

File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1994-0005

Remarks by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
at the
Ceremony for the Signing
of the
Agreement of Collaboration
between UNICEF and the International Olympic Committee

Lausanne, Switzerland
28 January 1994



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Item # **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1998-02435**

ExR/Code: **CF/EXD/SP/1994-0005**

Agreement of Collaboration with International Olympic Comm
Date Label Printed 24-Sep-2002

cover + 2pp + ob

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The agreement of collaboration that Mr. Samaranch and I are about to sign on behalf of the International Olympic Committee and UNICEF, respectively, is an important one. It is important in several ways:

* first, it associates two organizations that have a global scope and widespread prestige in common efforts to improve the lives of the world's children -- and God knows, children today, especially poor children, need all the support and assistance they can get. For lack of basic health care and nutrition, safe water supply and sanitation, nearly 13 million of them still die needlessly each year around the world.

* second, this agreement is important because it reflects the intimate linkage in this post-Cold War era between issues of war and peace, on the one hand, and issues relating to meeting the basic human needs of all people, on the other. Until recently, security meant arming yourself to the teeth in a world divided by opposing ideologies; today, security embraces human needs and human participation as key to peace and stable democracy. That is why the International Olympic Committee and UNICEF will work together to eradicate polio and promote the Olympic Truce.

In the final analysis, children -- the future of the world -- need peace and nurturing not only to survive, but also to develop into healthy and strong athletes, into productive and caring adults the world so desperately needs. We are on the brink of eradicating polio from the face of the earth -- just as we eradicated smallpox 15 years ago; it is just as imperative that we eradicate the hatred and intolerance, the poverty and injustice that engender armed conflicts (whose primary victims are, of course, children and women, as you will see in this new UNICEF brochure).

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We at UNICEF, who have had experience negotiating "Days of Tranquillity" and "Corridors of Peace" to help children caught in armed conflicts, will do everything in our power to support the International Olympic Committee's efforts to revive the ancient tradition of the "Olympic Truce". Ever-increasing and ever-widening spaces of peace and security must be opened for our children in this troubled world. And we welcome the International Olympic Committee to the Grand Alliance for Children, a movement that has gained unprecedented strength in the 1990s and which could, through concerted efforts, radically improve children's lives by the year 2000.