

File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1991-0010
See also: E/ICEF/1991/CRP.0018

Statement by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
at the
Close of the General Debate of the 1991 UNICEF Executive Board

New York
24 April 1991



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Item # CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1998-02224

ExR/Code: CF/EXD/SP/1991-0010

Close of the General Debate of the 1991 Executive Board. :

Date Label Printed 20-Aug-2002

cover + 25 pp + 06



United Nations Children's Fund Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia
Детский Фонд Организации Объединенных Наций 联合国儿童基金会 منظمة الأمم المتحدة للطفولة

File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1991-0010
See also: E/ICEF/1991/CRP.0018

Distri.
GENERAL

E/ICEF/1991/CRP.18
24 April 1991

ENGLISH ONLY

FOR INFORMATION

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
1991 session

Statement by Mr. James P. Grant

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

at the close of the General Debate of the 1991 Executive Board

Madam Chairperson
distinguished delegates
and friends:

If one was to characterize the general debate which this Executive Board has just concluded, one would speak of it as a highly encouraging sharing of news and views on how we can best keep the promise -- and a sharing of experience on some of the promises already being kept.

In the eleven years that I have been your Executive Director, the Executive Board has grappled with many great issues of policy, direction, emphasis and philosophy. The main issues this year are about how best we should move forward to implement and support goals on which we are well agreed. On the goals and broad directions of UNICEF's programme, we have already achieved a great consensus -- not only within the Executive Board and between Board and secretariat, but, through this Board's leadership and the respect with which its professionalism, competence and vision are held throughout the international community, we have a consensus that is shared in and influences virtually all agencies of the international system, all bilateral assistance agencies, all national governments, and the great host of non-governmental organizations and institutions also engaged in work for children.

We have our goals. We have our strategies. We have effective programmes. We have promising commitments. And in country after country -- developing and industrialized alike -- people are hard at work translating those goals and strategies into comprehensive, cost-effective plans, hopefully to be supported by necessary resources.

The issues which we confront in this Board session -- even the very important and difficult issues of the Budget -- are issues of implementation, of operational capacity, of numbers. They are issues which can be shaped by the quantity and quality of information available to those who examine them, and they are issues over which the perspectives of reasonable and well-meaning people can easily disagree. They are also issues which frank and open discussion can help resolve. I am confident that we will enjoy such discussion during the remaining days of this Board session, and that we shall end our work next Friday with a solid base of organizational capacity -- a firm foundation to support our castles in the sky.

Keeping the promise of the World Summit for Children

Country action

Virtually all delegations noted the success of the historic World Summit for Children as the climatic and cathartic event of an extraordinary year for children. Many echoed the prophetic challenge of Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada at the close of the Summit, when he said "the real work begins now!". As the distinguished Delegate from India reminded us, the world community now has the responsibility of redeeming its pledges. In the words of the distinguished delegate from Sweden, "Promises are not enough, deeds must follow words."

Many such deeds were reported in the general debate. Among them, the delegate from Sudan reported the establishment of a National Council for Children as a *mechanism for Summit follow-up* as well as a new Ministry of Social Development and Welfare. The Republic of Korea has transformed its Ministry of Sports into the Ministry of Sports and Youth, expanding its role to include policy formulation for children. Civil codes in the Republic of Korea are under revision to improve the status of women and reduce traditional disparities between girls and boys. In Bolivia, new legislation aimed at protecting the welfare of minors is being put into effect. We are aware of many other actions -- structural, budgetary and programmatic -- already underway in many other countries, which were not reported in this opening debate. Norway now has a Ministry for Children and Family Affairs.

Many delegations from both industrialized and developing countries noted actions already taken or underway in their countries to prepare National Programmes of Action as called for in paragraph 34 of the Summit Plan of Action. Among them are Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the USSR and Zimbabwe.

Some countries mentioned that this preparation was taking place within the framework established by their respective regional bodies, such as SAARC and the OAU. Bolivia encouraged those countries which have not yet initiated mechanisms for preparing the National Programmes of Action to do so, and UNICEF is prepared, as requested by Liberia, to provide assistance wherever possible.

The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States were among industrialized countries that mentioned a specific linkage between their own National Programmes of Action and a review of their international co-operation programmes in the light of the World Summit. The Netherlands was even more concrete in telling us that it is increasing support for education and raising its level of assistance to Africa by approximately 50 per cent over the decade. The distinguished delegate of the United Kingdom spoke of the need to ensure that the principle of "children first" is reflected in aid budgets and linked it to the need to bring poverty into the policy dialogue at a central level -- a point warmly endorsed by the delegate of Liberia. Additional support for the concept of a "first call" for children on the world's resources was expressed by the distinguished delegates from Bangladesh, China, Colombia, The Holy See, Indonesia, Liberia, the Netherlands and Senegal.

UNICEF's role in Summit follow-up

Many delegations commented on the role of UNICEF in Summit follow-up in seeking to fulfill its special responsibilities under paragraph 35 of the Summit Plan of Action. The distinguished representatives of Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland commented on the importance of monitoring progress toward meeting the Summit goals and the important role UNICEF can play in assisting countries to strengthen national monitoring and evaluation capacity. The distinguished delegates from Bangladesh and Pakistan indicated that each of their countries had created a special unit to monitor annually the progress being made towards reaching Summit-related goals. Mexico reported that President Salinas will personally conduct national reviews of progress every six months, and has invited UNICEF to join him in these exercises. The distinguished delegate of Poland proposed that a special bulletin be produced to monitor countries' progress in relation to the Summit Plan of Action. The delegates from Uganda and Uruguay each noted the need to strengthen national monitoring capabilities. Uganda stressed national capacity-building as a critical element in strengthening monitoring.

The convergence of advocacy and programme delivery

A number of delegations emphasized some important points on implementing the goals for the 1990s. We fully agree with the distinguished Delegates of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy and Norway who cautioned that in the follow-up to the Summit and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF must focus on long-range impact and capacity-building rather than on shorter-term targets that may overemphasize quantifiable results. Canada urged UNICEF to "strike a balance between basic programme delivery and public information, advocacy, and social mobilization efforts." The distinguished Representative of Italy advised that "the starting point must be that UNICEF remains primarily a development organization devoted to programme delivery.

Advocacy, information, mobilization are important aspects of UNICEF activities, but must be instrumental to that end." The Netherlands spoke in the same vein.

