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Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
to the
Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Geneva, Switzerland
4 July 1990

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Mr. President,
distinguished delegates:

I am most pleased to participate in the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council as you focus the annual discussion of global economic issues on the well chosen and timely issue of mobilization of resource flows for development.

As several speakers in this session have noted, and as much of the documentation before this Council illustrates, we meet at a volatile moment in history. After prolonged economic difficulties we have begun to see signs of potential for positive change. Brilliant progress has been achieved in the political arena, and signs are emerging of new commitments to search for solutions to our economic problems. Our discussions in this fora, for example, on the need to address the mobilization of resources for development, illustrate that search for new commitments.

I need not dwell upon the difficulties faced by most developing countries and the obstacles now before many developed countries. Among the documents before you, the "World Economic Survey" produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) presents an excellent treatment of the topics at hand. In fact, we in UNICEF continue to benefit from the consistently improving analytical strength of DIESA and from our growing links with them.

As the Survey points out, developing countries have seen a crippling, negative net transfer of financial resources - a staggering increase to US\$32 billion last year, and a total of US\$121 billion between 1984 and 1989. The first result in the well-acknowledged chain-reaction is usually illustrated by gross national product (GNP) figures. As the Survey points out, in the 1980s per capita GNP declined 30 per cent in Africa, 15 per cent in Latin America and 61 per cent in West Asia. Some countries have made progress - the Survey

lists 26 which have experienced increases in real per capita income in the 1980s. I need not belabour the fact that the Survey also lists 59 countries which have retrogressed in per capita GNP in the decade we have left behind, and of these a staggering 20 had per capita incomes which declined greater than 35 per cent.

As we have now all come to recognize, however, the balance sheet only begins with a GNP accounting. This point was reiterated in the excellent Human Development Report recently released by UNDP. International economic matters obviously have a significant affect in human terms, as well, such as on the health and well-being of the world's children. I would like to examine with you today some insights which arise from UNICEF's particular vantage of concern for this vulnerable group.

As we saw repeatedly and all-too convincingly during the 1980s, it is often the poor, and the most vulnerable among the poor - especially women and children - who bear the heaviest burden of suffering during times of economic constraint. Sub-Saharan Africa experienced an unprecedented fall from 80 to 75 per cent in gross primary school enrollment between 1980 and 1987, and dollar resources to education fell by 50 per cent. With education playing such a crucial role in the lives of children - and in the future of societies - the impact of these broad-reaching social and economic influences carries devastating potential, and similar set-backs have been experienced in other social sectors.

Mr. President, several times in this chamber I have addressed the issue of "adjustment with a human face". I know that many members of this Council are aware of and share the concerns of UNICEF that human needs be guarded - not disproportionately weakened - during the structural adjustment process. I believe we are all aware that this work signals an innovative approach to economic problems of today, and I will not go into greater detail at this session, other than to note that this increasingly broadly accepted concept of "adjustment with a human face" is still widely violated in practice.

Mutually reinforcing efforts for children

Fortunately, despite economic hardships of the 1980s, advances in certain focused child health areas have triggered positive action in a number of arenas far beyond the scope of the health field. Momentum has gathered at a rapidly increasing pace in recent years on a number of child-related issues, to the point at which the potential exists to usher in major progress for children of the world. Today, a critical juncture has been reached. A dynamic synergism is accelerating progress on child-related issues at a rate that would simply not be possible for any one issue alone.

My purposes today are: to share with you a few efforts which we believe to have been successful; to urge you forward in an all-out commitment to consolidate this progress; and hopefully, to draw some lessons from these successes for application into a wider field of action.

