

File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1989-0034

Statement by Mr. James P. Grant  
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
at the conclusion of the  
United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities

New York  
31 October 1989



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Rcf0006HRS

Item # **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1998-02160**

ExR/Code: **CF/EXD/SP/1989-0034**

United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities  
Date Label Printed 18-Jan-2002

cover + 8 pp + 1 b



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Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance  
Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia

*final form as presented during the PC*

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STATEMENT BY MR. JAMES P. GRANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF),  
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS PLEDGING CONFERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES  
New York - 31 October 1989

1. May I express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the way in which you have conducted this pledging conference, and my thanks to the bureau for its effective assistance. I also would like to thank all speakers who commented favourably on the work of UNICEF. Your words are of great encouragement to us, on the eve of the proposed Fourth Development Decade. The decade of the 1990s is the decade which demographers tell us will see more children born than ever before - or ever again - as the absolute number of births will begin to decline as the world heads towards a stabilization of its population sometime in the Twenty-First Century.
2. At this session, 70 Governments have announced pledges to UNICEF for a total of US\$ 184 million for UNICEF 1990 general resources at the current rates of exchange.
3. As in the past, some Governments, owing to a different fiscal year cycle, were unable to specify their pledges at this conference. However, judging from the past, and on the basis of the best current information now

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available, we project for 1990 an additional US\$ 178 million yet to come to general resources.

4. This would bring Government pledges to UNICEF general resources for 1990 to an estimated total of some US\$ 362 million, which would be a net amount of about US\$ 32 million more than the 1989 figure of US\$ 330. It would represent a net increase in monetary terms for 1990 of about 10 per cent over 1989. In addition, UNICEF expects to receive supplementary and emergency funding totalling more than \$ 200 million in 1990.

5. On behalf of UNICEF, and for the children of the world who are the beneficiaries of the efforts you are supporting, I would like to express my gratitude to all those Governments which have announced their pledges. We are appreciative of the many Governments which have maintained their contributions in the midst of difficult economic and financial circumstances. We are especially grateful to those Governments whose pledges represent increases in their contributions, either in United States dollars or in their national currencies. Some of these increases are very significant, such as the twelve-fold increase in the combined contributions of the USSR, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukranian Socialist Republic for 1989, which have now been followed by a further 17 per cent increase, bringing the total to 14 million Roubles. UNICEF is confident that discussions presently underway on the full use of the USSR contribution will soon reach a fruitful conclusion. UNICEF is also most appreciative of the extremely generous increase by the Government of Finland, which increased its already substantial

contribution to general resources by US\$ 5.6 million to \$ 32.6 million, which is a 22 per cent increase, making the per capita contribution from Finland increase by more than US\$ 1, to US\$ 6.58 at current exchange rates.

6. Other industrialized countries have also increased their pledges significantly. I would like to express appreciation to the Governments of Iceland, Poland and Hungary for their increases of 147 per cent, 105 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively. I would also like to thank the Governments which announced increases of 20 per cent or more: Belgium, Finland and Spain, as well as those Governments whose pledges increased between 10 and 20 per cent: Austria, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Netherlands, Ukrainian Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Governments of Australia, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have also registered increases in their pledges this year, between 5 and 10 per cent, for which we are grateful.

7. A special word of recognition goes to five major donor Governments: Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United States for their continuing strong support to the core resources of UNICEF, with each contributing more than \$ 30 million to general resources. For the first time in 1988, total contributions from all sources for one country - the United States - topped \$ 100 million, and per capita contributions from all sources for one country - Norway - topped \$ 10, with Sweden at virtually the same impressive per capita level. Italy has been providing financial back-bone for the remarkable UCI effort in Africa.

8. Since UNICEF is a field-based organization and works with the Governments of 118 developing countries, their contributions over and above their inputs into the national programmes of co-operation, are most meaningful. In particular, I would like to thank those Governments which have increased their contributions by 20 per cent or more: Lesotho, Mauritius, Republic of Korea, Tanzania, Zaire, Zimbabwe and Yemen. I would like to extend our thanks to the following Governments whose pledges reflected 5 to 20 per cent increases: Bhutan, China, India, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria and Viet Nam. I would also like to welcome back the Governments of Benin, Guatemala and Kuwait, who have again made pledges to UNICEF. India, with the largest number of small children in the world, increased its contribution from 28 to 30 million rupees, which is equivalent to almost \$ 2 million - more than the contribution of several industrialized countries.

9. It is our hope that those countries which have not been able to announce their pledges at this conference, sometimes owing to differing fiscal cycles, but which considerably increased their contribution in 1989, will consider significant increases for 1990.

