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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 1987 Executive Board

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FOR INFORMATION

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

at the close of the General Debate of the 1987 Executive Board

Mr. Chairman, I have listened to the debate over the past four days with obvious interest and, if I may say so, great encouragement. As I mentioned on Monday, this is the tenth UNICEF Board session in which I have participated. Every session has had its own flavor, I would characterize the nature of this year's interventions as "informed caring". It has been particularly satisfying to hear the comments of many delegates, in the hallways and at the back of the room, about the positive and collaborative atmosphere of this year's session. We have started on the right track.

I would say that this atmosphere is very much a product, especially, of the high degree of dialogue in which we have all engaged, as I mentioned in my opening statement - manifested particularly in the regular series of ad hoc luncheon discussions held with Board members at UNICEF Headquarters, in the "briefing and hearing" visits to capitals and the on-going discussions in countries with UNICEF offices, and even in the numerous informal meetings which have been held so far - and are scheduled to continue - during this Board session.

And in the spirit of that dialogue, Mr. Chairman, let me now proceed immediately to address the specific questions and concerns which delegations have raised during the debate.

Programme matters

I am happy to note that many constructive and useful suggestions on programme matters have been made and I would like to assure the Board that they will be taken into account in formulating our work, both presently and in the future. Some issues, I am sure, will be further discussed in more detail in the Programme Committee.

Adjustment with a human face

We are grateful to the 29 Board members who spoke with praise and encouragement of UNICEF's work on adjustment with a human face. Last year, we had 13 such statements of encouragement and the year before, 3. This support is naturally encouraging but it also indicates a growing awareness and spread of the human problem of adjustment and the urgent need for action.

UNICEF will continue to work closely with our UN partner agencies as well as, of course, with the national governments concerned. But may I also add that if we are to see action which achieves real changes in protecting children's lives, developing countries, industrialised countries and the main international agencies concerned will all have to do more than what they have been doing so far - and to turn their positive messages in UNICEF's Board into practical action and equally passionate advocacy in the councils of other agencies, including the international financial institutions. As stated by the distinguished delegate from Australia, action by all these three groups are interrelated and must be mutually supportive if children and other vulnerable groups are really to be protected in the course of adjustment.

Action by Board members within their own countries is also vital and possible, as was so clearly illustrated by the Pakistani Minister of Planning's intervention about the actual impact of reallocation in the health sector to CSDR activities by postponing the construction of a major hospital in 1982. I was most impressed by his statement that over-all life expectancy had increased by six years, and that for the first time, the life expectancy of females has surpassed males in Pakistan through the child survival activities generated by this support.

Child Survival and Development Revolution

We are very happy with the Board's reaffirmation of the reduction of infant and child mortality as a goal and CSDR as a thrust. I am sure the Board will agree with me if I say that the valiant efforts made by so many developing countries as reported to the Board in the last few days are endeavours of love and dedication which will one day be enshrined in history as opening a new era of care for children.

My colleagues and I have listened to the debate most carefully and we would agree that many valid points were raised which deserve serious thought and consideration.

In my synthesis, I think observations on CSDR made by different delegations can perhaps be grouped into:

- a) Context and scope
- b) Programme balance in terms of content and expenditure
- c) Sustainability
- d) Overcasting shadow of AIDS.

Since I do not think I should now take the time to discuss all these aspects, may I suggest that detailed discussions be continued in the Programme Committee.

I do not think there are any differences of opinion regarding the necessity to implement CSDR in the context of primary health care and basic services. I would only add that where PHC structures do not exist or are weak, CSDR activities should be planned ahead so that they lead to the establishment or strengthening of primary health care. The experience of strengthening of PHC by EPI has been ably presented by the distinguished delegates of Algeria, Argentina, Chile, Congo, Djibouti, Indonesia, Oman, Pakistan and Turkey, and I can readily cite similar examples from Burkina Faso, Senegal, Egypt, and Colombia, among others.

Having said that, I would like to stress that the varied forms of acceleration are entirely national prerogatives and I can cite as many examples as there are countries. The encouraging picture presented by the distinguished delegate of Indonesia is a good example of CSDR as a part of national health care implemented at the community level through posyandus - the MCH centres run by village women providing growth monitoring, oral rehydration, immunization, pre-natal care and family planning and which are scheduled to increase from 133,000 in 1986 to 199,000 by March 1988.