...Progress in child survival and development

Mr. President, it has been progress in child survival and development (CSD) activities, and especially the massive effort and success toward achieving universal child immunization (UCI) against the six main child-killing diseases by the end of 1990, which has given the confidence and credibility for nations and the international community to take other bold actions on behalf of children, some 40,000 of whom still die every day, a majority from causes readily preventable at low financial and political cost. I am pleased to report to this council that, on the UCI front, coverage at the end of 1989 reached 71 per cent globally - a major achievement in itself, considering that only some 20 per cent of the world's children were immunized at the beginning of the decade, before acceleration efforts began. If we can maintain the current momentum (and take full advantage of the forthcoming World Summit for Children), immunization coverage will reach 80 per cent globally by the end of 1990 - an achievement which will prevent more than 3 million infant and child deaths annually. -

...The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Mr. President, the unanimous and timely adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989 - the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and progress toward its ratification and implementation, are major steps forward for humankind. I am convinced that the involvement and keen interest of the expanded alliance for children gathered through CSD activities played a significant role in making this advance possible.

...Education for all

Likewise, attention to children's issues stimulated by support for the Convention as well as confidence won through progress on UCI contributed greatly to the tremendous creativity required to convene, on less than two years notice, the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand in March, and the largest conference ever convened on basic education. I am pleased to report to this Council that the Conference, in which most of the governments represented in this chamber participated, galvanized a new commitment to basic education. The activities and outcome of the Conference will have far-reaching consequences in a field with which, I know, the Economic and Social Council is seized.

Especially significant at Jomtien was the strong and widespread commitment to universal primary education by the year 2000 - to achieving a minimum level of learning for the great majority of children in literacy, numeracy and basic life skills - with the clear understanding that levels of achievement, rather than enrollment figures, must be used as assessment criteria. I might note that the new level of global commitment to basic education for all is vividly reflected in greatly increased allocations proposed for education in the coming years and a new partnership by the four principal sponsors: the UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank. For our part, UNICEF plans to increase funding from 7 per cent of programme expenditure in 1989 to 15 per cent by 1993, and to 25 per cent by the year 2000.

...The World Summit for Children

Advances in all of these areas: child health through CSD activities, the Convention, and basic education have contributed greatly to progress toward the World Summit for Children. The Summit is in turn now having an accelerating effect on both the ratification and implementation of the Convention and on CSD activities, especially UCI, as the leaders of many of your countries focus on the nation's accomplishments in these arenas in preparation for their own participation at the historic gathering.

Mr. President, the World Summit for Children, called on the initiative of the heads of state or government of six countries - Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden - will be held at UN headquarters in New York on 29 and 30 September. It will mark the first time that leaders from around the globe - East, West, South and North - have met for a single common purpose, i.e., to try to resolve some of the universal problems that children encounter in surviving and developing into adulthood. Representatives of heads of state or government of 30 countries are now heavily involved in preparations for the World Summit as its Planning Committee, and leaders from 150 countries have been invited. With many leaders actively considering their participation, nearly 50 heads of state and government have already indicated their intentions to participate. The overall aim of the World Summit is to put children high and firmly on the agenda of the 1990s, giving them priority - a "first call" - on the world's resources in good times or bad, war or peace for the essentials of child survival, protection and development.

...Goals for children for the 1990s

In fact, as preparations for the Summit and its follow-up progress, it is becoming clear that it is the impetus which the Summit will give to action on behalf of children which now brings within human reach the goals and strategies for children in the 1990s which I discussed with this Council in 1989 (and which gained their initial momentum from the CSDR). The goals (list attached), which are the result of an extraordinarily extensive consultative process, establish priorities among what is do-able for children. While each one is deemed feasible by itself, I personally doubt that they could all be achieved in the 1990s without a unique acceleration of political will. The World Summit offers promise of just such a catalyst. The import of this synergistic interaction of efforts is reflected in the projection that, if the goals are realized, the health of hundreds of millions of children will be improved and the lives of some 50 million children will be saved during this decade.

Achieving these goals will also bode well for the environment, a point especially worth noting in this year when UNEP's annual State of the Environment report is dedicated to the interaction of children and the environment. While overpopulation is often regarded as a root cause of many of the world's environmental problems, the historical pattern of demographic change in all nations shows that a sustained decline in birth rates will not be achieved without a sustained decline in child deaths. This is not surprising since most families, before sharply reducing their number of births, must be confident in the survival and health of their first-born children. Programmes to reduce infant and child mortality, coupled with

family planning programmes, will contribute to population stabilization sooner and at lower levels than either type of activity alone. We see this demonstrated in all areas of the world. For example, if all of South Asia last year had had the low child death and birth rates of Sri Lanka, 4.5 million fewer children would have died and 15 million fewer children would have been born.