10. Mr. President, UNICEF depends on the support and goodwill not only of Governments but also of the public - and our budget has always depended on a sizeable contribution from private sources. This is a unique feature of UNICEF of which we are proud. Therefore from the non-governmental organizations we expect in 1990 - via the National Committees for UNICEF, non-governmental organizations, the sale of greeting cards and from individual

and corporate contributions - about US\$ 75 million for general resources. In addition, private sources also contribute substantially for supplementary funds. May I take this opportunity to thank all of you who use UNICEF greeting cards (and the season is upon us) and urge you to continue doing so this year. I also wish to acknowledge here the critical work done by so many volunteers, including many from the United Nations diplomatic community, not only in selling UNICEF greeting cards, but also in promoting the cause of children in so many invaluable ways.

11. Mr. President, the newspapers are again reminding us, almost daily, of the destruction and human misery brought by natural and man-made disasters. UNICEF will continue, with urgency, to seek funds for existing appeals. I would like to thank those donors who contributed so generously to Operation Life Line Sudan. UNICEF will continue to seek funds for emergency programmes in countries such as Afghanistan, Sudan and Southern Africa, where an easing of armed hostility offers the welcome opportunity for relief and reconstruction.

12. We have appreciated the support of donors for UNICEF's emphasis on adjustment policies that protect the most vulnerable, an approach which is often characterized as "adjustment with a human face". This calls for a greater protection of investment in the social sector during adjustment, but also for a restructuring of social sector expenditures by focusing on cost-effective measures for protecting those most in need and by drawing attention to the impact of fiscal and monetary restructuring at all levels.

We look to "development with human face" becoming a central theme of the international development strategy for the Fourth Development Decade.

13. Mr. President, UNICEF is extremely pleased to see the continued strengthening of a world-wide alliance to improve the well-being of children. The past three years have witnessed initiatives in Latin America (including particularly in Central America), in Asia and its South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and in 1989, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) Summit support for children, including UCI 1990, the Bamako Initiative in Africa, and the designation of the next ten years as the Decade of the African Child. When UNICEF releases The State of the World's Children Report for 1990 in early December, it will report the welcome news that the specific action for children in the 1980s has saved the lives of approximately 10 million under-fives, reduced the child death toll in the past 12 months alone by approximately 3 million, and protected the health and growth of still larger numbers of the world's children. The proportion of children protected by immunization has increased from under 10 per cent at the beginning of this decade to nearly 70 per cent in the last nine years. Common illnesses like measles, tetanus and whooping cough, which were killing 5 million children a year and inflicting life-long disability on several million more, are now on the retreat world-wide. Vaccines are now saving at least 2 million children annually. There is now every hope that a large majority of the world's nations will come close to the United Nations target of universal child immunization by 1990. Similarly, more than 25 per cent of the developing world's families are now using the low-cost technique known as oral

rehydration therapy, or ORT, which enables parents themselves to prevent the lethal effect of diarrhoeal dehydration. The result is the estimated saving of another 1 million children's lives each year, and this number should increase significantly in the coming years.

14. After such unprecedented accomplishments, the next logical steps in strengthening this great alliance for children for the 1990s involve: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, hopefully to be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during the coming month; the Bamako Initiative, born in September 1987 at the WHO Africa Regional Meeting of Health Ministers, in which both the Director General of WHO and I had the pleasure to participate together with the Regional Directors of WHO and UNICEF; and the proposed Summit for Children. The Bamako Initiative is a major new initiative for strengthening and expanding universal primary health care for women and children in Africa. The mainspring of the Bamako Initiative is the idea of decentralized, self-sustaining primary health care. Communities share in the financing and management of local primary health services, which are maintained by the proceeds from income-generating services such as provision of essential drugs. The proposal for a World Summit for Children continues to gather support. Most recently, last week the Commonwealth Prime Ministers endorsed the proposal in Kuala Lumpur, adding importantly to earlier endorsements by the Francophone, OAU and Non-Aligned Summits.

15. The stake of children in this grand alliance for children is tremendous. Thus achievement of just the child survival goal for all



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countries by the year 2000 of an under-five mortality rate of 70 per 1,000 live births, or a halving of their 1980 rates, whichever is the lower figure, would mean saving the lives of 50 million children who would die if the current child mortality rates continued for the 1990s.

16. Mr. President, by the pledges made at this conference, and those yet to be made in the year ahead, we will be able to move ahead vigorously and improve the health and well-being of children significantly in the years to come, even in the face of economic difficulties.

Thank you very much.