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Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
at the close of
the General Debate of the 1990 UNICEF Executive Board

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

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New York - 18 April 1990

Madame Chairman,
distinguished Members of the Board,
and colleagues:

We have enjoyed two days of stimulating discussion, comments and ideas. They reflect not only this organization and movement called UNICEF, but the winds of change and opportunity swirling around us. No one listening to this debate could not appreciate that these times are historic for children. Indeed, the 1990s could easily prove to be the decade that children came into their own as a priority issue of world affairs.

Any listener to this debate also cannot miss that UNICEF is a central actor in making that watershed a reality ... principally by our programme cooperation with countries, but also by our collaboration with other inter-governmental, bilateral and non-governmental partners, and by our

programme advocacy for children. And it is also obvious that UNICEF has an Executive Board that is determined that this organization must make the most of its capacities and potential at this historic moment.

Your statements during the past two days have set a high standard for the debate over the next 10. We look forward to that debate, Madam Chairman, and to the guidance and constructive leadership which Board members offer.

World Summit for Children

The World Summit for Children has, obviously, been a predominant theme of this year's General Debate, as it will continue to be throughout the Executive Board session. Over 52 delegations spoke to reaffirm their support for the Summit initiative and their enthusiasm for its potential contribution to the wellbeing of children.

The delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy expressed particular concerns on the progress of preparations for the Summit and the Secretariat's responsibility. The distinguished delegate of Italy spoke for all of us, I think - and was joined by the delegates of FRG, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States - when he underscored the imperative that the Summit be well-planned, focussed on selected issues and achievable goals, and lead to clear commitments for every country. The discussion at the first meeting of the Planning Committee's Working Group on the Declaration was certainly consistent with this view, and I am confident that the drafts to be prepared by the Working Group's chairman will reflect this strong consensus.

The delegate of the Federal Republic of Germany expressed concern over the pace of planning, and encouraged that the format and plan of the Summit be determined at the earliest possible date. I know that the members of the Planning Committee share this concern, but also believe that a full process of consultation and consideration is necessary - both within their capitals, and among governments - before firm decisions are made, as well as that the format of the meeting must reflect the selected Agenda, which is also yet to be determined. Both Working Groups - on the Declaration, and on Format - particularly wanted to hear further comments expressed by governments in this Executive Board context prior to committing ideas to paper.

I should mention that the chairmen of both Working Groups - Minister Abdoulaye Diallo of Mali of the Format Group, and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden of the Declaration Group - will be joining us this week to hear your comments in the Programme Committee as well as to consult with governments directly as they prepare their work.

The distinguished delegate of Norway expressed concern that the Summit initiative is, in fact, moving too rapidly, and expressed the views that the idea should have been more thoroughly debated at last year's session of the Executive Board, and that the Norwegian Government is not fully convinced of

its cost-benefit ratio for children. As the distinguished delegate noted, I first put forward the idea of a meeting of world leaders - really as a question - in the State of the World's Children, 1989 in December 1988. The majority of members of the Executive Board did address the question at the 1989 session, with almost all expressing encouragement for further exploration of the idea. It was not until following the Board session, however, and responding to that encouragement, that several governments began to engage in serious consultations within and among themselves on whether to proceed. I am sure that they did so in the conviction that the majority of the Board supported their effort, and this was confirmed at the special session of the Board in December.

I am particularly encouraged that over 20 delegations affirmed the opportunity which the World Summit presents to positively accelerate many of UNICEF's principal goals, especially including ratification of the Convention, health targets for the 1990s, education for all, etc., and to do so within the context of the 4th Development Decade. As members of the Board are aware, we have always seen the Summit as first and foremost a means for accelerating programme delivery to children - through its advocacy effect, by providing a stimulus and impetus for governments to strengthen and expand programme actions, and by attracting the interest and active participation of broader constituencies for children. It is against these objectives that the success of the Summit will ultimately be measured.

To achieve these goals, I am pleased that many delegations affirmed their conviction that the Summit is intended, in fact, as a summit - a meeting at the highest level of governments - and that achieving this level of participation is essential to its effectiveness.

Summit Budget

The Committee on Administration and Finance will need to resolve any issues on the two Summit budgets, and I am confident that Board members will find satisfactory answers to any questions. I appreciate the Uganda delegate's expression of approval for the Revised Budget Estimates, which are within the ceilings established by the Executive Board at its special session in December.

The Secretariat appreciates the ACABQ's willingness to rapidly review the Revised Budgets for the Summit and Summit-related Mobilization activities. The delegates of FRG and Japan particularly referred to concerns noted by the ACABQ regarding transparency and the need for precise description of the use of staff and consultants. To put these concerns in perspective, please bear in mind that for both the Summit Meeting and for the Mobilization activities, we are requesting just 10 professional posts for a duration of only several months each. The task, as many of you who have been involved in the Planning Committee process are aware, is enormous, and I appreciate the many very positive comments which have been made by governments on the quality and comprehensiveness of the Secretariat's documentation for the Planning

Committee and its preparations for the meeting. Passersby will note that the lights burn bright on the 6th floor of UNICEF House well past midnight and throughout each weekend.

The December Board session, of course, authorized us to commence activities, up to specified ceilings. We delayed committing staff to the Summit Secretariat and UNICEF Mobilization activities until February, and have continued to delay implementation of some posts until they are absolutely necessary, reflecting our common concern that maximum economies be achieved - but without undermining our capacity to support the Summit process and to take full advantage of the programme opportunities which the Summit presents. A substantial part of the Revised Budget document (E/ICEF/1990/AB/L.11) explains in detail the basic functions of the staff support required for the Meeting and the Mobilization activities. I think that, following the discussion in the Administration and Finance Committee, members of the Board will agree that these are very tight and sparing estimates.