Goals and strategies - the international community

Mr. President,

The practical and successful experience that UNICEF has had in defining goals and strategies for children for the 1990s gives us conviction that, in broader development arenas, a clear, ambitious international consensus on goals and strategies for the 1990s will help ensure the effective and concerted use of international resources. In the same vein, these goals and strategies will play an invaluable role in creating the climate of confidence and common commitment that is essential if resources are to be mobilized. The difficulties of the 1980s and the need to mobilize new financial resources for the 1990s are well recognized. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that the focus on increased financial resources is closely, and positively, linked to a renewal of international commitment to common goals and strategies. The World Summit next 29-30 September is designed to do just that for the children of the world.

Mobilizing the UN system for the 1990s

If our efforts to develop and help implement international goals and strategies are to be effective, they must closely reflect and help support clearly defined national goals and strategies. In too many countries the adjustments and crises of the 1980s have deeply undermined national capacity to address long term development objectives. The UN system holds the potential of playing a vital role in assisting governments to restore their capacities to define and achieve goals and strategies for the 1990s. To make use of this potential, however, we must mobilize the entire UN system - in a concerted and effective manner. For this effort, perhaps the most important resource available to the UN system is its operational activities. The financial resources are an obvious asset - but even more importantly, the UN system's operational activities are largely country based and carried out by country offices working day by day alongside national governments. In recent years important new approaches for the UN system have emerged, as exemplified by General Assembly Resolution 44/211 and the new agreements reached in the ACC Committee on Operational Activities (CCSQ/OFS).

As this year's report of the Director-General on Operational Activities summarises in a clear and incisive manner, both the General Assembly and the UN system have placed renewed importance on, first, helping governments develop their goals and strategies, and only subsequently structuring the content and mechanisms for UN assistance around these goals and strategies. This philosophy is at the heart of what is called a "programme" approach. It will require from the organizations of the UN system, clear indicators of their programme objectives, along with well-defined impact indicators which

can be monitored. It will also require from the UN system a new degree of flexibility. For example, external technical assistance, capital assistance and local or recurrent costs need to be considered in the same framework, and external assistance should be able to be directed towards the form of assistance that is most cost effective to the country at that time. I recognize the understandable institutional barriers and concerns related to such flexibility. I believe these concerns can be met, and hope that governments and international organizations will work together to implement the provisions that GA Resolution 44/211 have laid out.

To meet these challenges, the UN system has made considerable progress in developing new and innovative ways of supporting more concerted inter-agency efforts. The ACC committee on operational activities (chaired by UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director for Programmes) has undertaken the first major overhaul of the Resident Coordinator system since this system was established. First, the ACC has embarked upon a common programme of training and policy development for the Resident Coordinators and senior field staff of the other UN organizations. This would complement the decisions reached to strengthen the selection process for Resident Coordinators and the development of a UN system handbook.

I believe it is particularly important that the ACC has also reached agreements for a more intensified and structured process of collaboration among the UN organizations at the country level, in support of the national government's goals and objectives. More regular cross-participation in each others' programme processes, common elements in the analytical stages of programme preparation, broader and more active support to Round Table and Consultative Group mechanisms, and the harmonization of programme cycles around the government's own planning cycle are all important mechanisms for strengthening collaborative efforts.

Most importantly, we have now come to realize that there are vital, important alternatives to viewing interagency collaboration as an administrative exercise, one that too often puts forward the lowest common denominator among UN organizations, and without reference to adapting to national needs. Through GA Resolution 44/211 and through the work of the ACC, UN bodies have agreed to organize our collaborative efforts so that supporting a national government's priority objectives serve as the basis for interagency collaboration. We have agreed to approach that collaboration in a way that builds upon the positive differences in mandates and programme processes among UN organizations. These fundamental principles have been clearly and commendably developed in the Director-General's report. As I hope I have made clear, I believe these new approaches are far more important than simply the establishment of more effective mechanisms, important as that is. They shift the focus of large parts of the UN system resources to helping to define and mobilize common action on the priority challenges of the 1990s.