I have carefully noted the apprehension of several delegations that UNICEF might be neglecting programme delivery as its primary mission and purpose and that, in the balance between programme delivery and advocacy, emphasis on the former could be lost. May I assure the Board that this apprehension is unfounded. UNICEF remains committed to programme delivery as its first and foremost function, and as, at once, the source and the object of its advocacy efforts. As the "proof of the pudding is in the eating", may I point out that during the last few years, when UNICEF has been involved in high intensity advocacy and social mobilization, the qualitative and quantitative level of programme delivery has been accelerated, not slackened. In terms of programme expenditure, there has been a steady growth from \$365 million in 1987 to \$400 million in 1988, \$501 million in 1989 and \$587 million in 1990, and we expect it to increase by at least another 25 percent over the coming year. In terms of programme results, we have heard first-hand accounts from developing countries in all regions with feedback that basically confirms the acceleration of programme delivery described in the Executive Director's Report, Part II and Addendum 1.

UNICEF's experience in country after country has been that advocacy and mobilization have been essential for effective programme delivery. Accepting the fact that resources for children, and for UNICEF's work, will always be insufficient to meet their needs -- in the words of the distinguished delegate of Italy: "Needs are enormous and resources are scarce"-- we must generate political will so that these scarce resources can be allocated in favour of children. Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria are shining examples of such political commitment on three continents. Thus, during its adjustment exercise, Mexico reduced its administrative and hospital budget but retained intact the preventive and health budget in favour of children. Recently, Mexico has further increased its budget for basic services impacting on children. We have always believed that advocacy and mobilization should be in support of programme delivery. A convergence of the two must occur, keeping in mind that programme delivery remains our fundamental objective. I would like to submit that this applies to both the use and distribution of resources as well as the management time involved.

The Secretariat welcomes the broad range of views about UNICEF's role in Summit follow-up and seeks the advice of the Executive Board. We feel that the document "A UNICEF Response to the Declaration and Plan of Action" (E/ICEF/1991/12) is a useful outline for this organization's efforts to respond to the promise and challenge of the World Summit for Children.

Organizing the Summit

UNICEF was privileged to serve as the Secretariat of the World Summit for Children, and the Secretariat is grateful for the kind words of the distinguished delegate of France and many others in this regard. That the Summit was held at all is a tribute to the hundreds of acts of individual dedication performed by so many members of the Executive Board, in their

professional and personal capacities. The Summit Declaration and Plan of Action were based, as the distinguished delegate from Pakistan reminded us yesterday, on the goals first approved by the Executive Board just one year ago, following their development in the preceding years through a series of broad-based, international consultations, from Talloires to Jomtien.

Notwithstanding the long hours and dedicated service of many UNICEF staff members in this effort, the preparation for the Summit required, as the follow-up of the Summit now demands, the broadest participation of national and local governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and individuals. The legacy of the World Summit for Children is not an expanded institutional mandate for UNICEF, but rather, as several speakers have reminded us, an expanded institutional partnership, an expanded and invigorated Grand Alliance in the service of the world's children.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Equally encouraging were the numerous references to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force with unprecedented speed last September and to the actions underway either in preparation for further ratifications or in response to the principles of the Convention. Virtually all Delegations made reference to the Convention in their interventions. Bolivia, The Holy See, Mongolia, Morocco, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and the NGO Committee pointed out the connection between the Convention and the Summit Plan of Action, the former providing the legal framework and the latter giving indications of measures to be taken to implement its norms and standards.

China, Germany, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom reported that they are in the final stages of preparations for ratification on the national level. The Secretariat joins in the appeal made by the distinguished delegates of Bolivia and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic to countries that have not yet ratified to do so in the shortest possible time. It is notable that Bolivia, Colombia, Pakistan, Romania, Spain and the USSR report having already made major revisions of national law relating to the child, in line with the principles of the Convention, or are preparing such amendments. We further note that Cote d'Ivoire and Uganda referred to the adoption of the African Charter for the Rights and Well-being of the Child, which is meant to complement the Convention on the Rights of the Child with provisions that are relevant to the particular situation of children in Africa.

The Delegations of Canada, Mexico and the Netherlands expressed some concern that follow-up work on the Convention on the Rights of the Child may lead to changed priorities for UNICEF. I would like to assure Delegations that the recommendations in the Executive Board paper devoted to the Convention, which the Board will have the opportunity to discuss later this week, does not contain any proposals for programme activities in industrialized countries. Here the activities will mainly be within the fields of advocacy and education for development and in this, the National Committees could play an important role, where possible and appropriate.

Adjustment with a Human Face

Several delegations, among them Cameroon, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Sweden and the United Kingdom, drew attention to the negative impact of the continuing financial crisis on the well-being of children. Deepening poverty affects governments' efforts to provide basic services to them, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Strong continued support has been voiced for UNICEF advocacy of "Adjustment with a Human Face", by, among others, Nigeria, Sweden, Zimbabwe and the National Committees. I can assure you that UNICEF will continue this effort, and will encourage governments and the international community to plan for sustainable development that emphasized poverty alleviation and the human dimensions of development. As several delegates emphasized, such planning requires improved collection, analysis and use of data in policy design of social indicators, and monitoring of changes in poverty. UNICEF is currently cooperating with UNDP, UNFPA, the UN Statistical Office and the ILO on these issues.

At the country level, UNICEF is cooperating with the UNDP Human Development Country Initiative in assisting governments to formulate a realistic country strategy for human development. This exercise will undoubtedly be supportive of governments' national strategies to achieve the Summit goals. The Fourth International Development Strategy, with its focus on poverty alleviation and human development, referred to by the distinguished delegate of Italy, of course, gives guidance for our efforts.

Encouraging government efforts were reported by, for instance Bolivia, Pakistan, the Sudan and Zimbabwe, in dealing with the social dimensions of adjustment in the structural adjustment programmes they are undertaking, and I recognize and support their calls for international assistance. It is worth noting, parenthetically, that some of the problems faced by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their transition to market-oriented economies also call for Adjustment with a Human Face -- and that the International Child Development Centre in Florence has just completed a report on this theme, drawing upon the Warsaw Roundtable of last October.

Likewise, it is encouraging to note that the United Kingdom has made poverty alleviation a key component in its development cooperation. I also appreciated the remarks by the distinguished delegates of the Netherlands and Sierra Leone in support of restructuring bilateral assistance in favour of basic services.

Debt relief for children

Many delegations raised debt as a critical issue facing developing countries. Cameroon, China, Indonesia, Mexico, Sudan, the U.S.A. and Zimbabwe were among those which noted that the debt burden makes it difficult for countries to maintain financial commitments for social programmes, particularly those which benefit children.