I fully accept the arguments that children are also killed by diseases other than diarrhoea and the six immunisable diseases, and often by an interaction between them. However, the fight against acute respiratory infections and malaria is more difficult to operationalise on a large scale at a low cost, often because national health systems do not wish to entrust community level workers with the prescription of antibiotics, and malaria control varies from country to country, some still relying on spraying. However, with WHO we have issued policy guidelines on both these problems and we are increasingly exploring at country level how large scale low cost actions can be built in to tackle them. I would agree that we should not be hesitant wherever low-cost opportunities exist.

Nutrition is another subject to which we have been seeking how best to give more attention through major but low cost actions. I would like to report that UNICEF nutritionists met in Naivasha, Kenya earlier this month and reached a broad consensus that nutrition is not a sector, but a goal for development that needs to be taken into account in all programmes. In this respect, it is analogous to the consideration to be accorded to women. We hope to develop a similar 'implementation strategy' for nutrition which was mentioned by the distinguished delegate of Netherlands. As part of this, I welcome the support of Canada and Australia for the need to strengthen national systems for up-to-date nutritional surveillance.

As part of this, we are also exploring how to give new impetus in our support for breastfeeding, including attention to the need for social support for working mothers needing to breastfeed away from home. We share frustrations over the continuing difficulty in developing more workable programmes thrust on growth monitoring and growth promotion. I would also like to point out that UNICEF is the world's principal supporter of control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders and Vitamin A supplementation.

As regards the question raised by the distinguished delegate of the Soviet Union that UNICEF should have more feeding programmes, we must recall that, except in areas of emergency and most vulnerable groups, the mandate of the World Food Programme displaces the role for UNICEF and other agencies, and they are far better equipped with many more resources to do the job.

As regards programme balance, as mentioned by several delegates, may I refer to paragraphs 5 thru 11 of the Programme Priorities and Focus paper. There is a real issue in how to define balance - whether in the overall context of external assistance, or of national efforts, or in all countries irrespective of resource magnitude. It also seems prudent to look at balance and integration as something that has to be achieved as a cumulative net result, and not necessarily as an obligation to spread resources thin and try to do so many things at the same time which easily can result in fragmentation and inefficiency.

The distinguished delegates of UK, Denmark and Norway have however raised serious concerns and fear of imbalance due to high expenditure of EPI. As the Board is aware, the expenditure on EPI has increased in part because it is a priority area with a 1990 coverage deadline, but also because many bilateral donors including Italy, USA, Sweden, Canada and EEC have channelled their own substantially increased support for it through UNICEF. We expect the expenditure on EPI to reach the peak at around 20% in 1989 or 1990 and then begin to decline, since, by then, UNICEF's principal support would be the provision of vaccines, syringes and spare parts for cold chain due to foreign exchange shortages, while other recurrent expenditures should be integrated within national expenditures on Primary Health Care.

I have listened carefully to the points made about sustainability and balance and the need for UNICEF to not neglect other areas of primary health care, or indeed, other areas of basic services, and that we should seek a better balance in our advocacy and publicity. I have heard these concerns and I hope most, if not all, Board members expressing them will be assured in future months as they see responses to these concerns echoed in UNICEF's actions and messages. But without pretending that no differences of view still exist, I am also encouraged by the large number of delegations, including these raising specific concerns, which have reaffirmed their commitment to the 1990 goals on immunization and ORT and made clear that their wish is not to slow UNICEF down but to make sure that we achieve these goals in a way which can be sustained and which makes still broader impact. On this, I hope we can all be united.

Many delegations, including USA, UK, Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Norway, Netherlands and Belgium have raised the issue of sustainability. I would like to assure the Board that this is an issue which ought to - and does - concern us all. One must acknowledge, of course, that sustainability is an issue for Primary Health Care in general, and, indeed, for all externally assisted programmes and projects. Our analysis is leading us to identify several inter-related dimensions of sustainability, including sustainability of political commitment, financial, institutional and technical sustainability, and sustainability of information flow and popular interest. It is a complex issue and already we have opened dialogues on this issue with various partners, which we hope to continue and to widen.