While the General Assembly has set clear, long term directions, and while the ACC has developed a number of complementary approaches, the long and difficult task of achieving these objectives remains before us. We will continue to need the guidance and direction of this Committee - and I hope that this year's discussion in the Third Committee will continue the current

trend. Likewise, we have greatly benefitted from the leadership of the Director-General and his staff. He can continue to count on UNICEF's full support.

Mr. President,

This session of the ECOSOC occurs at a crucial moment in the history of development, and surely at a crucial moment for the children of the world. The beginning of the last decade of the 20th century is not only a great symbolic moment, inviting a dramatic last chance to crystallize the legacy of our century to the next. It is in reality a time of phenomenal change and opportunity. In any century, only twice or thrice does the possibility of fundamental and essential improvement in our global situation lie close at hand. Now is such a time. Whereas often great opportunities must be painfully won from the anguish of war or drastic economic depression, the dynamism of this moment in history is born against a background of relative peace.

The challenge for governments, through the international body charged with economic and social affairs, is how to seize the opportunities of this open moment in history to advance development goals. The theme of this session of the ECOSOC, "mobilizing financial flows for development", with, of course, primary emphasis placed on the human dimensions of development, is perhaps the great key to designing into the international development strategy for the Fourth Development Decade, a new level of effectiveness for global cooperation. The international community looks to the deliberations of this Council for a major contribution in this domain.

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child embodies the most comprehensive listing of goals for the well-being of children. Full implementation of the Convention is the ultimate objective of programmes for children and development. The following goals, derived through a process of extensive international consultation, are essential means to achieve that ultimate objective.

I. Major Goals for Child Survival, Development and Protection

- Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate in all countries by one-third or to 50 and 70 per 1000 live births respectively, whichever is less.
- Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of maternal mortality rate by half.
- Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half.
- Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal.
- By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80% of primary school age children.
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level with emphasis on female literacy.
- Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.

II. Supporting/Sectoral Goals

1. Women's Health and Education

- Special attention to the health and nutrition of the female child, and pregnant and lactating women.
- Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies which are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many.
- Access by all pregnant women to prenatal care, trained attendants during child birth and referral facilities for high risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies.
- Universal access to primary education with special emphasis for girls, and accelerated literacy programmes for women.

2. Nutrition

- Reduction in severe as well as moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half of 1990 levels.
- Reduction of the rate of low birth weight (2.5 kg or less) to less than 10%.
- Reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one-third of 1990 levels.

Virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders.

- Virtual elimination of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences, including blindness.
- Empowerment of all women to exclusively breast-feed their child for four to six months and to continue breast-feeding with complementary food well into the second year.

- Growth promotion and its regular monitoring to be institutionalised in all countries by the end of the 1990s.

- Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production to ensure household food security.

3. Child Health

- Global eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000.
- Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995.
- Reduction by 95 percent in measles deaths and reduction by 90 per cent of measles cases compared to pre-immunisation levels by 1995, as a major step to the global eradication of measles in the longer run.
- Maintenance of a high level of immunisation coverage (at least 85% of children under one year of age) against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis and against tetanus for women of child bearing age.
- Reduction by 50 per cent in the deaths due to diarrhoea in children under the age of five years; and 25 per cent reduction in the diarrhoea incidence rate.
- Reduction by one-third in the deaths due to acute respiratory infections in children under five years.

4. Water and Sanitation

- Universal access to safe drinking water.
- Universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal.
- Elimination of guinea-worm disease (dracunculiasis) by the year 2000.