Pakistan and Uruguay were among the delegations stressing the need for debt relief and reduction schemes. They were joined by the representatives of Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Uganda and Yugoslavia as well as the representative of the National Committees, all of whom expressed support for the UNICEF Debt Relief for Children initiative. We are grateful for the position of the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, who stated, "We are prepared to continue and develop activities in this field, in cooperation with UNICEF, e.g. along the lines of the UNICEF/Inter-American Development Bank Initiative with regard to debt for development swaps".

In response to the concerns raised by the delegations of France and Japan, I would like to clear up any misunderstanding that may exist regarding the role of UNICEF in the area of debt relief. There is no intention of UNICEF becoming involved in the substantive discussions related to debt forgiveness agreements. We recognize this prerogative of sovereign states, multilateral organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and other international financial institutions and other groups such as the Paris Club. The UNICEF Debt Relief for Children initiative is designed to work within structures established for the on-going debt relief dialogue. Within that framework, UNICEF will work to ensure additional local currency resources for approved programmes benefitting children.

As delegations may know, UNICEF and the Government of Sudan have now participated in six debt for development swaps which have generated more than US\$2 million in Sudanese pounds for water supply and sanitation programmes. These provide a useful model for Debt Relief for Children initiatives.

Finally, on economic matters, let me welcome the positive statements by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands on how they have started reviewing their own aid allocations in response to the Summit call for each country to re-examine their national budgets, and in the case of donor countries, their development assistance budgets, "to ensure that programmes aimed at the achievement of goals for the survival, protection and development of children will have a priority when resources are allocated". This process of budget review will often be of critical importance for ensuring adequate resources for achieving the Summit goals. Indonesia and the USSR are among those which made the important point that enormous gains could be made if some element of a peace dividend could be brought into their budgetary restructuring.

Sustainability and national capacity building

Several delegations, including Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Holy See, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Oman, Sweden and the Soviet Union, mentioned the importance of sustainability of programmes and the significance of national capacity building in this process. The distinguished delegate from Switzerland, introduced the apt new term "durability of initiatives". Sustainability is, indeed, the test of the soundness of programmes. This applies not only to health programmes but also to all development programmes financed by both external and domestic resources.

In UNICEF we do take the issue of sustainability seriously and we look at it in all its four dimensions, namely, its political, technical, managerial and financial aspects. We will be holding a consultation in June with some outside colleagues. We will engage in an exchange of experience and have a serious dialogue on the subject. Incidentally, an informal session on sustainability will be held tomorrow, and UNICEF hopes to share its experience and thoughts with you and to receive your advice and guidance.

If I may use the case of UCI as an example, we feel its sustainability can be examined through two aspects -- the structural part and the immunization-specific supplies and equipment part. Taking supplies as an example, we think the need will vary from country to country and region to region. For example, in view of the serious economic situation prevailing in Sub-Saharan Africa, we think that with the exception of countries like Botswana, Gabon and Nigeria, we may have to provide support for vaccines until the end of the century. On the other hand, countries like Brazil, Iran and Mexico are almost self-sufficient in vaccines which have been bought with domestic resources. China, India, Indonesia, etc. are establishing vaccine manufacturing capacities with the World Bank, Rotary International or their own resources, and they will all be on stream by about 1994-1995. Most of them already produce bacterial vaccines, and the new plants will produce viral vaccines or also bacterial vaccines where they are still deficient. After that date, since the vaccines will all be purchasable in local currencies, UNICEF support will not be needed except for outbreaks of epidemics.

Regarding structures, Nigeria was among the many delegations to emphasize their importance. Structures and systems are needed to deliver all programmes, and we are working towards using the UCI structures for other programme deliveries, essentially building them up as integral parts and extensions of basic primary health care structures. A major purpose of the Bamako Initiative is to revitalize or build these structures. Once a structure is in place it can be used for different purposes, including the sustaining of UCI. The fact that this is already happening is clearly emphasized in the recent cholera outbreak in Peru, which has experienced a case fatality rate of only 0.65 per cent - the lowest, I believe, ever experienced in a massive cholera outbreak - thanks to Oral Rehydration Salts and UCI structures which were used for delivery.

As regards national capacity building, mentioned by several delegations including Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Liberia, Sweden and Uganda, it is clear that if the national capacities could not be strengthened, development efforts would fail. UNICEF has especially focussed on national capacity building in all our programmes by trying to avoid parallel structures, by employing nationals and by working through national institutions -- not just governments but also universities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, national and local religious structures, etc. Because of this, we will study in detail the document mentioned by the distinguished delegate of Denmark, and we will come back to the Danish delegation on a bilateral basis in due course.

UNICEF has also initiated a most interesting programme, called the National Capacity Building Programme in Africa, supported by Finland. It is currently in operation in Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. Cote d'Ivoire and Ethiopia are coming on stream this year. This programme is built on the working relationship established between government departments, universities and communities which look into their own problems and try to find solutions together. They work collectively, with UNICEF serving as a facilitator. In fact, UNICEF has a supplementary funded programme proposal submitted to this Board on this activity, and I hope donors will find it possible to support it. Another good example of national capacity building is the Bamako Initiative. It not only reinstates the credibility and usefulness of primary health care structures, as mentioned by the distinguished delegate of Nigeria, but it also empowers communities to be more self-reliant and able to manage their own affairs. These are significant contributions towards building national capacity.

Universal Child Immunization (UCI)

The delegations of Angola, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Liberia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, the United States, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe all commended the historic achievement of UCI, which this year will be saving the lives of some three million children under five. This achievement proves that with a strong political commitment, a well co-ordinated approach, widespread support and an alert society, major goals are achievable. It has been, as the Canadian Public Health Association has labelled it, a "miracle in the making". The success of UCI has already given confidence to the world to attempt other goals, such as those enunciated by this Board last year and endorsed by the Summit. In this respect, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Governments and people of Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, and to the members of Rotary International. Without the generous support of donors, UCI-1990 would not have been achieved. At the same time, we should note that by far the largest contributions, financial and otherwise, were made by the developing countries themselves. The challenge for us now is to sustain these achievements, develop them into disease eradication/elimination strategies in the larger context of mortality reduction and improvement of general health and well-being. The structures built for the success of UCI can now be used for delivering other programmes and at the same time reinforcing primary health care structures.

Children's Vaccine Initiative

The distinguished delegate from the United States noted the productive partnership that exists between UNICEF and bilateral donors, as exemplified by the UCI effort, and reaffirmed their intent and desire to continue collaboration in the Children's Vaccine Initiative. The Initiative was further welcomed by the distinguished delegates from Japan and the Soviet Union. The concerns of the delegations of Finland and Japan that this Initiative be in close co-operation with the WHO and international resource

institutions is well appreciated, and I am pleased to report that this effort, which grew out of WHO-UNICEF collaboration in UCI, has continued to build on that relationship and now includes the UNDP as a full partner in this new effort.

