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for
International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling (IRTAC)
Conference on Youth in the 1990s

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FOREWORD

UNICEF has a long-standing commitment to providing opportunities to youth-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for constructive activities to promote the well-being of children - a practice bolstered by an active participation during International Youth Year (IYY) in 1985. UNICEF has developed and is promoting the concept of youth-in-service-to-children.

Youth movements have been important in many areas of UNICEF concern including education, health, environment, disability, water and sanitation, nutrition and children's rights. Many youth groups have developed income generating projects to support their service activities. They have set up, for example, at national and local levels, fish hatcheries, vegetable and poultry raising projects and handicrafts. Some also have contributed to the strengthening of primary health care services by building or renovating dispensaries and health posts. Youth NGOs involved in development issues have also organized several training activities on education, health and nutrition. Many youth NGOs have developed strong networks which very often reach the village level through communication activities aimed at raising awareness in the communities on vital issues.

Youth movements have also played an active role in Child Survival and Development (CSD) activities supported by UNICEF. For example they have contributed to making available to the mothers and children of poorer communities in developing countries the knowledge and means to administer oral rehydration therapy (ORT) to combat diarrhoeal dehydration, the number one killer of young children; they have helped in motivating and helping parents to get their children immunized against the main child-killing diseases; in playing a significant role in preserving and promoting breastfeeding; and in educating mothers in the use of growth-charts to detect malnutrition at an early stage. This fruitful cooperation on child-related issues at national level with our field offices is supported by cooperation in the industrialized world with the National Committees for UNICEF.

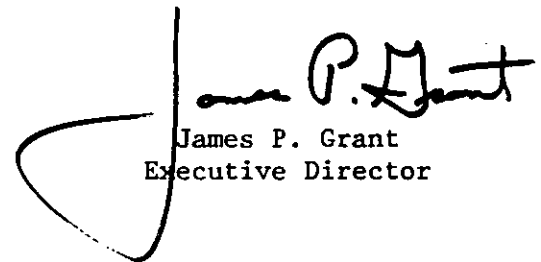
The Convention on the Rights of the Child offers youth NGOs an opportunity to develop and strengthen their relations with UNICEF. The Convention raises global issues about which young people have demonstrated deep concern, and several youth NGOs are already organizing related events in cooperation with UNICEF. Young people have a major role to play in the task of ensuring the Convention's ratification and implementation - it is an important cause to advocate on behalf of children in their national settings.

On the initiative of six governments, a World Summit for Children has been called - a first-ever North-South-East-West Summit - to take place on 29-30 September 1990 in New York, and the agenda will be devoted to child-specific

issues. Youth groups are invited to play an active role in the preparatory work in order to ensure the highest possible attention on priority needs for children worldwide. A Youth NGO World Round Table will be organized in Geneva from 15 to 18 September to mobilize practical action worldwide among international and national youth NGO networks to promote the ethos of "children first" at national and international levels so that progress in their survival, protection and development can be accelerated and sustained.

The Summit will also offer an opportunity for youth NGOs to call on World Leaders to do the "doable" in improving dramatically the situation of children in the world and to pledge their commitment as active partners to achieve truly historic progress for children in the 1990s.

This International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling (IRTAC) Conference on "Youth in the 1990s" shows great promise of contributing to a genuine advancement for counselling by generating understanding and support for the challenges and opportunities conveyed by young people for real and meaningful development for our world.



James P. Grant
Executive Director