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Statement by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
at the conclusion of the
United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities

New York
2 November 1990



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STATEMENT BY MR. JAMES P. GRANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF),
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS PLEDGING CONFERENCE
FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

New York - 2 November 1990

1. Mr. President, I compliment you for the skillful way in which you have conducted this pledging conference, and give my thanks to the bureau for its effective assistance. I also would like to thank all those who have commented so favourably on the work of UNICEF. Your words are of great encouragement to us, in this year of the World Summit for Children, which has also been highlighted by the coming into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the landmark World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand.

2. At this session, 63 Governments have announced pledges to UNICEF for a total of US\$ 172 million for UNICEF 1991 general resources at the current rates of exchange.

3. As in the past, some Governments, owing to a different budget year cycle, were unable to specify their pledges at this conference. However, judging from the past, and on the basis of the best current information

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available, we project for 1991 an additional US\$ 268 million as likely to come to general resources from these supportive countries.

4. This would bring Government pledges to UNICEF general resources for 1991 to an estimated total of some US\$ 440 million, which would be a net amount of about US\$ 40 million more than the 1990 figure of US\$ 400 million, a net increase in nominal dollar terms for 1991 of about 10 per cent over 1990. This is the upper end of the forecast in our Medium-Term Plan. We should, however, realize that one-third of the increase is due to exchange rate fluctuation. In addition to this \$ 440 million, UNICEF expects to receive supplementary and emergency funding in 1991 totalling more than \$ 250 million from governmental sources as well as some \$ 150 million of proceeds from greeting card sales and other form of private sector fundraising income, for a total income from all sources of approximately \$ 840 million.

5. On behalf of UNICEF, and for the children of the world who are the beneficiaries of the efforts you are supporting, I would like to express my gratitude to all those Governments which have announced their pledges. We are appreciative of the many Governments which have maintained their contributions in the midst of difficult economic and financial circumstances. We are especially grateful to those Governments whose pledges represent increases in their contributions, either in United States dollars or in their national currencies. Some of these increases are very significant.

6. Some industrialized countries have increased their pledges significantly. I would like to thank the Governments of Australia, Finland, Netherlands and Portugal for the increases in their contributions.

7. I would also like to thank the following Eastern European countries which have substantially increased their pledges: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

8. Among the newly industrializing countries, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for its increase of 50 per cent.

9. Since UNICEF is a field-based organization and works with the Governments of 118 developing countries, their contributions over and above their inputs into the national programmes of co-operation, are most meaningful. In particular, I would like to thank, for their significant increases, the Governments of Fiji, Kenya, Malawi, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

10. This year, I would like to welcome Albania to UNICEF's family of contributors, as well as welcome back the Governments of Algeria, Chad, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Panama and Paraguay.

11. It is our hope that those countries which have not been able to announce their pledges at this Conference will consider significant increases for 1991.

12. Mr. President, UNICEF depends on the support and goodwill not only of Governments but also of the public - and our budget has always depended on a sizeable contribution from private sources. This is a unique feature of UNICEF of which we are proud. Therefore from the non-governmental organizations we expect in 1991 - via the National Committees for UNICEF, non-governmental organizations, the sale of greeting cards and from individual

and corporate contributions - about US\$ 80 million for general resources, as compared to \$ 60 million for 1990. In addition, private sources contributed \$ 68 million for supplementary funds in 1989 and it is estimated that \$ 72 million will be contributed in 1991. I also wish to acknowledge here the critical work done by so many volunteers, including many from the United Nations diplomatic community, not only in selling UNICEF greeting cards, but also in promoting the cause of children in so many invaluable ways.

13. Mr. President, the newspapers remind us almost daily of the destruction and human misery brought by natural and man-made disasters. UNICEF continues to seek funds for existing appeals - for Afghanistan, for victims of the Gulf crisis, for Mozambique and for Sudan, and, next week, for a new appeal for Angola. I would like to thank those donors who contributed so generously to these operations. Children need peace; they have a right to it - as proclaimed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force two months ago.

14. Mr. President, UNICEF is extremely pleased to see the continued strengthening of a world-wide alliance to improve the well-being of children. This was underlined a few short weeks ago when on September 30, 71 Heads of State or Government and an additional 87 governmental delegations adopted a Declaration and a Plan of Action with an ambitious set of goals to be accomplished by the year 2000. The Summit reflects the momentum which has been gathering over the 1980s. As a result, the immunization of children has increased from 20 per cent at the beginning of this decade to 75 per cent today. Common illnesses like measles, tetanus and whooping cough, which were killing 5 million children a year and inflicting life-long disability on

several million more, are now on massive retreat world-wide. Other major achievements have been the World Conference on Education for All in Thailand last March and the entering into international law, two months ago, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, now ratified by 55 countries.

Rarely can there have been so much unanimous commitment to both principle and action by leadership. The action required will be, first, at the national level. The Summit has urged all Governments to prepare, before the end of 1991, national programmes of action to implement the commitments undertaken in the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action.

All international development agencies are asked to see how they can contribute to the achievement of the goals and strategies for children and development set out for the 1990s before the end of 1991 and periodically thereafter. We in the United Nations System are asked to institute the mechanisms to follow-up on these initiatives. UNICEF, as the world's lead agency for children is asked to prepare, in close collaboration with the relevant specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations System, a consolidated analysis of the plans made and actions taken to support those child-related development goals.

15. The stakes for children are enormous. Thus, 50 million lives would be saved over the next decade by all countries, achieving by the year 2000 an under-five mortality rate of 70 per thousand live births, or a halving - if that is lower - of their 1980 under-five mortality rate. Births would be reduced by a still larger number as parents gain confidence that their children would survive, basic education spreads, and family planning is more

widely practiced. Maternal mortality and child malnutrition would be halved. Universal access would be achieved for both basic education and to safe drinking water.

16. Mr. President, increasing resources will be required in the next several years from both domestic and external sources to achieve these ambitious yet do-able goals outlined in the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, rising to some \$ 20 billion annually by mid-decade. Possibly one-third of this amount will need to come from external assistance, channelled through both multilateral and bilateral assistance, and coming from increased ODA, reallocations within existing assistance flows which now total more than \$ 50 billion annually, or, more likely, a combination of both. The Summit declared, quite correctly, that "the financial resources required are modest in relation to the great achievements that beckon". But it will require from each of the donors a careful assessment of the allocation of their aid resources in relation to priorities for the 1990s. As Mrs. Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom said just after the Summit, "We should probably give a bigger proportion of our aid to things which help children". She went on to say: "Obviously, if you are helping to bring water to a village, everyone profits. If you are helping to have immunization, then many, many people can profit."

17. Mr. President, the alliance of which I have spoken has already demonstrated the potential to save children's lives on a large scale, and has saved some 12 million children's lives over the 1980s, three-and-a-half million last year alone. I firmly believe, however, as I hope do all of you who have pledged help at this Conference, that this is an alliance which will

do more than save lives. It is an undertaking which can move the whole development dynamic towards a new level of achievement. The good we help the parents, communities and societies do in this important dimension must inevitably have a broader impact on their overall ability for self-reliant progress in other dimensions. Now, more than at any time for perhaps 45 years, the way is clear for the world to act together on a shared endeavour toward a common goal. It is an opportunity we must not miss - we may not get another.

Thank you very much for your help in this great common effort.