Country programming approach

In reviewing the priorities and focus of UNICEF programmes of co-operation, I would like to reaffirm that the country programming approach will remain our operational modality at the country level. It is also useful to remind ourselves that the country programmes are outcomes of the interaction between the situation and needs of the countries concerned and the corporate priorities of the organisation set by the Board from time to time. We often forget that in formulating country programmes, two additional factors which must also be taken into account are the experience of past performance of programmes in the country and the national plans and priorities. It will be useful to remember that, as most appropriately pointed out by the distinguished delegate from India, these programmes are "owned" by the country and implemented by the country. In fact, in all developing countries, UNICEF inputs are only a fraction of the national inputs. I am sure the Board will agree that UNICEF should and will retain this approach but that the dialogue should be sharpened so that the programmes developed are most effective, reflecting the needs and priorities of the country.

Africa

I would like to express my appreciation for the broad support given to UNICEF's work in Africa and expressions of support for our appeals for support to SADCC countries by many delegations including Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Canada, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Benin, Italy, USA, France, UK, Switzerland, Japan and Netherlands. In view of the prevailing situation and likely prospects for the immediate future, the problems of Africa remain huge, as the Romanian delegation, among others, mentioned, and I think that Africa will have to remain a special focus perhaps even towards the end of the century.

SAARC

Mr. Chairman, the delegations from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Netherlands and Pakistan mentioned the SAARC meeting and the Bangalore Declaration on which I have reported in detail in the Executive Director's Report. If I were asked what were the five major events for children in 1986, I would definitely include the SAARC meeting and the Bangalore Declaration as one of them. It is of major significance that the leaders of seven nations representing 29% of the world's population of under-fives and 40 per cent of their deaths, have put children on such a high political agenda and attention - an unprecedented act of collective wisdom and foresight. I am glad to hear that one of the major follow-up actions of this summit will be the SAARC meeting of Ministers of Planning on "children in development planning" later this year, as conveyed to us yesterday by the Minister of Planning from Pakistan.

AIDS

Several delegations, including Australia, Norway, Canada, USA, FRG, Sweden, UK, Netherlands and Denmark have talked about the pandemic of AIDS. I would like to report to the Board that we are working very closely with WHO on this problem. A Conference Room Paper has been circulated on this, and I know that the role and activities relevant for UNICEF will be explored further in the Programme Committee.

Women

I would like to express my appreciation and concurrence to many observations made by different delegations, including Tunisia, France, Benin, Bhutan, China, Denmark, Guyana, USA, Italy, Colombia, India, FRG, Sweden, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and Mali, about the significant and important role played by women in both development and CSD strategy. I am happy to note that delegations have found the implementation strategy acceptable and useful. In fact, it is already being operationalised and the Secretariat would be happy to provide copies of our programming guidelines and other documents to those who are interested.

Family planning

The distinguished delegates of FRG, Sweden, Norway and Denmark mentioned the importance of family planning. We have focussed on the child spacing aspect in order to discourage having pregnancies "too young, too old, too frequent and too many" as part of our training of traditional birth attendants, midwives, etc. We have concentrated on playing a supporting and advocacy role in this area, and for this reason, we have last year institutionalized regular collaborative meetings between UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF, and are co-sponsoring with UNFPA, WHO, the World Bank, UNDP and others a major conference in Nairobi this fall on Better Health for Mothers and Children through Family Spacing.

Children in especially difficult circumstances

Knowing her personal commitment, I would particularly like to report to the distinguished delegate of Sweden, and also to the delegates of Norway, Mexico, Pakistan and Venezuela, that we are actively exploring how to implement further activities connected with children caught in situations of armed conflict. Besides the better-known example of 'Days of Tranquillity' in El Salvador and lesser known 'corridors of peace' in Uganda, UNICEF is working very hard to establish similar bridgeheads in both Africa and Asia and I hope I can report some good news to the Board in the near future.

Other examples of our programmes for children in armed conflicts include programmes to reunite displaced children with parents or relatives, with provision of playground and play activities in Beirut where children have grown not knowing the meaning of a normal and peaceful life. We hope to help provide some opportunities to lead a normal life to these children. In this connection, we are also exploring the need for early childhood stimulation as the children in conflict areas are found to have more than normal learning difficulties. We have also started a project to meet the psycho-social needs of refugee children in Somalia and projects on street children in Brazil, Philippines, Sudan, etc.