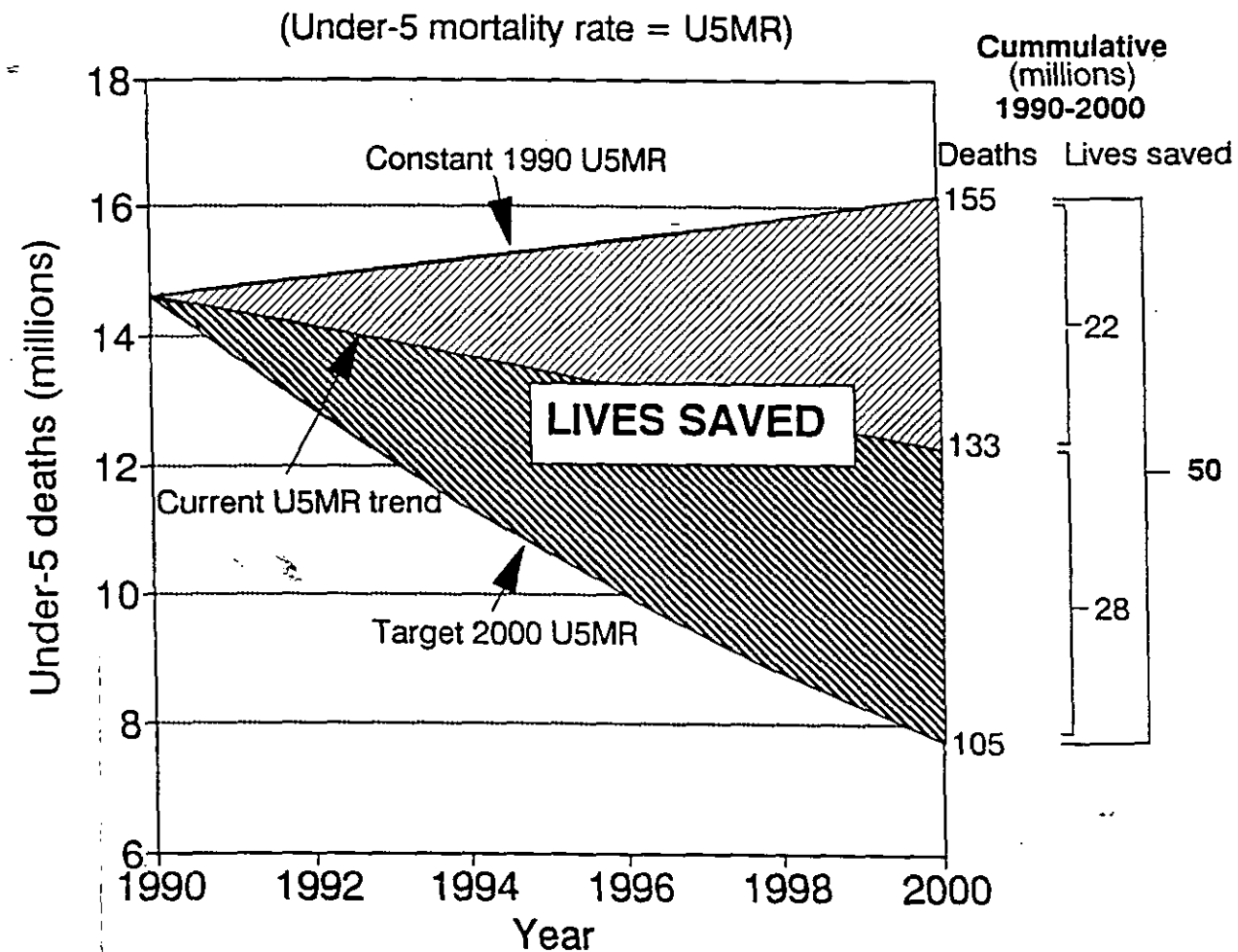
5. Basic Education

- Expansion of early childhood development activities including appropriate low-cost family and community based interventions.
- Universal access to basic education, and achievement of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school age children through formal schooling or non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls.
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy.
- Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living, made available through all educational channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication and social action, with effectiveness measured in terms of behavioural change.

6. Children in Difficult Circumstances

- Provide improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes leading to such situations.

Saving children's lives in the 1990s



Target 2000 U5MR

Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of under-5 mortality rate in all countries by one-third or to 70 per 1,000 live births, whichever is less