I can assure Board members that the exercise of reducing the originally proposed budgets by one-quarter for the Meeting and one-third for the Mobilization activities, as the Board instructed in December, imposed the most severe economies on our planning, and I am convinced that the budget estimates as presented are the minimal necessary to effectively fulfill our responsibilities for the Meeting and to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for extending awareness and programme commitment to the needs of children. We look forward to answering your specific questions during the Administration and Finance Committee discussion.

In order to provide appropriate management control and to assure that all arrangements are made by September, it is necessary for the Board to approve the Budgets to replace the current interim authorizations, and to provide a further authorization to temporarily charge Summit-related expenses to receivable accounts, so that we can assure an orderly and cost-efficient implementation of the project.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to those many Governments and National Committees which have contributed to the Summit budgets, including those new contributions or intentions to contribute announced this week, including those by Turkey and the Holy See.

Programme Issues

Era of Challenge and Opportunities

In reflecting on 1989, the distinguished delegates of United Kingdom and Italy characterized the past year as "a year of dedication and innovation", and as "one of great challenge and, at the same time, of unexpected opportunities". The distinguished delegate of Indonesia pointed out that "regional conflicts have diminished, super power conflict has become less

likely, ideological tensions have eased and most positively, a new look is being given at the amount of military spending required for defence in a less hostile world". Indeed, this is an era of challenges and opportunities.

Several delegations have described their countries' achievements and innovative experiences. The distinguished delegates of Nigeria and Pakistan mentioned their experience in decentralizing decision-making and in using creative approaches to strengthen services at the periphery. The distinguished delegate of Turkey described the major benefits for Turkish children as a result of the personal commitment of the President and the Prime Minister to child survival and development efforts. The rich experiences of so many countries in every region of the world highlight the need for intensified efforts to exchange experiences that will facilitate learning from each other.

Year of UCI

1990 is, of course, the target year for achieving universal child immunization, and it is heartening that so many countries are reportedly close to this goal. Many delegations spoke of their efforts and commitment to reach the goal. It seems fitting for us to pay special tribute to the achievement, despite the civil conflict and economic crisis, of a city like Maputo in Mozambique which reached 90 per cent immunization coverage three years ago and has maintained that level ever since, and of a country such as El Salvador where immunization of under ones now tops New York City. This is an indication of the power of national will and national commitment. The achievement of UCI globally is significant not only for saving over 3 million child lives annually by the end of this year, but because this achievement nurtures confidence that even more ambitious goals can be achieved in the 1990s.

Sustainability

Many delegations have expressed concern about the sustainability of these efforts. The distinguished delegate of Norway has put it very aptly in stating that rapid increases in vaccination coverages can lead to a neglect of more long-term investments in infrastructures and administrative capacities.

We share these concerns, but experience has shown that the UCI effort has highlighted the weakness of existing infrastructure in many countries and has prompted governments to take corrective action. Professor Ransome-Kuti, in describing this process in his acceptance of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award on Monday evening, stated, "the nineties promise to be even more exciting when the systems in place for the delivery of EPI and ORT services will be developed into a health care delivery system responding to the many health needs of our people, particularly of mothers and children". In many countries, the structures used to deliver vaccines and ORT are used for the delivery of essential drugs and other primary health care services. Capacity

building, as mentioned by a number of delegations, is certainly a key concern in the planning of all our support, and 7 per cent of our programme resources is devoted to the support of training.

The concern for sustainability has also led many countries to conclude that many services will have to be self-financing, through cost-recovery and payment for service alternatives, as stated by the distinguished delegations of Benin and Cameroon. The distinguished delegate of Nigeria said that his Government recognizes that cost recovery in the supply of drugs is essential as a means for financing health services, and that it must be done, always, with attention to equity. This explains the urgency of increased support by the donor community for the Bamako Initiative launched by the Health Ministers of Africa in September 1987.

Bamako Initiative

The importance of the Bamako Initiative has been underlined by many delegations, including Algeria, Japan, Norway, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. UNICEF will redouble its efforts to mobilize appropriate levels of resources for ensuring the success of the Bamako Initiative. Delegations such as Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland have stated their concerns about the potential of the Initiative for strengthening maternal and child health services and the importance of community involvement in each step of the process. I wish to assure these delegations that their concerns are our own and that experiences in many countries are most reassuring.

We welcome the United Kingdom's offer to participate in a substantive evaluation of the Bamako Initiative and, although an in-depth assessment of the Initiative's conceptual framework was carried out recently in Sierra Leone, co-sponsored by UNICEF, OXFAM and Health Action International with financial support from the U.K. Government, we will be pleased to arrange for an evaluation in the last quarter of 1990.

The Bamako Initiative has been seen from the outset as the principal means for assuring sustainability for UCI and expanding PHC in Africa in the 1990s. The faster donors increase their support to the Initiative, the sooner we can phase down direct external support to UCI in Africa. The latter is dependent on the former.