Primary Health Care: The Bamako Initiative

We have taken note of the many statements emphasizing the importance of strengthening Primary Health Care in Africa with specific mention of the Bamako Initiative, including those of the distinguished delegates of Angola, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Switzerland, Uganda, the United States of America, and Zimbabwe. In particular, the establishment of sustainable, well managed and adequately financed health care systems and the extension of them to groups thus far unreached, as emphasized by the delegates from Germany, remains a UNICEF priority. In this regard, we fully recognize the hazards highlighted by the distinguished delegate from Switzerland: that without effective prioritization and integration of various actions within health services, progress in one area can be at the detriment of equally important actions in other areas. We further note the caution of the distinguished delegate from Finland that the establishment of parallel health infrastructures that lack co-ordination inevitably result in the waste of scarce resources.

The Bamako Initiative's capacity to strengthen public confidence in government services, as highlighted by the distinguished delegate of Nigeria, is the cornerstone of the Initiative and complements the community ownership emphasis described by the distinguished delegate from Liberia. Expanding collaboration with other institutions, such as the World Bank, and the International Children's Centre in Paris, as noted by France and Italy, and also, of course, with WHO, continues to be a priority to UNICEF and is also a growing trend.

Consistent with Finland's recommendation for close inter-agency collaboration, UNICEF continues to work closely with WHO at headquarters, regional and country levels. The Initiative's policy guidelines were in fact first developed and endorsed through the WHO Regional Committee structure meeting in Bamako in 1987. The 1990 Pan African Conference on the Financing of Community Based Health was organized by the African Regional Office of WHO. The recent meeting on organizing operations research in the rational use of drugs was jointly sponsored with the Drug Action Programme of WHO, and the International Children's Centre in Paris. We are pleased to note continuing national support, such as reported in Cameroon, where the Bamako Initiative is being progressively implemented as the National Primary Health Care Policy with both bilateral and multilateral support.

Both Finland and Switzerland have referred to the need of the Bamako Initiative to take account of several complementary actions required for effective implementation. We look forward to a fuller discussion in the Programme Committee. Consistent with the United States' request that UNICEF

remain vigilant on equity issues, it should be noted that we are increasing our support to field monitoring systems and operations research specifically focussed in this area.

AIDS

Many delegations -- including Finland, Germany, India, Japan, Korea, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, USSR, Zimbabwe and others -- expressed concern about the impact of AIDS on children in many parts of the world, the potential for AIDS to undermine child survival gains, and the recommendation that UNICEF accelerate its activities in this field. The most striking example of its seriousness was illustrated by the distinguished delegate of Zimbabwe who mentioned that "25 per cent of people dying from AIDS in our region are children under the age of four and 50 per cent of the rest are younger parents". I would like to emphasize that the Secretariat shares this grave concern of the Board. All of us need to do much more. Together with other partners, we hope to focus on the preventive side and work both in schools and out of schools in the arena of public education. During this year and in the next two or three years, we shall focus on 4 or 5 countries in order to develop the operational modalities to reach country-wide coverage so that significant impact can be made, particularly on both awareness and changes in sexual practices. We have also gained quite good experience in Uganda on AIDS orphans and we hope to expand our work for these children in many countries. AIDS is on the agenda of the Programme Committee and is also a subject for an Informal Session. Delegates may like to continue our dialogue there. And I can assure the Executive Board that, in so far as my own personal involvement in this issue may make a difference, it will get it.

Family planning

Many delegations, including Australia, Barbados, Germany, Denmark, the Holy See, India, Nigeria, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States, mentioned family planning. Denmark expressed a concern that UNICEF has not placed much emphasis on it, and has 'buried' it under other issues such as women's health and safe motherhood. There are many dimensions to family planning, and UNICEF is deeply involved in several of them, often with our key partners, WHO and UNFPA. All successful family planning programmes have an element of effective demand creation -- i.e., the knowledge that parents do not need more children if they are convinced that their first children will survive; the knowledge that having pregnancies which are too early, too late, too frequent or too many are injurious to their health and the survival chances of their children; the knowledge that breastfeeding, in addition to its many other advantages, can be an effective contraceptive for months after giving birth; etc. Pregnancies and birth deliveries are all related to women and safe motherhood, and experience shows that the best family planning programmes are intertwined with raising the status of women, female education, safe motherhood, and linking them with such confidence-building health programmes as universal child immunization and growth monitoring.

Members of the Board may have read in last Sunday's New York Times about a small village called Baya in Yunnan Province of China. It said that "One

reason why people want fewer children is simply that there is a greater prospect today that they will survive until adulthood". There was also a strong editorial this year in the Lancet, the renowned British medical journal, urging UNFPA and UNICEF to recognize the "importance of breastfeeding for child health and child spacing". UNICEF is involved in both of these among several relevant activities. This year's State of the World's Children Report devotes an entire chapter to articulating the UNICEF position on family planning very clearly, and I trust Board members have found it to be a balanced and sensitive position. (Chapter V of the State of the World's Children Report 1991). Furthermore, the joint letter signed by the heads of UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF, to which I referred in my opening statement and which has been distributed to members of the Board and cited by a number of delegations, including Norway and the Holy See, should also reassure delegations regarding UNICEF's intentions about how we propose to pursue active support for family planning and maternal and child health in concert with our sister agencies, especially building collaboratively on the complementarity of our strengths at field level. I look forward to further discussion of this subject in the Programme Committee.

Children in especially difficult circumstances

Thirty-five delegates made poignant observations on the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances, especially the situation of children in armed conflicts. While the impact of armed conflicts varies from conflict to conflict, the common underlying theme has been children's suffering and deprivation. I fully concur that UNICEF should be active in preventing and alleviating their suffering, ranging in activities from immunization so that the children do not die from measles epidemics, to prosthetics rehabilitation work and detraumatization programmes -- in which UNICEF is, incidentally, heavily involved. UNICEF is active today in many conflict situations in reaching children, e.g., in El Salvador, Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique and Iraq. I fully agree with the distinguished delegate from India that UNICEF needs to give attention to problems of street children, working children, exploited children, handicapped children and children born to women in difficult circumstances, although the focussed attention will vary depending on the magnitude and seriousness of the problem. We count on working closely with all others involved in these endeavours.

