health and social development. Child health sector = clearest vision of what needs to be done and can be done.
 - A) Talloires - Conclusion that it is do-able - by 2000 - to reduce 1980 child death rate by more than half, saving from death or disability in this process well over 100 million children over the period, while slowing population growth as well.

Major achievements already. "Twin engines" of UCI and ORT alone saved 2 million child lives in 1987.

- B) Bamako Initiative launched September 1987 by Health Ministers of Africa now approved by UNICEF Executive Board, WHA and OAU. Mainspring is new way of funding PHC and MCH in Africa through such income generating aspects of health care as specially managed essential drugs. External assistance required until revolving fund self-contained - could reach \$100 million annually by early 1990s, and will leverage increased African domestic private support several times larger than that which would otherwise be available.

Against child health breakthrough, Moscow Summit joint communique:
"Both leaders reaffirmed their support for the WHO/UNICEF goal of reducing the scale of preventable childhood deaths through the most effective methods of saving children. They urged other countries and the international community to intensify efforts to achieve this goal."

- C) We must apply lessons of CSDR to other fields essential for meeting basic needs of poor: to low-income food producers - esp. women; to meeting literacy and education needs. Democracy as a major supportive means to secure redistribution for the poor if we can come up with workable proposals, such as CSDR, which empower families without requiring massive increases in governmental spending.
- D) Convention on the Rights of the Child - prospects are good for 1989 adoption - IYC+10.

New effort emerging - worldwide and at all levels - intl to village - for seriously addressing one aspect of human society portfolio - children and mothers. Long-overdue shift in priorities toward children and mothers is clearly beginning - in industrialized and 3W countries, because of a synergistic combination of crises and creative responses.

- V Planning to meet the challenge - In prioritising, it is time to think of Global Summit for Children - children as trojan horse for securing how to address worst effects of absolute poverty.

Today's children; tomorrow's future.