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Statement by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
on the
Launching of the Rwandan Humanitarian Emergency Appeal

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One of the major tragedies of the 20th century is unfolding in and around Rwanda. That tiny African country's humanitarian emergency is a wound on the world's collective psyche. The international community must respond immediately and adequately to the coordinated, inter-agency appeal launched today by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Half a million Rwandans have already lost their lives. Hundreds of thousands more could die in a matter of days if we delay or make a half-hearted response. If we fail to meet the challenge, the wound on the world's conscience will fester and the infection of inaction, hopelessness and resentment will spread. It is not only three or four million Rwandan lives that are at stake; the moral health of all humanity is at risk. In the global village, every fire is a fire next door.

A war-traumatized nation is emptying out before the horrified eyes of the world. Over the past few weeks, a human flood has entered a few small towns in Zaire from Rwanda. Hunger, thirst and disease are assaulting millions of Rwandans already weakened and dazed by four months of conflict and slaughter. Waves of refugees continue to pour into already overcrowded areas. People lack shelter and are jammed into every available space, from cemeteries and parks to sidewalks and busy streets. Dead bodies remain unburied. Sanitary facilities are virtually non-existent.

The tragedy within the tragedy is that young children -- who normally make up about a fifth of refugee populations -- constitute between a third and a half of this refugee flow. This higher proportion of children means two things: first, young children are far more vulnerable to the effects of malnutrition and disease than are adults, and thus require more assistance more rapidly; and second, it means that the human future of this country hangs in the balance. What we do or do not do today will affect Rwanda for generations.

To make matters worse, large numbers of these children are orphans, or are unaccompanied by adults. Desperate parents are even leaving their children with UNICEF and other relief agencies, knowing that special areas have already been established to give

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such children priority assistance. Unaccompanied children are being dropped off by the truckload at the office and warehouse that UNICEF established in Goma, Zaire, in anticipation of the current crisis.

Cholera and measles have wasted no time in making their appearance. Already thousands are sick and dying. If these and other diseases are not quickly controlled, they could wipe out large numbers of refugees almost overnight.

The international community, which has been trying to keep up with the Rwandan crisis in its various phases by mounting a substantial, multi-faceted humanitarian presence inside and outside the country, must now respond on an entirely different scale. It may be that only military forces have the equipment and supplies on hand, as well as the man-power and logistical capacity to begin to meet the emergency needs of millions of Rwandan refugees requiring immediate help. Now that the fighting in Rwanda is over, a massive, short-term, exclusively humanitarian mission by the militaries of different nations, seconded to the humanitarian agencies under the United Nations flag, should be considered.

Meanwhile, the new government of Rwanda needs to do everything in its power to allay the fears of the refugees and work with the United Nations to create conditions for their speedy return home and for a resumption of harvesting and planting. National reconciliation and stability will obviously not come about with millions of Rwandans camped -- hungry, ill, and desperate -- along the country's borders.

As the Secretary-General described earlier, and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hansen informed you on Wednesday, the United Nations is coordinating a major relief effort in cooperation with numerous countries.

UNICEF is doing its part -- in the context of the larger UN and still larger international response -- not only to assist the refugees but also to re-establish the infrastructure inside the country that will facilitate their prompt return. We have 100 staff and experts on the ground in all the vital points of the current crisis, with more on the way. We are concentrating our assistance in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, psycho-social needs for traumatized children, peace and humanitarian rights mobilization, and income generation -- the idea being to maintain a continuum between relief and development in order to facilitate as rapid a return to normalcy as possible.

As an integral part of the United Nations appeal for \$434 million issued today, UNICEF is seeking \$37 million from the donor community.

The vast majority of Rwandans who have crossed into neighbouring Zaire over the past ten days can still be saved. This exodus without parallel in recent times presents the international community with an opportunity to show that modern civilization, with its capacity to send people to the moon and bring them back safely, truly cares about the fate of people on earth -- all the earth's children.

I shudder to think of history's judgement of us if, as we monitor explosions on far-away Jupiter, we permit millions of our Rwandan neighbours to die of hunger and easily preventable diseases.

I can only reiterate -- on behalf of the children of Rwanda -- the urgent need for the international community to act immediately to provide the support that is required.

A UN Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal will be launched on 22 July by the Secretary General and USG Peter Hansen simultaneously in New York and Geneva. It will cover the period July-December 1994. The UNICEF component of the Appeal will address the following activities:

- **Health:** The provision of ORT will be an important intervention to help prevent diarrhoea-related deaths. The acute shortage of basic drugs and equipment in camps and still functioning health centres will receive special attention. Whenever possible, vaccination campaigns will be undertaken against measles for all children 1-2 years old. TT vaccination for pregnant women will also receive high priority. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 9m**
- **Nutrition:** Supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes will be given to selected nutritionally vulnerable children and women to compensate for specific deficiencies in energy, protein, vitamins and minerals in their diets. Micronutrient deficiency Anaemia (IDA) and Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) will be addressed through the distribution of Vitamin A capsules and iron tablets with folate supplement. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 7.5m**
- **Water and Sanitation:** To address the high incidence of diarrhoeal diseases and bacillary dysentery, rehabilitation and/or construction of new water sources will be undertaken, as well as rehabilitation of municipal sewerage system (Kigali) and construction of appropriate latrines. Personal hygiene and solid refuse/garbage disposal will require very specific health education activity and strong community monitoring system. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 4m**
- **Education:** Basic education materials on numeracy, reading and writing with particular emphasis on health, nutrition, sanitation and peace education will be provided with appropriate teacher training. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 4.65m**
- **Psycho-Social Needs for Traumatized Children:** Development of psycho-social rehabilitation interventions for the traumatized children and their families and strengthening the community's capacity for crisis management to cope with psychological stress of traumatized children. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 1.5m**
- **Peace and Humanitarian Rights Mobilization:** UNICEF will support press and radio diffusion of information on peace, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, women's and human rights. Creating an environment for dialogue among children and youths is the most viable means of changing long-standing ethnic

hatred attitudes. UNICEF will promote "Child to Child" techniques for peace with teachers in the basic education project to further dialogue and attitude change for the next generation. UNICEF will also support dialogue on peace through community-based sentinel surveillance. Community feedback sessions on the results of household surveys on feeding and hygiene practices will open the stage for introducing peace themes. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 0.35m**

- **Relief Items and Income Generation:** In order to prevent pneumonia, improve personal hygiene, enable preparation of food, facilitate the construction of shelters and latrines, essential items such as blankets, soap, domestic utensils, carpentry/masonry tools, etc., will be provided. Small business development programmes for women will be undertaken. **Total UNICEF requirement: US\$ 5m**
- **Goma/Bukavu Addendum:** Urgently needed items for Rwandan refugees in Goma/Bukavu (Zaire), including cholera kits and water supply equipment, were added as an addendum to the Appeal and total US\$ 5 million as noted on the table below.

UNICEF Requirements from Consolidated Appeal--July to December 1994

Sector	US \$ Value	US \$ Value addendum
Health	9,000,000	1,000,000
Nutrition	7,500,000	1,000,000
Water and Sanitation	4,000,000	1,000,000
Education	4,650,000	
Psych-Social Needs of Traumatized Children	1,500,000	
Peace and Humanitarian Rights Mobilization	350,000	
Relief and Survival Items	5,000,000	2,000,000
TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	32,000,000	5,000,000
GRAND TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	37,000,000	