Environment

Many delegates spoke about the importance and relevance of environmental protection in UNICEF's work for child survival and development, but the distinguished delegate of Japan cautioned UNICEF against broadening itself into issues like environment that are dealt with in other forums. Environment is an issue which none of us can avoid. It affects us all. However, I do not foresee UNICEF becoming an agency concerned with environmental issues at the expense of our other programmes. They are mutually supportive. I believe successful child survival/child spacing programmes, basic education, water supply and sanitation, household food security, appropriate technology and social forestry programmes, and related advocacy, will all contribute to a

better environment for a child to grow up in, and they are "environmentally friendly" in their own right as well. May I reassure the distinguished delegates of Cameroon, Czech and Slovak Republic, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and the Chairperson of National Committees for UNICEF that we are fully involved in the preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and our working relationship with UNEP is very close. The Secretary-General of UNCED has invited us to meet with his staff to share our experience in organizing and preparing the World Summit for Children as an extraordinary model for how to ensure that the "event" is a culmination of a widespread and intensive process of substantive consensus-building and not simply a momentary spectacular, and I will be devoting most of 13 May to this in Geneva. We hope to further intensify our activities in environmental education and social forestry so that children will grow up aware of the value of the environment in which they live and of the need to preserve it.

Education

Many delegations mentioned the importance of education, particularly in the context of the historic Jomtien Conference. The distinguished delegate of Sweden highlighted the significant role of education as part of the comprehensive approach of programmes. I would also like to draw attention to the important measures undertaken by Bangladesh for improved access of girls to basic education despite the numerous problems the country faces. As stated in the Medium Term Plan and in the Goals and Strategies for Children in the 1990s approved by the Board last year, education is proposed to be the major growth area for UNICEF in the decade ahead, and is scheduled for a several-fold increase in financial support.

Women in development

The Executive Board continues to strongly advocate for continued emphasis on the role of women in UNICEF programming, as evidenced by the statements of many delegations including Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Korea, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda and the United States of America. Several delegations including Bangladesh, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco and Nigeria underscored the importance of girls' and women's education as the foundation for improving their status, and the distinguished delegate from Thailand recommended that advocacy, research and programmes for the girl child should be extended to all regions.

Cameroon and Nigeria emphasized the challenge of reducing maternal mortality, and several countries, including Australia, Barbados, Denmark, India, United Kingdom and the United States, stressed the need to strengthen family planning and child spacing activities to improve women's health and reduce the population growth rate.

Important emphasis by many delegations -- including Barbados, Egypt, India, Peru, Spain, Sri Lanka and Thailand -- urged that UNICEF should promote

women's role in decision-making; their participation in development planning, implementation and management; and an active effort to change the perception of women as passive beneficiaries of services.

We have taken note of the expressed concern of the United States that thus far only some 30 per cent of the UNICEF country programmes have reported satisfactorily to the Board's policy on women and girls. Further emphasis will be placed on this issue in coming months, and it should be noted that an additional 30 per cent of country programmes are making substantial progress in establishing and implementing projects with a strong focus on women's needs.

Strong appeals were made by delegations, including Egypt and India, to increase UNICEF's support and staffing for the women's programme. We note with pleasure that the 1990s have been declared the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child, with increased emphasis on the adolescent girl and her special health, education and social needs.

Water and environmental sanitation

We again note the strong support for efforts in the water and environmental sanitation sector, and the continued emphasis on promoting sustainable community development approaches closely linked with hygiene promotion, as evidenced by the comments of the distinguished delegates from Bolivia, Denmark, Germany, India, Korea, Mexico and Sweden.

The need for further co-operation among United Nations agencies in the sector and bilateral organizations continue to be a priority for UNICEF, consistent with the view expressed by the delegation of France. We share the concerns of the delegation of Zimbabwe that many children, particularly in Africa, continue to lack access to a safe water supply and adequate sanitation. We are especially encouraged, as I noted earlier, by the comments of the distinguished delegate from Peru pointing out that UNICEF's support of hygiene education and ORT interventions in Peru has substantially reduced the number of deaths among children which otherwise accompany a cholera epidemic of the proportion currently experienced in Peru. We also note with pleasure the report of the delegate of Nigeria that Guinea Worm disease cases have been reduced by 30 per cent nationally and by over 50 per cent in UNICEF-assisted programmes through a combination of health education and rural water supply.

Africa

Many delegations, including from other developing continents, reiterated their support for UNICEF's priority for Africa as the region most in need. UNICEF's emphasis needs to be matched by a similar prioritization by the donor community, as well as through a commitment by the recipient countries to place children at the center of their concerns. In this regard, we welcome the announcement by the Netherlands, noted earlier, that it will increase its assistance to Africa by 50 per cent in the 1990s.

Many delegations expressed concern over the continuing emergencies in Africa. Appreciation and support for UNICEF's rapid response was voiced by Liberia and a number of delegations expressed support for the concept of "corridors of peace". I am grateful for the commendation by France and Liberia of the courage and prompt action of UNICEF staff. UNICEF's work in these emergencies was a re-confirmation of our mandate to save children's lives everywhere. We thank those donors who came forward so promptly with assistance in so many cases, but we note with concern that large portions of emergency appeals for Africa remain unfunded, as several delegations also mentioned with concern. UNICEF is working closely with other members of the UN system, particularly UNDP, WFP, and UNHCR, to establish relief and rehabilitation programmes throughout the Horn of Africa. In many cases, these efforts have been limited by lack of access to the worst affected areas.

As you yourself stated, Madam Chairperson, and as further emphasized by the delegation of Zimbabwe, the impact of apartheid is still being felt by the children and women in South Africa and southern Africa, as we will soon document in a third edition of Children on the Frontline. The programme for South African children and women approved by the Executive Board last year has gained momentum. Links with the vast network of non-racial, democratic NGOs in South Africa, in coordination with the liberation movements, have been strengthened.

Liberia's concern that the numbers of child and maternal deaths in Africa were increasing is fully shared by UNICEF, and I might note that AIDS is a growing problem in South Africa, too, and we are committed to helping reverse this trend before the year 2000. To do so will imply extra efforts by the African countries and donors alike. Germany's request for UNICEF to expand support for sustainable primary health care, particularly in Africa, is receiving priority attention through the Bamako Initiative. The delegations of Angola, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and the United States have noted malaria as a major cause of child death, and urged UNICEF to participate in the WHO ministerial meeting on malaria, which we fully intend to do, recognizing that no easy solution is yet in sight.

