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Message by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
in connection with the exhibit
"World's Children and UNICEF"
organized by
Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee

21 June 1990



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UNICEF wishes to congratulate and to thank Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee and those individuals who have offered their talent and determination to organize the "World's Children and UNICEF" exhibit. The organizers' careful study of what UNICEF has been doing and plans to do, in collaboration with concerned people and governments, to improve the unconscionable situation of massive numbers of the world's children has already borne fruit in the production of this exhibit. It is our hope that through these efforts, the important message of the plight of these children, and of the remarkable capacities to alleviate so much of their suffering, will draw new partners into the hopeful efforts depicted in the exhibit. I express my respect for the members of the Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee for their commitment to the search for peace, including a peace for the coming generations of children, as manifest in this inspiring project.

We have entered the 1990s on a new wave of international concern for the survival, protection and development of children, and that concern is increasing rapidly. For example, the unanimous adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations on 20 November 1989, and subsequent progress toward ratification and implementation of the new charter, indicate a new promise in many countries to fulfill the needs of the younger generation and to ensure that their rights are met. Also, the World Summit for Children, to be held at United Nations headquarters in New York on 29 and 30 September, will mark the first time that leaders from around the globe - East, West, North and South - have met for a single common purpose, joining hands to try to resolve some of the universal problems that children encounter in surviving and developing into adulthood. The overall aim of the World Summit is to put children high and firmly on the agenda of the 1990s, giving them priority - or "first call" - on the world's resources in good times or bad, war or peace.

This historically unprecedented World Summit is envisioned as the launching of a decade of government action and society-wide mobilization for the benefit of children, built upon the encouraging experience of the 1980s in which major progress for children was made despite difficult economic conditions and constrained resources.

I sincerely hope that the hundreds of thousands of people who visit this exhibit will join forces with UNICEF in this mobilization to give children - all children - the first call.