Longer Term Needs: Strategies and Goals for the 1990's

We were gratified to hear support for the proposed goals and strategies expressed by the distinguished delegates of Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Several delegations reminded us of the need to adapt the goals to the reality of each country. The Holy See was among those which emphasized the need for national capacity-building to ensure sustainability. As indicated in paragraph 75 of the 1990 policy review (E/ICEF/1990/L.5), and in paragraphs 70 and 71 of the Medium Term Plan, there are already excellent examples of how these global goals are being adapted in national plans. The distinguished delegates of Bolivia, India, and Indonesia have made this point eloquently in describing how their countries' development plans and the UNICEF programmes of co-operation are complementary.

I note with appreciation the remarks of the distinguished delegates of Denmark and Norway on the greater balance among programme areas as outlined in the Medium Term Plan, and I thank the delegation of Switzerland for the lead they have taken in preparing a resolution on the goals for the 1990s. This will undoubtedly facilitate the work of the Programme Committee.

Regarding Switzerland's comment that maternal health seems to be excluded from the priorities, I would like to point out that it is indeed proposed to be very high in the order of priorities for the 1990s. This is reflected in paragraphs 29-33 of the Medium Term Plan and in a separate policy paper on Safe Motherhood (E/ICEF/1990/L.13) which will be reviewed in the Programme Committee. Health, as one of the four priority areas, definitely includes maternal health, and it is noteworthy that several of the goals deal directly with maternal health - including the reduction of maternal mortality as one of the seven major goals.

The distinguished delegate of the Netherlands has reminded us that poverty is the underlying cause of problems which UNICEF strives to overcome. Paragraph 76 of the Goals and Strategies paper states that the long-term viability of the goals for the 1990s is contingent on significant progress in alleviating critical poverty and the debt crisis, improved terms of trade and commodity agreements and increased resource flows for development. This is why UNICEF complements its direct material and technical co-operation programmes with advocacy for what is now widely known as "development with a human face."

The distinguished delegate from the Netherlands also questions the organization's ability to maintain the level of resources for health, as I stated in my opening address, while indicating in the Medium Term Plan that other sectors, especially education, will be receiving a greater proportion of funds during the course of the decade. Let me point out that if our fund-raising goal of 6 per cent annual real growth is achieved, UNICEF would be spending approximately US\$255 million on health (in 1993 prices). On the other hand, if we only achieve the 3 per cent growth projected in the Medium Term Plan (a growth rate comparable to that for the past decade), we would be spending roughly \$250 million by the year 2000, compared with \$240 million in 1990, providing the proportion on health dropped to 30 per cent rather than 25 per cent.

There is no contradiction between spending on health and increased spending in other programme areas. Our experience in the 1980s has shown that the major breakthroughs in child health in the 1990s are most likely to come through improved education, particularly for women and girls, better nutrition, safer water supply and improved sanitation. The sustainability of the health gains of the 1980s will depend greatly on improvements in these other sectors, especially through increased focus on education.

Regarding the very pertinent observations made by the distinguished delegate from Australia, it should be noted that the percentages for each sector projected in the Medium Term Plan are indicative. That is why the Plan refers constantly to the expected increases in one or another sector, and states, in paragraph 202, that the resources for individual country programmes will be distributed in accordance with national needs and priorities. Over the coming years, progress in each of the sectors will be evaluated continually to be sure that our expenditure projections correspond to the priorities of the partner countries and to the UNICEF capacity to support these priorities.

Concerning the observation of the distinguished delegate of the United States of America that the document on strategies seems to imply that all countries should meet all the goals, please be reassured that we do not consider all goals to be easily achievable in all countries nor that they should be achieved at the same time. There are many important pre-conditions for the achievement of these goals, and some of these are elaborated in the document under section V on strategic priorities for reaching the goals and under section VI on programme approaches in different country situations. In paragraphs 92 through 97, it is acknowledged that the least developed countries will be unable to attain most of the goals without extraordinary effort and major external support. On the other hand, many developing countries will be able to set themselves even higher standards before the close of this century. What we are proposing is that all countries should examine the feasibility of these goals and, based on their situations and priorities, should set their own targets for their planning cycles.

Like the delegations of Benin, Cameroon, Canada, Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria, Norway, the United States and Zimbabwe, I strongly agree that Africa should remain the continent of greatest priority for increased attention from UNICEF in the 1990s.

Advocacy

While underlining the important role and function of advocacy, two delegations have sounded cautionary notes. The distinguished delegate of Italy has warned against increasing the resources devoted to global analysis and global advocacy. UNICEF advocacy is essentially based in programme countries themselves. The Philippines' description of advocacy and social mobilization - and the way both form an integral part of the country programme - was a very helpful intervention. This, in our experience, is the answer to

the concern of the distinguished delegates of Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany, that a balance needs to be kept between advocacy and programme delivery in the field. Advocacy and social mobilization are truly part of, and often by far the most cost-effective means for increasing, programme delivery. The statement of the distinguished delegate of Turkey is particularly pertinent here. The economic cost of immunizing 5 million under-fives was approximately US\$28.5 million, some US\$3.5 million of which came from the Ministry of Health, and a majority of that from external assistance. The US\$25 million balance was in the form of donated time by TV, radio, 50,000 imams, 200,000 school teachers, etc. Advocacy leads to political commitment and political commitment contributes to the success and sustainability of programmes. Despite the significant contribution of advocacy towards programme success and sustainability, the programme submissions for this Board show that the budget for advocacy is only 1.1 per cent. In fact, I would suggest that for programme delivery to be effective, the advocacy component should probably be higher.