Central and Eastern Europe

Regarding Central and Eastern Europe, there appear to be divergent views expressed by members of the Board. A view was expressed cautioning UNICEF from diverting its resources to the region while a contrary view felt UNICEF was not doing enough. I feel Board Resolution 1990/5 remains valid for UNICEF's work, but I would welcome the Board's guidance if there is consensus for any change in approach or for interpretation of our role in emergencies. To date, UNICEF has conducted workshops on issues affecting children in Central and Eastern Europe, and has also promoted analytical studies co-ordinated by the Innocenti Centre within the letter and spirit of last year's resolution. As reported in the Executive Director's Report, we have also provided emergency support for children in Romania and a very small amount of emergency vaccines for Bulgaria.

Bulgaria, with UNICEF support, has already initiated a Situation Analysis and similar exercises will be undertaken in 1991 in other Central and Eastern European countries, including Albania, so that a clear picture of the current condition of children can be obtained, as suggested by the distinguished delegates of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Italy and Poland. The information gathered from the Situation Analyses could serve as a baseline for the preparation by Governments of a Programme of Action for Children as stipulated in paragraph 34(i) of the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

The distinguished delegates of Byelorussia and the USSR called for UNICEF assistance to children affected by the Chernobyl disaster. I am pleased to inform you that UNICEF is, in fact, in the process of providing iodized oil pills and medical testing equipment. A UNICEF mission will visit Chernobyl during the month of May to formulate a programme of assistance based on a contribution received from the German Committee for UNICEF specifically for that purpose. For further information on UNICEF's activities to date in Central and Eastern Europe, including emergency support for Romania, I would invite interested delegates to attend the informal briefing session scheduled for Monday, 29 April.

Unless the Board alters our mandate, the Secretariat has no intention to launch any long-term, major programme of development co-operation in Central and Eastern Europe, or in any other industrialized countries, for that matter.

Emergencies

May I first thank the many delegations which commended UNICEF for its timely and effective delivery of emergency assistance to mothers and children in several countries, but particularly in Africa and in the Gulf. Their kind words are particularly appreciated by those UNICEF staff members who are, at this very minute, on the frontline of UNICEF emergency operations, and including those in Iraq and in the Iraq-Turkey and Iraq-Iran border areas. I am certain that all Board delegations will want to join me in paying tribute to these dedicated UNICEF staff.

Several delegations, including Finland, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States stressed the importance of close co-ordination within the United Nations system, and with non-governmental organizations, if the international response to any emergency is to be effective. This sentiment is one with which we not only agree, but which we also actively support.

I report to the Board that UNICEF staff have been instrumental in both the establishment and the operation of United Nations co-ordinating mechanisms for responding to various emergencies. The Office of Emergency Operations for Africa (OEOA) in 1984 is one major regional example. Most importantly, at the country level where the emergency response takes place and the assistance is delivered, UNICEF has been similarly active in promoting co-ordinated responses. Our staff were instrumental in the creation of Operation Lifeline Sudan, the Special Relief Programme for Angola, and the United Nations Emergency Response in Liberia.

However, the establishment of full co-ordinating arrangements or structures takes time, as not all agencies are able to move at the same pace. And no matter how strong our desire to support co-ordinating mechanisms, many donor governments have made it repeatedly clear to UNICEF that when a severe emergency occurs they expect a timely and effective delivery of emergency assistance to children and mothers in need. In the case of emergencies that are highly visible to the international community, many governments expect UNICEF to be at the cutting edge of the emergency response, providing assistance quickly, even when the situation might still be confused at the field level.

More than one delegation referred to the need for an effective division of tasks among relevant organizations according to their "comparative advantages". Allow me to list UNICEF's comparative advantages as we see them: our emergency fund-raising capabilities, especially from the private sector; our ability to deliver emergency assistance quickly; the presence on the scene of operational, hands-on field personnel who can readily adapt their activities to emergency needs; and, finally, our Supply Division in Copenhagen's emergency stockpiles which -- in the spirit of inter-agency collaboration -- we also make available to other organizations and governments responding to emergency situations.

I wish to emphasize that UNICEF always attempts to place our response within the framework of an overall United Nations system emergency needs assessment, usually carried out under the broad aegis of the Secretary-General. Inter-agency appeals, covering the totality of needs estimated by the United Nations system, come out of such assessments. UNICEF then often utilizes its own fund-raising mechanisms to raise the resources necessary to implement UNICEF's portion -- normally addressing non-food requirements -- of the consolidated United Nations emergency response. When UNICEF moves ahead in these situations, as after the recent WHO-UNICEF mission to Baghdad and in its early February appeal for \$125 million in non-food aid for Africa, it has done so only after consultation with other agencies and with the specific encouragement of the Secretary-General.

Inter-agency collaboration

As you will recall, in my opening address to the Board I stressed the importance of working closely with the UN system and our other partners in achieving the goals for children, including those established at the World Summit. It was, therefore, particularly satisfying to see the theme of inter-agency collaboration emphasized by a number of delegations such as those from Bolivia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Haiti, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, United Kingdom, the United States and Vietnam. I believe many of us would agree with the distinguished Italian delegate who indicated that significant progress had been made on this score but that more could be done by drawing upon the International Development Strategy, the leadership role of the Director-General and the landmark General Assembly Resolution 44/211. I would also agree with the French delegation that the Least Developed Countries Conference also provides an important framework.

Some delegations, such as those of Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden, also stressed inter-agency collaboration in emergencies. This is a particularly timely point. Recent experience has shown that considerable improvements can be made in this area. It should not be beyond the capacity of the UN system to achieve both rapid action and efficient co-ordination. I would agree with the delegation of Finland that the upcoming ECOSOC review presents an important opportunity to strengthen system-wide co-ordination and I can assure you UNICEF will fully support the review process.

Programme Advocacy and Resource Mobilization

I was pleased to note that the Secretariat's efforts to improve the external relations functions have been viewed positively by a number of Delegations, including Canada, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and Japan. The continued focus in the external relations area, which encompasses programme advocacy and resource mobilization, will indeed be to support the work of Field Offices and National Committees. I trust that the Finnish delegation will find its concerns regarding clarification of roles and responsibilities of various units in external relations answered by the directory Who Does What in External Relations, which will be available at the back of the room. The need to give more attention to advocacy in Field Offices is fully in line with our intentions, and the strengthening of the Division of Information proposed in our budget submission is a direct response to needs identified both by the External Relations evaluation and subsequent detailed studies of Field Office needs.

I would like to reassure the distinguished delegates of Canada, Japan and the United States that the Secretariat is indeed working hard to carry out Resolution 1990/14 on UNICEF external relations, especially with a view to integrate them fully into UNICEF's Medium Term Plan and Country Programming processes. We look forward to a fruitful discussion of this matter and, of course, again next year when we will be reporting fully on the implementation of the main part of the Resolution.