Future thrusts

Listening closely to the debate, I think the Board generally endorses the thrusts of UNICEF programmes of co-operation for the future as outlined in the Priorities and Focus paper. I should, however, point out that they will not be and should not be the same in all countries; some countries will probably have more emphasis on water supply and sanitation while others may focus more on education and urban basic services, depending on the needs and priorities of the countries. I would also make clear, in response to Canada's concern, that we will certainly expect more detailed discussion with the Board before these are made operational priorities for some future Medium Term Plan.

We agree with the observations made by many delegations, including Tunisia, Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Canada, United Kingdom, Niger, Mexico and Finland, regarding the importance of water supply and sanitation. As mentioned in the Medium Term Plan, we intend to maintain UNICEF expenditure in support of water and sanitation at at least the same level as the average of the last three years. We also hope to continue and, indeed, strengthen our current emphasis on sanitation and health education. In fact, I am happy to report that we have instructed all of our offices that we will not submit any proposals on water supply for approval unless they include sanitation and health education as well. We are also prepared, if the Board so requests, to submit a policy paper on water supply and sanitation to the next session of the Board.

The continuing importance of urban basic services has been stressed by the distinguished delegate of Canada and the significance of education in child development and indeed in national development has been mentioned by the delegations of China, Guyana, India, Thailand, Mali, and Sweden. I fully concur with these observations.

Evaluation

The distinguished delegates of Belgium, China, Netherlands, France, USA, FRG, Finland, Sri Lanka and Thailand have called attention to the importance of evaluation. This important subject will be, I'm sure, more thoroughly discussed in the Programme Committee, and we look forward to your further guidance in this area.

Inter-agency cooperation

Several delegations, including Japan, Netherlands, Sudan, Thailand and the USSR, have stressed the importance of inter-agency coordination in order to achieve optimal results in our joint endeavours. The delegate from the Sudan has reminded us that the activities of UNICEF and the United Nations system in general do not fall neatly within mandates. The need for active cooperation and coordination with other agencies at the global and country levels is obvious, while appreciating that, as the delegate from India pointed out, all assistance is coordinated at the national level by the Government itself in order to maximize the benefits for children and mothers through its programmes.

As a common practice, UNICEF always involves sister agencies and also bilateral agencies in many countries in the development and evaluation of programmes. UNICEF Regional Offices have not only informal working relationships but also memoranda of understanding with WHO Regional Offices and participate in each other's meetings. At Headquarters level, there are regular inter-secretariat and constant less-formal meetings to exchange information and to co-ordinate the work relevant to the concerned organisations. Many joint statements are outcomes of these efforts. Indeed, in our experience, meaningful collaboration will result if it is based on the strengths and weaknesses of each organisation so that the inputs are complementary.

International Child Development Centre

I would like to associate the UNICEF Secretariat with the many expressions of appreciation to the Government of Italy for its gift to UNICEF of the facilities of the Spedali degli Innocenti. I look forward to the discussion of the use and activities envisaged for the Centre at the Innocenti in the Programme Committee.

UNICEF Awards

In proposing the establishment of a "world class" series of honours, we agree with the distinguished delegate of Tunisia that such distinctions have merit in drawing the attention of the international community to the problems of survival and development of children, and to encouraging others to play more leading, creative roles on our concerns. Here again we look forward to the discussion in the Programme Committee.

Inter-governmental machinery

Several delegations have spoken on the ECOSOC request for comments on the structure of inter-governmental machinery in the economic and social sector. This issue will be dealt with in the drafting session which follows, so I need not comment here.

Finance and administration issuesFunding

On the financial side, 1986 was a better year for UNICEF than we had reason to expect at the beginning of the year. Our total income increased by over 20% from 1985. As was noted by Mr. Vittachi, one half of this gain was due to exchange rate fluctuations or strengthening of local currencies against the dollar which, of course, was also partially offset by increased costs to UNICEF such as staff and certain supplies paid in dollars. \$30 million came as a result of increased support from governments and other sources of income, of which \$8 million was UNICEF's share of Sport Aid income for 1986, with a comparable amount to be received in 1987.

Our prospects for 1987 also look less precarious than only one year ago. I was encouraged by the outcome of the Pledging Conference held in November 1986. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Governments who have indicated an increase in support for our general resources. The Government of Finland was extremely generous with an approximate 50 per cent increase of more than \$6 million becoming thereby UNICEF's fifth largest financial supporter to General Resources. The German Democratic Republic, as well as, the Governments of Iceland, Byelorussian SSR, Denmark, Italy, Monaco, Spain, Ukrainian SSR and USSR also announced major increases. There are many more whom I could mention but time prohibits me from doing so. However, I would like to note and especially commend those developing countries which, despite the continuing unfavourable economy, announced increases of over 100%. These were the Governments of Bolivia, Botswana, Cameroon, Cyprus and Guatemala.