Acute Respiratory infections and the control of diarrhoeal diseases

I am encouraged by the ARI and CDD programme activities reported by several countries, and by the support expressed by the delegations of China, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, the United States, the Soviet Union and Zimbabwe. Diarrhoeal dehydration remains the major single cause of infant and child mortality, and if we wish to sharply reduce the 7,000 daily deaths still resulting from this cause, the control of diarrhoeal diseases must remain a major area of focus, as emphasized by the distinguished delegate of Japan.

Acute respiratory infections (ARI), and especially pneumonia, account for another 7,000 child deaths daily. Until now the attention in this area has been inadequate for several operational reasons. The operational protocols have now been finalised with WHO, and the treatment regimen has been standardised. A policy review is before the Programme Committee, and the support expressed by the delegations of Australia, Benin, Bolivia, Chile, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and Uganda is most encouraging. In response to the distinguished delegate of Australia, I would like to mention that a Senior Adviser on ARI has already been appointed, and the creation of a Child Survival Unit will provide the field with strong support in this new area of endeavour.

AIDS

I have noted the concern of several delegations - including Australia, Barbados, Benin, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, France, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Uganda and the USSR - on the impact of AIDS on women and children. I am encouraged by their appreciation of UNICEF involvement in this field, and I wish to assure the Board that the Secretariat is painfully aware of the potential impact of HIV infection and AIDS on

mothers and children, and we are thus accelerating UNICEF involvement in AIDS prevention activities. The inter-regional fund for AIDS is being submitted to this Board for approval, to increase UNICEF's capacity to expand activities both in AIDS prevention education and in programmes to address the socio-economic impact of AIDS on families. In fact, we have just concluded an in-house consultation on AIDS with the participation of WHO, the International Children's Centre in Paris and our field staff, to analyse our experience and to plan our next steps in conjunction with other partners. I wish to report that we are also examining the growing problem of AIDS orphans, and we are working in Uganda to support pioneering activities in community support to orphans.

Essential Drugs

The distinguished delegates of Denmark, Italy and Pakistan mentioned UNICEF involvement in essential drugs, and Denmark encouraged the secretariat to be involved in such programmes, particularly in promoting the rational use of drugs. I wish to assure the Board that UNICEF continues to be closely involved in essential drugs programmes, with programme expenditures totalling US\$31 million and drugs provided under reimbursable procurement. UNICEF is the world's largest purchaser of vaccines, and it is not only involved in the supply of drugs but also in training programmes to promote the rational use of drugs, the standardization of treatment regimens and the establishment of logistics systems. As Board Members are aware, essential drugs comprise a major element in the Bamako Initiative, and the issue of pricing and equity are also important concerns.

Nutrition

A number of delegations - including Australia, Bolivia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Mozambique and Oman - referred to programmes to improve the nutritional status of women and children, the control of micro-nutrient deficiencies and the need to reverse the decline of breastfeeding in developing countries. The delegate from Sweden referred to the basic human right to adequate nutrition and the delegate from Switzerland said that she was pleased that nutrition was now getting the attention it deserved. The delegate from Denmark referred to the balanced place of nutrition in the overall strategy for the 1990s. The representative of the Netherlands said that his delegation was not yet fully convinced by the proposed nutrition strategy, but spoke eloquently on the importance of involving people in setting priorities, and of what families and communities themselves can do for children. It is important to be aware that these features are intrinsic to our strategy. The delegate of Canada characterised our strategy and experience as amongst approaches "known to work". We look forward to discussing all these issues further in the Programme Committee. The delegate of India pointed out that health interventions alone cannot ensure child survival and development, and she said that UNICEF should increase the 6 per cent of programme expenditure now devoted to nutrition. While accepting this

point, as evidenced by the programme priorities before you for the 1990s, we need to remember that improved nutritional status is the result of different interventions - including the control of infections, the provision of water and sanitation, the availability of food and micro-nutrients, the improved status of women, their level of literacy and disposable family income. The programme expenditure specified under nutrition does not necessarily reflect the total resources that in fact have a more indirect impact on nutritional status.

Child Spacing

Several delegations - including Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Nigeria, Norway, Sweden, Pakistan, Uganda and Zimbabwe - have mentioned the impact of rapid population growth and have welcomed the section on birth spacing and family planning in the policy review on Safe Motherhood. Since the major issues on family planning and safe motherhood will be debated in the Programme Committee, I shall confine myself here to making only a few observations.

First, we welcome the support for our statement of policy on birth spacing and family planning as set out in the Safe Motherhood paper. The government of India asked us to be unequivocal - and we hope this statement is clear and forthright. Our commitment is certainly to respond always to Government policy - and within this, to advocate the need for attention to the benefits of child spacing. Facts for Life devotes a full chapter - its first - to the benefits and importance of birth spacing, and the second to safe motherhood.

Second, many of our other programme actions provide important indirect support for lowering fertility. Indeed, if you count UNICEF resources devoted to child survival and development, including support of breastfeeding, education and women's employment activities, probably half of UNICEF expenditure is related to lowering fertility and encouraging birth spacing. It is noteworthy that no major country since World War II has dramatically lowered its birth rates without first lowering its child death rates to a level at which the average family can reasonably be confident its first children will survive.

Third, our partnership with WHO and UNFPA is already well established. Indeed, we will hear statements from them this afternoon. Our three agencies are about to send a joint letter to our field staff, emphasizing goals for the 1990s which are common to all three agencies and suggesting ways in which field level collaboration can be strengthened. This, I hope, will provide the basis for collaboration built on complementarity which Board members call for.

