


File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1994-0002

Message by Mr. James P. Grant  
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
on the occasion of  
The "Children of the Planet Earth" Exhibition  
of Photographs by Mr. Takeyoshi Tanuma

February 1994

	UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label
	Rcf0007276
<b>Item #</b>	<b>CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/2002-01198</b>
<b>ExR/Code:</b>	<b>CF/EXD/SP/1994-0002</b>
Photo Exhibit Takeyoshi Tanuma. Address from Mr. James P.	
<i>Date Label Printed</i> 24-Sep-2002	

cover + 1p + 0b



United Nations Children's Fund Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia  
Детский Фонд Организации Объединенных Наций 联合国儿童基金会 منظمة الأمم المتحدة للطفولة

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Dear Mr. Tanuma:

I would like to congratulate you on the major exhibition of your photographs, "Children of the Planet Earth", in Tokyo. My wife Ellan (who is a photographer) and I wish we could personally be there to see the exhibition of photographs taken by one of UNICEF's best friends. Regrettably that is not possible now, but we thank you for your long-standing support for UNICEF and look forward to seeing the collection at another time.

I have had the privilege of seeing many of your photographs, including those you so generously allowed UNICEF to use in desk diaries and the book, We, the Children, published to commemorate the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Your photographs eloquently portray the situation of children in many parts of the world. At the same time, they have the marvelous quality of enabling us to see the world as children see it.

Children live, play and grow in developing countries, in affluent countries, in countries at war and in countries at peace. However, every day all over the world children are dying needlessly -- 35,000 per day, some 13 million every year, lost due to the combination of largely preventable malnutrition and disease. In addition, children are among the hardest hit by armed conflict. There have been more than 150 conflicts since the end of World War II, over 40 of them raging today. In the past decade alone, more than 1.5 million children were killed, 4 million disabled, 12 million left homeless and many more orphaned. In addition, it is estimated that 10 million children suffered war-related psychological trauma.

Despite this obscene waste of young lives, the principal historical enemies of children are now on the run. Thanks to the ceaseless advocacy efforts of concerned persons like yourself, public awareness of the needs of the world's children has increased over the years, and hope for a better world for children has greatly expanded in the 1990s. The 1990 World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child embody this heightened awareness and constitute a global framework for urgent action.

Today's children are tomorrow's world. So I sincerely hope that those who visit your exhibition will join hands with us to work together for a better life for all children. Again, thank you for showing us the face of the world's children, the face of our collective future.

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