The continued increase in support for our general resources will be the cornerstone on which the programme submissions approved at this Board will be built.

However, we should not allow our somewhat promising financial prospects to blind us from the situation in which the United Nations system finds itself today. As the delegate from France noted, we are living in "a year of realism". And, for UNICEF, the reality, as noted by the delegate of Italy, is that we have become a major development agency with revenues approaching \$500 million. Our growth to this size has challenged us all to be the best that we can be. As noted by the delegations of Lesotho, Pakistan, Gabon, India, Thailand, Sudan, Japan, Brazil, Venezuela and others, UNICEF staff are highly professional, competent, hard-working and very devoted, and I want you to know that I am very proud of them.

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Yet, as noted by many delegations, over the past year questions regarding UNICEF's compliance, in some instances, with policies and procedures, have been subject to review and comments from the External Auditors and the ACABQ. Several delegates have given notice that they intend to address these issues in more detail during the Committee on Administration and Finance. Let me say from the outset that we welcome and appreciate the input and concern from delegations. We fully understand constructive criticism.

I can assure Board members, and I know that the Chairman of the team of External Auditors assigned to UNICEF will bear me out, that UNICEF takes its co-operation with the External Auditors very seriously. The delegates from Italy, FRG, Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark also noted that UNICEF has been responding to the Auditors' concerns in a constructive way. The documentation before you (E/ICEF/1987/AB/L.8) contains the complete list of observations and also documents that remedial action has been taken on all points. We look forward to discussing with the Board the specific issues raised in the reports referred to and to receive your guidance on other specific points of concern.

As UNICEF grew and its operations became more complex, the need for a body to review our procedures, including the biennium budget, became apparent. The ACABQ fulfills this role as an advisory body to the Executive Board. As I noted in my opening statement, you, the Board delegates, are our governors; it is you who set the policies. Thus, when we may differ with an advisory group, such as the ACABQ, on certain issues, it is incumbent on the Executive Board to come forward and clarify the UNICEF policy in question. We surely agree with the delegates of Belgium, Tunisia, France, Sweden, Norway, Japan and the United Kingdom that the need remains as strong as ever to manage our resources efficiently and effectively.

We also note the remarks of the delegates from Indonesia and the United States who stated that, in 1986, UNICEF has made progress towards even greater efficiency. We do not for one minute believe - or pretend - that we are perfect or even close to it, and we agree with the delegate from Denmark that UNICEF cannot afford to ignore - nor do we ignore - advice and observations intended to improve our efficiency, our effectiveness, and thus our image.

Financial Plan

Let me return briefly to the financial environment which faced UNICEF only one year ago. General resources income in 1984 and 1985 did not reach expected levels, and expenditures actually exceeded income. We were faced with the prospect that legislation would seriously decrease the governmental contribution of our largest donor. In addition, concern about the long-term effects of the financial crisis which faced the U.N. system necessitated the build up of our general resources cash balances as a prudent buffer against future negative impacts on our income. Thus, we planned to curtail our expenditures both in the budgetary and programme areas - a task which was not easy.

We must always remember that UNICEF is a voluntary organization. Most of you will agree that UNICEF's strength lies in our flexibility to respond quickly and effectively in times of need, both programmatically and administratively. By approving multi-year country programmes, the Executive Board sets the programme targets for each country. Within this approved umbrella, we establish our financial plan on a rolling yearly basis. This plan is a framework of projections which allows us to maximize our expenditures within the constraints of our available income and our liquidity policy. Thus, during times of increasing income, we have the ability to adjust our expenditures upwards.

This flexibility must also function in times of adversity. Last year's financial plan, which was presented and approved by the Executive Board, proposed reduced expenditures, from previous financial plans, for both programme and budget. Actually, several delegations at last year's Executive Board were concerned that our proposed reductions in spending were not large enough. The 1987 financial plan presented to this year's Executive Board continues the process of maximizing programme cooperation while minimizing expenditures on budgetary items.

Budget considerations

In this vein, great efforts have been made to break the trend of growing administrative expenses, which to a great extent were due to mandatory increases, and to assure that the growth in programme expenditures exceeded that of administrative overheads.