UNICEF efforts can usefully contribute to working with WHO and UNFPA, to strengthen health services and - of great importance - to strengthen the knowledge and empowerment which encourages parents' planning. No parent will practise family planning if they are not sure that their limited number of children will survive. The dangers of pregnancies which occur too early or

too late in life, too frequently and too close, need to become common knowledge before many people will think seriously of practising family planning. I think the challenge is both on the side of demand as well as on the side of supply.

Social Costs of Urbanization

As stated by the delegations of Bangladesh, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Thailand, the costs of ignoring problems of urbanization are already visible in increased violence and in the lowering of the standards of social conduct in big cities. Increased child labour and exploitation and poor environmental conditions are also responsible for tens of millions of preventable deaths each year.

UNICEF recognizes these problems, and there are targetted interventions to address them in EPI, nutrition and water and sanitation in many country programmes. Urban basic services in India have been scaled-up in 200 cities and to 15 cities in Thailand. In other countries, especially in Latin America and the Philippines, programmes for street and working children in urban areas are being linked with interventions in the neighbourhoods from which these children come, and in Bangladesh special schools have been set up to reach these children. Much remains to be done, in collaboration with municipal authorities and financial institutions, to break down the barriers between the public and private sectors and to develop a comprehensive approach to urban problems. Management schemes for co-ordinating the thousands of already existing local initiatives must be developed, and UNICEF is working closely with other United Nations organizations and NGOs in this endeavour.

Education

I welcome the strong statements of support for the goals and targets that have come from the World Conference on Education for All. I am pleased with the broad definition of basic education that came from the World Conference, including as it does such important aspects as the focus on early child development and on reducing disparities in educational opportunity, especially for girls and women. The emphasis on the needs of special children is noteworthy, and I believe that every effort must be made to ensure that educational programmes for the handicapped are rooted in the family and community, and to the extent possible, that they are an integral part of mainstream educational opportunities. The inclusion of a broad range of educational channels is important, combining formal and non-formal education and what has come to be called the "third channel" - the many means of communication available in today's world, including the mass media.

The World Conference proved to be a strong example of the kind of mobilization of new alliances that will be needed to push this initiative towards its goals, and UNICEF looks forward to collaborating with partners - old and new - for achieving education for all.

I appreciate the endorsements of several delegations for increased allocations to basic education in the Medium-Term Plan. While the details of co-operation between agencies for the follow-up are still being worked out, we believe that a good beginning has been made. The four original sponsoring agencies are working together to ensure continued close co-operation, and I will be meeting the heads of the other four sponsoring agencies in June to pursue this. The new Joint Committee on Education, to which I referred in my opening address on Monday, will be ready for discussion on concrete proposals in the fall of this year. This subject will also be discussed in Programme Committee.

Water and Sanitation

I am grateful for all the observations made by the distinguished delegations of Cameroon, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland and Uganda on UNICEF programmes of co-operation in water and sanitation. UNICEF has supported these programmes bearing in mind the concerns for cost-effectiveness, increased efficiency and sustainability. I am happy to report that at any given time, 85 per cent of UNICEF supported wells are in running order and many wells and pumps are now maintained by communities. Some of the innovations introduced by UNICEF include production bonuses in the Sudan, appropriate drilling technologies in Nigeria, and cost-sharing or cost-recovery systems in Bangladesh and Guatemala. Sanitation remains the major challenge, and this shall be the focus of our operations in the current Medium-Term Plan.

Women

I am happy to note that all the delegations who spoke on women and development - including Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Egypt, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and Uruguay - noted the critical importance of UNICEF co-operation in this area. We will continue to focus on redressing gender disparity in all programme areas.

Environment

Several delegations - including Barbados, Chile, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea and the USSR - referred to the need for attention to environmental degradation and its impact on children. Norway and the Netherlands underscored the important link between the high rate of population growth and strain on the environment. We have noted the Netherlands' recommendation that the impact of environment on children should be included among the topics for the Summit declaration. We appreciate Poland's suggestion that environmental concerns be included in UNICEF goals and strategies for the 1990s. UNICEF priorities for the decade of the 1990s

seek to improve the physical environment by combating diseases and malnutrition and promoting education.

Adjustment and Debt Relief

Many delegations - including Benin, Bolivia, Cameroon, Egypt, Mexico, Mozambique, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden and Uruguay - referred to the difficult economic circumstances and the debt burden of many countries as major constraints in allocating additional funds to social programmes, particularly for activities benefiting children. Some delegations noted that the issue of debt relief for children might be an important theme for the Summit.

I have noted with appreciation many delegations' reference to the need to give special attention to vulnerable groups during adjustment and transition periods. I also welcome the positive comments on UNICEF efforts to support "adjustment" and "development with a human face". I can assure the Board that these efforts, which are very modestly financed, will be sustained during the important decade ahead of us.

We are appreciative of the support for the debt relief for children schemes. We are acutely aware of the many complications inherent in such schemes, and for that very reason we are co-operating with the Inter-American Development Bank in launching the "Human Investment" scheme. I would like to underscore that it is not my intention that UNICEF should invest in developing the expertise required for managing debt swaps.

Evaluation

The delegations of Canada, France, Italy, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States mentioned evaluation. The Evaluation Office and the Training Section have been organizing regional training workshops emphasising the role of evaluation in the country programming process. The need to plan evaluations at the start of a programming cycle and methods for feeding those results into the next plan is emphasised. The inclusion of evaluation results in country programme recommendations is also recommended at these workshops.