The Delegations of Bulgaria, France and Poland referred to the need to have a structure in Europe that can meet the challenges of the 1990s. The strengthening of the Geneva Office as presented in the 1992-1993 budget submission is proposed exactly with this in mind, and with particular emphasis on providing increased support to European National Committees.

The importance of National Committees as genuine partners of UNICEF in industrialized countries was given warm and well-deserved recognition in a number of interventions, including those of Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and Viet Nam. May I add my voice and state emphatically that UNICEF, indeed, considers the National Committees as true partners. I am happy to note that the Republic of Korea delegation expressed hopes for a smooth transition from being a recipient to becoming a donor country, including the establishment of an independent National Committee for UNICEF in the Republic of Korea.

The distinguished Chairperson of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF offered thoughtful and frank suggestions on a number of issues of concern to National Committees. We will attentively study them, and discuss them with the National Committees. I note with pleasure the comments on improved co-operation with the Secretariat in the past few years, including the positive comments on progress in education for development and volunteer development. The distinguished delegate of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic likewise expressed appreciation for the work on development education. The importance of volunteers was also highlighted by the German delegation. The kind words both of the Chairperson of the Standing Group and the Polish delegation with regard to the excellent co-operation between the National Committees and the Greeting Card Operation (GCO) are gratefully noted and I assure the National Committees that the indispensable flexibility and efficiency of GCO will be maintained.

Information support to National Committees is of critical importance as it so directly affects the image of UNICEF in industrialized countries. The issue of image and visibility will be a major agenda item at a workshop this June with participants from National Committees and Field Offices. A number of efforts and changes are underway in response to National Committee and Field Office requests and, in all these endeavours, our information staff in Geneva and New York are working as an integrated team.

Working with NGOs and Other Partners

The importance of building or expanding a Grand Alliance between governments and a wide range of sectors within society, including NGOs, the mass media, religious leaders, parliamentarians, artists and intellectuals, and concerned individuals, was recognized in a number of statements. If we are to continue to score the kinds of successes we have recently had -- the achievement of our UCI goals, the ratification of the Convention, and the adoption of the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action -- this Grand Alliance must be sustained, further strengthened and enlarged to fulfill the promise of the Convention and the Summit Declaration.

As emphasized by the distinguished delegates of Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, NGOs, as a result of their networks at the grass-roots level, often constitute powerful forces for bringing about needed changes in attitudes and behaviour relating to children's well-being. Morocco has stressed that even greater impact could be achieved through a participatory approach, in which the efforts of concerned population groups would be enlisted in programmes to reduce infant mortality rates or increase education. Sweden and Zimbabwe have also mentioned the importance of NGOs in developing innovative approaches to improve the lives of children, including -- as emphasized by Sweden -- some of the most difficult-to-reach population groups, such as street children. The Delegations of Bangladesh, Barbados, India, Liberia, Romania and Viet Nam underlined the crucial importance of the assistance provided by NGOs in supplementing the efforts of Governments.

Fundraising

In the area of fundraising, a number of delegations have welcomed the significant increase in UNICEF resources achieved in 1990, among them Germany,

Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway and Thailand. However, some Delegations and in particular the distinguished representatives of Italy, Norway and Sweden emphasized that contributions in support of UNICEF should be more equitably forthcoming from among donor countries. We in the Secretariat consider this issue to be of extreme importance, particularly so if the growth of ODA flows becomes more limited over the 1990s, as a number of Delegations predicted. This issue should also be seen in the context of the review of development assistance that is urged in the Summit Plan of Action.

UNICEF's capacity

Turning to the subject of the budget and financial matters, I would like to sincerely thank the many delegations who spoke — both those who found much to agree with in the proposals of the Secretariat and those who expressed reservations. I know that all the concerns which were expressed were intended in a very constructive spirit. Delegations expressing these concerns are among UNICEF's long-standing and most consistent supporters and I do take their reservations and advice seriously and in the constructive spirit in which they are offered.

Listening to the general debate, I have noted three major areas of concern which I will address now, and several specific suggestions which we will discuss in-depth next week in the Administration and Finance Committee.

Transparency of the Budget

The first major problem seems to be the issue of transparency. The distinguished delegates of Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland commented on the need to further improve the presentation and transparency of the budget document. The fact that the issue of transparency has been raised consistently over the past several years indicates to me that there are still major flaws in our system that we have not been able to identify clearly and rectify effectively. While I remind members of the Board that the format used for the current budget proposals was revised and approved by the Executive Board last year, the fact that the document is still deemed unsatisfactory indicates that both the Board and the Secretariat need to work closely together to further improve and refine the format and presentation of the budget. The Secretariat would welcome suggestions from delegations during the discussions of the Committee on Administration and Finance aimed at further enhancing the transparency of the budget document, and we will do our utmost to have a more user-friendly budget document two years from now. If UNICEF could improve its budget by studying more transparent and user-friendly ones presented by other relevant organizations — as the distinguished delegate of Japan suggested — we would certainly be happy to learn.

Income projections

The second issue that seems to worry many delegates is that of the reliability of our income projections. A number of cautionary statements were made regarding our revenue projections by the distinguished delegates of Canada, Finland, Italy, Switzerland and the Chairperson of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF. UNICEF is fully aware of the budget

constraints facing donor governments and of the fact that some countries have experienced, in their contributions, an extraordinary period of growth that inevitably will taper off. For this reason, we have not used the average growth rate in General Resources of the last five years, which was 17 per cent, but a much lower figure. In fact, the Medium Term Plan assumes an average annual growth rate of 5 per cent in general resources income for the period 1991-1994. We are now well into 1991 and our receipts so far exceed our forecasts for this period. The moderate increases we project are based on an assessment of the Pledging Conference last year, discussions with several major donors and the increased potential for GCO income. I trust the Board will agree that this is the absolute minimum we can possibly forecast, and that it cannot be considered over-ambitious. While we have set this very conservative income projection for the Medium Term Plan period for programme planning and budgetary purposes, I trust that all Board members would agree that our fundraising strategy and efforts should certainly be more ambitious at this extraordinary time when we finally enjoy a political climate which is conducive to constructive co-operative action for children and for social progress. I was encouraged, in this respect, by the reassuring comments of Germany and the Netherlands. But let me once again reassure the Board that the income projections on which the budget proposals are based are the conservative estimates of the Medium Term Plan and not those of our more optimistic fundraising strategies.

Staff increases

The third major issue I heard is the question of what the distinguished delegate of Finland characterised as the "sizeable number of the organization's non-project staff" financed from project funds. Other delegations and the ACABQ have characterised this as high administrative costs and overhead expenses.