The Australian delegation supported these ambitions and urged us to strive to achieve the target of 10 per cent of our total expenditures - as compared to the current 11 per cent - on strictly administrative costs.

These efforts have resulted in the budget estimates that are before you and which also propose considerable rationalization and savings in staff. The ACABQ and a number of delegations, particularly Canada, Japan, France, Belgium, and the Federal Republic of Germany, have voiced concern that adequate consultation with the Executive Board regarding the budgetary reductions included in the 1986-1987 revised budget estimates were not held and that the Executive Board was only informed "post facto". I would like to refer to the deliberations of last year's Executive Board session. This may be of particular assistance to those delegates that were not present in that session.

Budget documentation was not, per se, presented to the Executive Board in 1986. However, the intention of UNICEF to initiate a budget planning process aiming to control or reduce administrative costs was proposed in the Medium Term Plan (E/ICEF/1986/3, para. 123-125). In summary, UNICEF informed the Board of the intention to reduce the 1986-1987 budget by approximately \$11.3 million and that approximately 80 core posts would have to be abolished to meet this goal, and these posts would have to be abolished in the biennium 1986-1987.

In my statement at the close of the general debate of the 1986 Executive Board (E/ICEF/1986/CRP.21), I made reference to reduced financial prospects and funding uncertainties and that our Budget Planning and Review Committee would commence its work in August 1986 with the objective of achieving the targets as approved in the Medium Term Plan. The initiative to reduce administrative costs was welcomed by many delegations and it was with the support of the Board that I approved the guidelines for the budget planning process which has resulted in the budget proposal before you. Of the 180 posts affected by the rationalization and savings effort, 103 represent net reductions. This is broadly within the framework of the projected reductions. The difference is mainly the result of decentralization to the country level of personnel resources in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, which was strongly endorsed by the ACABQ.

There is no question but that UNICEF's commitment to be financially prudent has certain serious implications. I consider UNICEF's main asset to be its staff. I am deeply aware of the human costs related to the abolition of posts. These are not merely numbers on a page; these are colleagues who have invested their time, their careers and their lives to the cause of children. We have spared no effort in our attempts to place the affected staff in other vacant positions within the organization or within the U.N. system. Naturally, most staff are concerned, but we are certain that most of the staff-related problems will be properly resolved. My senior colleagues and I are working closely with the staff associations in the affected offices to minimize, wherever possible, the human cost.

Good management

Our financial situation today is no less precarious than a year ago. Income which results from exchange movements is capricious and that which is here today may be gone tomorrow. We cannot base our planning upon such uncertainties, nor allow the organization to be vulnerable to unanticipated fluctuations.

I would submit to delegates that our efforts towards rationalizing our programme and budgetary expenditures, which are continuing this year, reflect our ambition to be "good managers". We fully agree with the delegate from Japan that every penny given to UNICEF is a penny in trust. That is why we must sometimes do that which is necessary, however painful in the short run, in order to ensure the financial viability of UNICEF in the long run.

We do not expect your support to be unconditional, as observed by the Swiss delegate. However, we do expect that you will support our efforts towards improving the management efficiency of UNICEF so that we can provide, as noted by the delegate of the United Kingdom, "value for money" to those who depend on us.

External relations issues

Global Events

Several delegates have noted with appreciation the benefits of global events - in raising funds, in increasing awareness and in generating greater public participation to improve children's lives. The delegate of Thailand said global events had helped in the establishment of a Special Committee to develop activities on behalf of children in Thailand. The delegates of Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom and Indonesia referred to increased public participation and the delegation from Poland noted an increase in support from young people as a result of last year's events.

Several delegates expressed appreciation for the open and critical assessment of events as presented in Conference Room Paper 4. While encouraging UNICEF to explore this area, many delegates expressed concern regarding the impact of these events on UNICEF's programme delivery. They cautioned us not to overstretch the capacity of our staff and to ensure that these events serve to accelerate on-going programme activities. Delegates including the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands and France stressed the need for adequate planning and consultation with governments and UNICEF's National Committees. Others, including Japan, Finland and the Netherlands, asked us to develop clear criteria for future events, which we are now working on.