The Evaluation Office is developing a data-base which summarizes over 300 evaluations carried out every year, and it keeps field offices informed of findings and recommendations through a newsletter. A task-force is developing guidelines for the evaluation of new initiatives to be undertaken during this decade. Womens' projects and growth monitoring and promotion activities have been selected for thematic evaluations in 1990. A women's project in Jamaica has been evaluated and two projects in Africa will be selected in the coming months.

Emergency

I am grateful to the delegations of Egypt, Italy, Japan, the Sudan and the United States for their words of appreciation on Operation Lifeline Sudan. Phase I of this operation owes its success to the worldwide moral insistence on the need to help civilian populations trapped in the midst of war and financial support from a wide range of countries. I am sure that the words of appreciation of the distinguished delegates are indicative of their continued interest and support for OLS/Phase Two. The UNICEF appeal for phase two is due shortly, and I am happy to note the renewed commitment of the Government of Sudan to the concept of the corridors of peace which made the success of phase one possible - and which will determine the outcome of phase two.

The delegate of Italy asked about our efforts to strengthen UNICEF's capacity for responding to emergencies. I am pleased to announce that in the last month, we have appointed Charles La Muniere, one of the United Nations' most experienced persons in emergency work, to be Director of UNICEF's Emergency Operations. He will work closely with Programme Division, drawing on the full strengths of our desks and field offices, together with more specialist staff in countries where they are appointed. Let me take this chance also to explain that our collaboration with others in emergency operations has grown stronger over the years, including in capacity building. In response to the US delegate, let me explain that we have many links with UNHCR at country level. We have also participated in joint training courses with UNHCR and the World Food Programme on preparation and response to emergencies at field level. CCSQ (Ops) has this month agreed to undertake a review of UN operations for refugees and displaced persons. UNHCR will be taking the lead in this review.

Central and Eastern Europe

1989 was a year of dramatic and historical changes in Central and Eastern Europe. Several delegations - including Egypt, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Nigeria, Norway, Sweden, Pakistan, Poland, UK and the USA - expressed their views on the situation and on possible programmatic responses. I think all delegations recognise the needs that may exist during transition in these countries. The distinguished delegate of Hungary described the situation most vividly. The frank description of the needs of children in Romania were moving indeed - together with the welcome news of early action by the new government. These issues will be pursued in the Programme Committee, but let me note here what I think are three points of broad agreement - and a key issue yet to be resolved.

I hear Board members saying, first, that UNICEF needs to respond, during this transition period, when many children in Eastern and Central Europe are in obvious need.

Second, in responding, UNICEF must ensure that there is no diversion of resources committed to the support of developing countries.

Third, the proposed areas of action identified in the conference room paper on Eastern Europe seem well judged in relation to the present needs of the countries concerned, according to the assessments voiced by a number of delegates.

The issue yet to be resolved is whether or not general resources should go to supporting any of this endeavour. The issue concerns not the emergency supplies, which can be covered by special and additional fundraising, as already done by the National Committees of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands, or secretariat services such as the Richard Jolly mission to Eastern Europe, but support for workshops, consultants, technical exchange, etc., for which I had suggested a maximum of \$1 million per year. This issue can be discussed further in the Programme Committee, but let me simply note here that, compared with alternatives, US\$1 million per year of general resources - the equivalent of a quarter of one per cent of general resources added to the programme expenditure foreseen in the Medium-Term Plan - would in my view be simpler and more transparent and make for speed and flexibility of response and for broad based support of the sort needed. We will also in this way be able to utilize some of the non-convertible currencies we have accumulated which, for the time being, cannot easily be used for assistance to other countries. I have no doubt at all that if UNICEF is seen as being concerned with the needs of children in Eastern Europe at this time of difficult transition, the increased level in voluntary contributions will exceed, by far more than US\$1 million, the level we would receive if we are seen as not being responsive. It is also worth noting, I think, that UNDP and UNFPA both already have general resource programmes in Eastern Europe, with UNDP spending over US\$6 million from general resources in 1989.

Inter-agency Co-operation

A number of speakers have mentioned the inter-disciplinary nature of UNICEF work and the special benefits that derive from the partnership of many organizations acting as an "alliance for children". I have referred earlier to the Task Force on Child Survival and the UNESCO/UNDP/World Bank/UNICEF sponsored World Conference on Education for All, in both of which UNICEF has played a leadership convening and supporting role.

In a similar vein, delegations such as Australia, Denmark, India, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States have stressed the importance of inter-agency collaboration. The Board is aware that UNICEF has placed particular emphasis on supporting the joint United Nations efforts to achieve greater impact through a rational approach to development co-operation in countries, and we believe that UNICEF has a special responsibility in carrying out this effort for improved co-ordination. As the distinguished delegate from the United Kingdom has noted, the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes has been asked by the Executive Heads of the United Nations system to chair the inter-agency committee on these issues for the last two years. I am encouraged that delegations wish UNICEF to pursue this vigorously, although

I am conscious that these issues require considerable staff time, often at a relatively senior level. The landmark General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the proposed International Development Strategy will pose new challenges for us all.

Our experience has convinced us that to achieve this sort of collaboration, clear consensus goals need to be articulated and adopted. I agree with the delegations of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands that the goals and strategies for the 1990s are linked to the important question of inter-agency collaboration. The Programme Committee will have the opportunity to discuss developments that are still underway, such as the emerging UNFPA/WHO/UNICEF agreement on common efforts to strengthen the Resident Coordinator System and collaboration in country programming processes.

