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Speaking Points for Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
for opening remarks at
"Children and Development in the 1990s:
Programme Goals and Operational Strategies for UNICEF"

Mohonk, New York
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Welcome

Background

Mohonk '89: perhaps the best prepared "Mohonk" yet

Congratulations to the planning unit and to the whole system. We rushed, earlier in this decade, to get the system going for UCI and for the CSDR. We have learned from that experience, and Mohonk preparations for programme goals and operational strategies for the 1990s show we now know a great deal about how to mobilize ourselves.

-- Extensive regional and country level consultations

(see Gautam's "Highlights of Regional Consultations")

The fact that the Regional Directors and Representatives have taken the time to critically analyze the goals and strategies which were proposed to the Board this year, produces a unique resource for UNICEF. Very valuable feedback, indeed, has been received from these consultations - which is especially useful because of the participatory process that produced it.

Consultations were held in all UNICEF regions on the proposed goals and strategies - beginning with Cocoyoc in September 1988 which endorsed Talloires Declaration, with some tailoring and modifications. In true UNICEF tradition, each regional meeting was unique and distinct from others.

Excellent reports were produced from each region, highlighting regional perspectives and priorities. Many regional consultations had the benefit of advice from highly respected and prominent persons from outside UNICEF.

cover + 7 pp + 06

-- Good background documents

(More than 30 documents: background, reports of regional consultations, sectoral papers, thematic papers) provide a very advanced point of departure for our discussions here. From this common ground let us all open our minds and think together.

-- Timely: due Summit, DD4, UCI-1990, Convention

The fates are with us in the timing of this retreat. Major developments underway right now could turn the tide of history for children if we prepare now to take full advantage of them in the months and years ahead.

DD4: This meeting comes, of course, as the whole UN system is planning its development strategies for the next decade. The goals and strategies that we brought to the Board this year in the "Strategies paper", also among the documents here, has formed the core of UNICEF's contribution to the DD4. Our process of formulating goals and strategies, which involves considerably more consultation, especially at country-level, than is common in the multilateral system, is considered exemplary. This meeting and its preparation are themselves part of UNICEF's vanguard participation in the broader development of intl development goals for the next decade. I must say the planning unit, programme division, and all in the system who have contributed, are to be commended for making this process a reality.

Talloires provided the starting point for us to talk seriously about the goals we are discussing here. And what these goals refer to, really, is doing the do-able.

Summit: These goals will truly become do-able, however, only with a successful Summit. Without it we would make progress, but we would fall seriously short.

Just as we're gathering here at Mohonk to crystallize strategy for children for next decade, prospect of the Summit brings once in a lifetime opportunity to give quantum boost to any aspect of our issue (children) that we are sufficiently resourceful to capitalize on. Almost every one of our country Representatives contacted in a first informal partial survey by Manou Assadi said they see the Summit as a golden opportunity; something that happens in anyone's career only once. It holds the potential to vastly enhance support for virtually all of our programme activities, as well as issues on which we wish to advocate a position rather than become directly involved ourselves. How we coordinate our mutual support in-house among country, regional and headquarters levels to capitalize on this event will be crucial to UNICEF programme activities well into, and even beyond, the next decade.

UCI-1990: Success in this relatively straightforward goal will give credibility for the more complex goals we choose to prioritize for the next decade. Crucial that we achieve this goal in the next year, in order to open new doors throughout 1990s. Mohonk offers chance to rally forces for this essential feat.

Convention: We should plan here at Mohonk how best to capitalize on the powerful new tool that the adoption, ratification and attention to implementation of the Convention will offer for the future, and beginning, really, right away. We all need to study the Convention to discover how its provisions bolster our various activities for children, and we should be prepared to use it - and to use specific references from it - to remind governments, media, etc., what they have committed their countries to do.

The big picture

-- East-West Thaw, changes in Eastern Europe

Along with Perestroika, Soviets have been expressing extensive shift in thinking. More than a year ago Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovsky spoke of:

- more interest in humanity as a whole than in only the class struggle;
- USSR must develop within, an international economy, and must participate in the international division of labour far more effectively than it has in the past, if it is to utilize its own economic opportunities;
- Security: in the past, too much emphasis on seeking security through military means. New realization that true security must encompass environmental, economic, and other aspects.
- He emphasized the serious global problems of ecology and world cooperation in building peace through collaboration on common problems.

-- New potential for the UN and expectations from it

A year ago Petrovsky said the Soviets saw an elaborate new role for the UN, including acceptance of the concept of international law by the USSR, their new acceptance of compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. This month, in his address to the General Assembly, he said the world must develop "a new model of security" based on "political and legal guarantees". The Soviet aim, he said, is to elaborate "through the UN, a comprehensive international strategy for establishing the primacy of the rule of law in relations between states." Careful follow-up proposal calling on UN to create a legally binding instrument for peaceful arbitration, shows that new vision for greater UN role is being manifest by Soviets with creative and useful initiatives.