Information and Communications

The communication strategy paper drew positive comments from the United Kingdom and Thailand. Thailand suggested the exchange of industrialized and developing country experiences which we will encourage, while the United Kingdom expressed disappointment that the paper did not make more of the potential of development education. This potential is indeed considerable. The Secretariat recognizes that development education is carried out largely at the national level and must be adapted to socio-cultural realities and specifics. This is best done by allowing our limited information gathering resources to respond to overall advocacy needs, with more refined selection taking place at the national level.

The delegate of Finland felt that information material for local adaption was too narrow in its scope. We have undertaken to work with committees on a shared cost basis to produce information supporting particular fundraising or advocacy efforts. We have identified the special interests of different national committees and are making efforts to direct relevant resource material to them.

The Chairman of the Standing Group of National Committees expressed regret at the decision to cease publication of UNICEF News; we will explore National Committee needs in this area bearing in mind the costs and staffing involved. The delegate from the Netherlands referred to the need for regular and substantive reporting from the field. In this connection, we have been encouraged by the recent successful establishment of a series of national and regional associations of journalists interested in child survival and development.

The delegate from Denmark has expressed concern about what he perceives to be a trend towards inadequate consultation with National Committees, especially in the field of information and communication. I would like to assure the delegate that UNICEF regards this consultation as essential and efforts are being made to further improve this process. National Committees are regularly consulted in the annual workshops, including the 1986 Information Workshop where they made valuable suggestions to the development of the Information Strategy paper.

Funding and Mobilization

The delegate of the Netherlands has expressed concern about the increase in UNICEF's supplementary funds. UNICEF's supplementary funds for 1986 were US\$164 million, including US\$32 million for emergencies. The percentage of the US\$132 million supplementary funds proper to the total income of UNICEF for 1986, which was US\$463 million, was thus 28.5 per cent and not 40 per cent. UNICEF will continue to closely monitor the level of its supplementary funds in order to observe the Board's policy that supplementary funds contributions will not be received from the government unless it remained a generous contributor to General Resources. I want, however, to stress that the control over this issue does not rest with the Secretariat but is fully in the hands of donors. We constantly encourage donors to channel as much of their support as possible to general resources.

The delegate of Japan expressed the view that UNICEF's major activities such as the CSDR should be supported mainly through general resources. I would like to assure the delegate of Japan that the importance of the CSDR programme is fully reflected in the allocation of funds from general resources. However, as I have already indicated, there has been a substantial increase in finances for CSDR from supplementary funds because of the heightened interest of some donors in this area. I would, of course, prefer to see this additional money go to UNICEF's general resources.

The Representative of the USSR has requested information on UNICEF's relations with corporations. UNICEF seeks additional funds from the private sector, including from corporations, in support of its programmes. Donations-in-kind are contributed by governments as well as private sources, as the German Democratic Republic mentioned in reporting its contributions, and clear guidelines on this have been documented and are available to Board Members.

The delegates from the Federal Republic of Germany and Denmark have suggested that UNICEF should undertake an analysis of its fundraising and mobilization efforts including the experience of the National Committees and the Greeting Cards Operations. The delegate of the Federal Republic of Germany hoped that such an analysis might result in a new external relations structure. In his Statement to the Board, the Deputy Executive Director for External Relations acknowledged the need for renewed imagination in this area and has indicated that UNICEF will give due attention to this in the coming months.

We support the statement of the USSR delegate on the spirit of Yeravan. Advance copies of the conference report are available in English and Spanish in the conference room.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Canon Moerman summarized the conclusions of the NGO Forum devoted to the themes of shelter, drugs and communication strategies, reminding us of the importance of examining these issues in the context of the total family environment. The NGO Forum has made several valuable recommendations on communications strategies, and UNICEF will work closely with the Committee in this effort.

Rights of the Child

Several delegations including Sweden, Poland and Hungary, as well as the Chairman of the Standing Group of National Committees, have urged us to pursue a speedy resolution of the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF will continue its efforts to bring the drafting process to an end and work towards adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly and its ratification by governments. We hope that the Convention which was first proposed by Poland, will be adopted by the General Assembly in 1989, which as the delegate of Hungary, reminded us, will be the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Child.

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Mr. 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.

Finally, may I express my personal appreciation for the very kind remarks that so many delegations have made about me personally, and about all of my colleagues in the secretariat. For myself, your words are very much appreciated. For my colleagues, you know that no one regards them more highly than do I.

I am privileged to serve with them; we are all privileged to work for you to advance the well-being of children in the world.