External Relations Issues

The broad area of External Relations has drawn considerable comment - on the work of National Committees and NGOs, on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit for Children, on the role of advocacy and on the Evaluation and the subsequent report on the future role of UNICEF External Relations.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Satisfaction at the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been expressed by virtually all delegations - including Barbados, Belgium, Byelorussia, the Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Finland, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. More than 20 referred to the process of ratification as already underway in their countries. The Holy See took the opportunity to announce its accession to the Convention, the fourth to do so, following Ecuador, Ghana and Viet Nam. Particularly gratifying, moreover, was the obvious importance of the Convention as a framework for efforts to improve the situation of children - as noted by the delegations of France, Indonesia, Japan, Norway and Turkey. It is "a vision, a commitment and a tool for progress" as Norway put it. The delegate of Indonesia testified to the integral relationship between the commitment of such global initiatives and planning at the national level, and also pointed out, as did a number of other speakers, the link between the Convention and the "strategic opportunity" of the World Summit for Children.

In the words of the United Kingdom delegate, the Convention's ideas - developed over the long period preceding its adoption - "will enrich the Summit and the Summit will strengthen commitment to it." This is precisely the kind of mutual reinforcement of international initiatives to which I alluded in my opening statement.

Funding

With regard to Programme Funding, many donors - notably the German Democratic Republic, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom - reiterated their commitment to continued financial support for UNICEF especially through contributions to general resources, and encouraged others to increase those resources. Several delegations also mentioned the important financial support from National Committees. I express once again, our deep appreciation for all of our donors, most notably Governments and National Committees, for their continuing support.

The delegations of Finland, Japan and Korea expressed concern about the increasing proportion of supplementary funding in UNICEF resources. It is my strong conviction that as large as possible a proportion of UNICEF funding should be for general resources, providing this does not diminish our total funds. We understand, however, that many donors are unable, for various reasons, to confine their support to general resources. It is noteworthy that in 1989 supplementary contributions were down by some 20 per cent and general resources in contributions were up by approximately 7 per cent.

I am pleased to hear the increasing support for the Bamako Initiative and I hope this will be reflected soon by a significant increase in financial support to the programmes to which African countries have demonstrated their strong commitment.

National Committees

I welcome the participation at this Executive Board of leaders of nearly two-thirds of the National Committees for UNICEF - many as members of national delegations.

Many delegations - including Australia, Cameroon, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States - spoke of the valuable work of National Committees, which not only contributed \$138 million in the past year but their advocacy and mobilization efforts have made UNICEF a household name throughout much of the industrialized world.

Many Committees participated in the external relations evaluation and UNICEF is grateful for the guidance and expertise they provided. Now we look forward to undertaking a more integrated and coherent approach to our partnership.

As the external relations evaluation pointed out, effectiveness and impact depends to a very large extent on the flow of communication between the Committees and the Secretariat.

Following on the successful advocacy for the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, most of the Committees have taken up the challenge of

mobilizing support for the World Summit for Children, and nearly half have already made contributions for Mobilization activities. As the Chairman of the Standing Group put it, the Summit provides Committees with a particular opportunity to reach out for new partners in their own societies.

National Committees in Eastern and Central Europe face new challenges; their peers in other countries stand ready to help. I concur with the Romanian delegate's expression of gratitude towards the Committees of Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and the Netherlands for their generous emergency assistance to Romania.

The spirit and commitment of the National Committees was personified by the late Robert Nestdale, whom many of you will have known from his vigorous participation and leadership of the Australian Committee. Even as he struggled with the illness which was so soon to take his life, Robert undertook his own mission to successfully promote the UNICEF cause - and the World Summit for Children - at the Commonwealth Summit in Malaysia last October.

Non-Governmental Organizations

The role of non-governmental organizations in any sustained development initiative or action is clearly a basic prerequisite, and this is well-recognized within UNICEF. Many delegations - including France, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sweden and Turkey - have underscored this in their statements.

The successes of the child survival and development revolution have shown beyond doubt the achievements possible through the building of alliances between international agencies, Governments and NGOs. China, the Côte d'Ivoire and Peru have all testified to the importance of such alliances in the progress made in their countries. In addition, the delegations of Barbados, India, and Turkey cited instances of important co-operative efforts to improve the situations for children. The past year also has seen particularly dramatic evidence of the importance of NGO collaboration in the area of child rights. The NGO community deserves much credit for mobilizing the will that brought about the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We see this again in the contribution NGOs are making in accelerating the ratification process.

UNICEF and the United Nations system will need to rely on such collaboration to realize the "Education for All" goals set by the Jomtien conference. Similarly, it is our hope that the World Summit, in concentrating on 'doable' objectives, will find ways to better co-ordinate and strengthen the work already underway on behalf of children. We have just heard from the President of the NGO Committee on the ways that the NGO community is preparing to use the World Summit as a fulcrum for greatly expanded efforts to mobilize action for children, and also to follow-up on the Education for All initiative. Strengthening these alliances will be a key element in reaching the goals for the 1990s.

UNICEF is keenly aware that NGOs provide an invaluable channel for bringing services to children who would otherwise be unreached. My colleagues and I look forward to the discussions in the NGO Forum on this topic over the next few days. I hope all of us will have an opportunity to study the conclusions from this important gathering. We also appreciate the encouragement of the delegations from Uganda and Zimbabwe to find ways of working with NGOs to address the specific problems of children in South Africa.