This comes at same time as public support for the UN in the West is increasing, and new role emerging for UN on political side. Political successes of UN will require persistent, creative negotiations in order to consolidate resolution. Such advances must now be matched by comparable breakthroughs in social and economic fields. These evolving geo-political conditions continue to give rise to a new sense of possibilities in development of international relationships. Confidence increasing in the use of existing international institutions and creative new approaches to resolving global and regional problems. Opportunity now within UN to redesign its own roles in social and economic development.

Development priorities for the 1990s (poverty, population, environment)

Human dimension of development increasingly recognized as the important focus - as best "development investment" and as true security of the future, as Soviets have articulated.

How goals and strategies for children relate to this

An issue grounded in human side of development issues, which everyone can support - witness green lights for Summit. Entry point to broader development issues.

Goals

-- Not a number's game

-- Not at the expense of or instead of country programming
(Gautam's paper 89/03 deals with pros and cons of goals)
Country programme approach remains the backbone of UNICEF's effectiveness; it is, in fact, the principal means through which global goals can be accomplished. And global goals offer powerful advocacy and social mobilization tool to be used in support of country goals. The same global goals need not be emphasized in every country if we can, together, come up with effective guidelines for adaptation and selection of goals. Challenge is how to maximize use of global goals to strengthen, not weaken, country approach. In meeting that challenge we are faced with another: to design process for selecting the most appropriate goals for each country. For example, we already use standard adaptation for some goals - ie, each country sets what it means by 100% access to clean water

-- Major goals

USMR; nutrition; water and sanitation; female literacy

Not every country will be able to focus on all 26 goals, and we will hopefully work together this week on discerning how to prioritize goals in each country, but all UNICEF programmes should address specific goals within each of these four areas (above).

The most important emphasis for the next phase of UNICEF's work will be reduction of 1980 U5MR by half or to 70 per 1,000 live births, whichever is less, by year 2000. Every UNICEF office should have a plan to reach this goal and can, in fact, prioritize the other goals according to most effective support of this one. All countries are behind in progress toward this goal, with a few exceptions such as Iran, Iraq, Chile, etc. Each country can, through good country analysis, identify the main child killers, and concentrate on those. Offices will be accountable, first and foremost, for this target reduction of U5MR.

I am aware some goals will be tough: in Africa, AIDS will make U5MR goal virtually impossible in some countries. Still, let us examine, for each country, what will make it possible.

I am also aware that some LDCs will require massive external support.

In support of U5MR, main areas in which to take goals seriously are

- water
- malnutrition
- female literacy

-- Specific/sectoral goals

Some goals must be taken on by all countries, globally, or no country can achieve them: polio, guinea worm, measles, tetanus toxoid
Others must be taken on regionally: IDD, CDD, ARI

(Rama's paper 89/16, Christmas' paper 89/13, Education Conf paper 89/14, etc.)

-- How goals can help strengthen country programmes

Goals have thusfar strengthened UNICEF's programme activities in 3 important ways. They have introduced at country and global levels:

- management by objective
- mobilization of public support
- focus for organizational coherence. etc.

Strategies

Determining UNICEF role vs. that of others (UNICEF cannot do it all)

-- Leveraging other people's resources

Heart of UNICEF is leverage vs. just expenditure to achieve programme objective

- Collaboration with other UN agencies
As you know, UNICEF is taking the lead in efforts to strengthen Resident Coordinator system, advocating, among other steps, field-level inter-agency meetings on programme issues such as women in development, food security, etc.
- Social mobilization
- Monitoring - social indicators to highlight human progress

UNICEF in the 1990s

- Empowering UNICEF for the 1990s

(Woodhouse Task Force paper 89/24)

As we look toward probable expansion of UNICEF, major questions arise, as expressed in the Task Force paper: "Every organization has an appropriate and optimal size after which point major mutations start to occur. What is the appropriate size of UNICEF? How fast can we realistically grow before administrative and/or programming difficulties reach the point where UNICEF's good image is at risk? It is also the case that the larger offices become, the more time that senior management has to spend in managing the staff and administration with correspondingly less scarce senior time devoted to managing ideas, mobilization and programmes. A balance is required between policy and programmatic vision and management capacity to effectively translate the vision into action." (p.5 #2.2)

As more and more is expected of UNICEF, how will we achieve this balance?

- Increased professionalisation of staff -- focus on increasing management skills through training
- Increased number of staff? (quality vs. quantity)
- How much more resources in the 1990s?
- Emphasis on quality and leverage rather than on quantitative expansion
- Overload - discussions from Directors' meeting and Deputies' retreat

New frontiers for UNICEF in the 1990s

- Convention - possible broadening of UNICEF mandate
- Role in industrialized countries/Eastern Europe
(Himes/Freiberg paper 89/17)
- Role in high income developing countries/NICs
(planning office paper 89/18)
- Children as Zone of Peace/Priorities of Environment