External Relations Evaluation and Report

Already we have had many constructive and useful comments on the subject of external relations and we look forward to the discussion in the Programme Committee which will provide the opportunity for an even more detailed and comprehensive exchange of views.

I am very happy to note that the comments so far agree with the findings of the evaluation, which the Secretariat values and accepts, as well as with my own strong conviction that advocacy and social mobilization are of increasing strategic importance for our programmes. I hope that we can live up to the expectations of the distinguished delegate of Nigeria, whose Government has such faith in our efforts to put forward its cause forcefully and sensitively. The experience of Mexico in its national solidarity campaign to foster an understanding of interdependence underlines the importance of advocacy for attitudinal change.

In fact - as suggested by the delegations of Canada, Chile, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Poland and the Republic of Korea - advocacy and direct programme activities are mutually supportive and are proving a most cost-effective means for greatly increasing programme delivery at the country level. UNICEF surely benefits from a programming process that integrates the external relations function as a matter of course at field level.

As is the case with globally defined goals, specific advocacy efforts must be defined and applied locally, within the country context, and planned carefully as part of the country programme. The bulk of our advocacy efforts take place in this context and will continue to do so.

As to the "spectacular" advocacy referred to by the Danish delegate, these tend to be opportunities resulting from factors outside the UNICEF realm of influence, but which offer such potential for advancing the cause of children that UNICEF has felt it would be wrong not to grasp them. These may be seen as "extraordinary" opportunities and should be viewed as such, and as complementary to, and not detracting from, our ongoing advocacy efforts.

The words of praise for the Director of our Evaluation Office and his team have been gratifying. The Secretariat has found the evaluation most helpful and pertinent, and we are following its recommendations very closely as we plan for the 1990s. In fact, steps are already being taken to implement many

of its specific recommendations, such as an evaluation of publications and information services, the establishment of the External Relations Committee, and in general, a more planned, strategic and integrated approach to external relations activities.

Some delegations have expressed their intention to discuss the evaluation findings thoroughly during the Programme Committee. I have noted the requests for greater clarity on future priorities and activities than those set forth in the Secretariat paper. We look forward to a further discussion on this in the Programme Committee.

A number of delegations - including France, Hungary and Poland - have commented on the importance of the Geneva Office and the role it can be expected to play in the 1990s. We fully appreciate the importance of the Geneva Office in the European context, especially at this time of dramatic change, and we will be reviewing its needs in the budget review this fall.

Operations Issues

I have listened very carefully to Board members' concerns on operational issues. This year, we have continued the constructive practice of a frank and open debate on issues of importance in the areas of finance, administration and supply, and we look forward to a more detailed discussion of these issues during the Committee on Administration and Finance.

Procurement

The delegates of Egypt, India and the Philippines mentioned the important role that UNICEF's procurement policy can have in encouraging industry and capacity-building in developing countries. UNICEF recognizes the importance of increasing country procurement in helping to develop national capacity, as demonstrated by the increase in the value of our purchase orders placed in developing countries from US\$56 million in 1988 to US\$78 million in 1989. This represents an increase from 23 per cent of total procurement in 1988 to 28 per cent in 1989. As the range of commodities available in developing countries continues to increase, new potential sources will be identified and encouraged to participate in UNICEF procurement activities.

The delegate from India suggested that UNICEF should "consider a change in procurement policies...giving preference to local industry without compromising quality of products". I am pleased to respond that no change in policy is required for this; we already follow this principle. As an example, in 1989 the value of purchase orders placed by UNICEF with suppliers in India greatly exceeded that of every country other than Japan.

Staffing

Several delegations - including the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Republic of Korea, Turkey, United States of America and Zimbabwe - commended UNICEF staff for their hard work and dedication. I wholeheartedly agree with these comments. UNICEF staff are quite frequently called upon to work long hours under extremely difficult circumstances, often with no relief or break over extended periods. On behalf of all UNICEF staff, I extend my sincere gratitude for your kind remarks.

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Madame Chairman, distinguished delegates:

Perhaps if any illustration was needed of the inter-relationship of our programme efforts - of programme delivery in the field, of advocacy and of social mobilization worldwide, allow me to recall the personal anecdote of the distinguished Minister of Health of Chile. As a small boy he participated in a vaccination effort in the late 1940s which marshalled the technical and human resources to immunize a million people in two days. There was even a specially prepared Walt Disney film brought on a UNICEF truck along with the vaccines and other supplies. Beyond the immediate effect, this vaccination campaign obviously left an indelible impression on some of those who took part in it, and today, UNICEF and Chile stand to benefit from the leadership of this small boy, now Minister of Health.

Is not UNICEF's fundamental purpose to protect and affect each new generation of children, so that they, too, have the capacity to grow up to be their countries' ministers of health, their prime ministers, their managers of business, their newspaper reporters, their dentists and teachers?

Finally, Madame Chairman, it may be appropriate to close this General Debate on the historic initiatives now underway for children with three quotations from Jean Monnet, who is considered by many to be the dedicated father of the New Europe now emerging, and a hero to so many of my generation:

"Let us not sit on opposite sides of the table with the problem between us. Let us sit on the same side of the table, put the problem on the other side and solve it."

In his wallet, he carried a quotation from Ibn Saud, "For me, everything is a means - even the obstacles".

Finally, as I have viewed the world-wide response to UNICEF's support and leadership:

"When an idea answers to the needs of an era, it ceases to belong to those who invented it and becomes more powerful than those who serve it."