Implicit in these observations seems to be the belief that all posts and all expenditures at Headquarters are overhead costs of an administrative nature. This is clearly not so. Whether it is our procurement officers at Headquarters who purchase supplies and equipment for projects in the field; our specialist programme advisers who provide technical advice and support field offices; or staff in the personnel and finance areas who are directly responsible for recruiting and training staff for field offices and ensuring proper financial management and monitoring of field operations -- all are clearly directly related to projects and programme delivery. Moreover, it has been the Board-approved policy that General Resources should not be used to subsidize supplementary-funded projects. The growing volume of supplementary-funded projects in the Field obviously requires project-funded support posts at Headquarters if the Board policy is to be fully applied. Much of the growth in project posts at Headquarters must be seen in this light. If there were to be no increase in project-funded posts at Headquarters -- as implied in the ACABQ's advice and contrary to the guidance of the Executive Board in the early and mid-1980s -- there would have to be a significant growth in core posts and a consequent subsidization of noted projects by general resources. Therefore, the Secretariat seeks the Board's further guidance on this matter.

I am thankful for the support from Bolivia, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Poland, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Venezuela for the budget proposals and particularly for the recognition of the need to strengthen staffing capacity both in the field and at Headquarters. The concerns expressed by Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland and the United States on the issues of additional core and project posts and reclassification in Headquarters are appreciated. I am confident these issues and others noted in the ACABQ report will be fully dealt with in the Committee on Administration and Finance. At this time, I would like to reiterate the point I made on Monday that the rate of increase in total posts at Headquarters has been substantially less than the rate of increase of total posts in the field over the last ten years. With regard to core posts, UNICEF headquarters will actually have 31 fewer posts in 1992 than we had in 1982. In this connection, I would also like to repeat the view of the External Auditors last year that the necessary strengthening of our field offices cannot occur without some further strengthening of the support capacity at Headquarters.

Income and Expenditure Ratios

Italy, Japan and Poland have noted the increase in the magnitude of UNICEF resources, specifically programme resources. This reflects both the increased need for activities within UNICEF's mandate to improve the situation of women and children, and the increase in donor support for these activities. It is for this reason that we had to propose an increase in administrative and programme support to our country programmes. We note the concerns expressed by the delegations of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, and the United States regarding the increase of the administrative and programme support budget in relation to total UNICEF expenditures. But I emphasize that the proportion of total UNICEF expenditures devoted to the administrative budget and programme support budget has decreased from its highest level of 25.5 percent in 1984 to 20.2 percent in the 1992-1993 proposed budget, with approximately half being identified as for administrative purposes as defined by the Joint Inspection Unit earlier.

I would like to assure the distinguished delegate from Germany that the 1990-1991 budgetary reserves have been mainly used to cover mandatory increases such as salaries, mandatory rent increases in existing facilities and increases in external audit and joint inspection unit costs. Out of the US\$3 million spent from the reserve, US\$2,850,000 was spent on such clearly mandatory increases. The expenditures at issue amount to only US\$150,000, which was spent to cover a variety of miscellaneous increases.

The distinguished delegate from Canada was concerned that the rate of growth in the budget exceeded the rate of growth in income. For the period 1990-1993, the period covered by the revised and proposed budget estimates, both the average annual income growth and the budget expenditure growth are projected at approximately 10 percent -- with the estimated budget growth a little lower than the estimated income growth.

The distinguished representative from Switzerland asked if there was a contingency plan should the income we forecast not materialize. Income projections are presented annually to the Board in the financial Medium-Term

Plan. The income and expenditure forecasts contained in the plan are revised annually based on actual income receipts and the latest information available. If actual income is less than forecast, UNICEF's planned programme and budget expenditures are reduced. Given the moderate forecast in general resource growth contained in the current financial Medium-Term Plan, it is unlikely that UNICEF will be faced with such a situation. However, I recall that in 1986 UNICEF experienced a financial crisis and was obliged to reduce its budget below the previously approved level. If actual income is more than forecast, it can be used to increase programme expenditures since an approved administrative budget is limited to mandatory increases beyond UNICEF's control. Therefore, the budget approved by the Executive Board provides a ceiling on budgetary expenses. Actual budget expenditures can be lower than approved if income is lower than expected, but cannot be higher even if income exceeds expectations.

Staffing Issues

I was pleased that the distinguished delegate from Egypt noted the increase in the percentage of women currently employed by UNICEF. The delegate from Egypt also requested information on the number of women staff from developing countries. I am happy to inform the delegate that women now comprise 35 percent of all staff in the professional category, and of this total 57 percent are from developing countries.

I have noted the observation of the distinguished delegate from the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic that in addition to under-represented countries, there are a number of non-represented countries. The Division of Personnel will take this situation into consideration when planning future recruitment missions.

Headquarters Office Accommodations

Germany suggested that substantive and costly financial commitments concerning office space have been entered into without the prior approval of the Board. When the Executive Board discussed the office space issue last year, and postponed its decision, it was clear that UNICEF had immediate needs for additional office space to accommodate already existing staff. As a bridging measure awaiting the Board's decision for a permanent solution, we have entered into short-term leases which are very inexpensive if compared to other New York prices, including present rents for UNICEF House. The cost for this has been covered from savings through postponement of some activities in the first year of the 1990/91 biennium to the 1992/93 biennium. This is clearly within the Executive Director's authority.

I have also noted several other specific concerns with regard to Headquarters office accommodations raised by several delegations including Canada, Germany and the United States. We look forward to discussing this topic fully during the Committee on Administration and Finance.

Contrasting advice

I conclude this subject of budget and financial matters by reiterating a sense of a major dilemma of contradictory advice that the Secretariat and the Board have received from two very competent bodies -- the ACABQ and the Board of External Auditors -- as I indicated in my opening statement on Monday. I am pleased that the Board will have the opportunity to hear the Chairman of the ACABQ next week; he has accepted an invitation from the Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance to answer questions from members of the Committee. This is especially important since the ACABQ itself could afford very little time to review the budget proposals with the Secretariat, and that the Advisory Committee prepared its report just two weeks before the Board meeting, thus severely limiting the opportunity for Board members to give its observations proper consideration.

As is known to the Board, the External Auditors made their observations and recommendations after thoroughly and methodically reviewing the situation on-site over two periods of many weeks. The Secretariat's assessment obviously coincides much more with the observations of the External Auditors than those of the ACABQ; indeed, our proposals were greatly influenced by the Board of Auditors' expert findings. The need to ensure that UNICEF Headquarters is in a position to provide adequate monitoring, supervision and support of effective programme delivery in the field is of paramount importance. My staff and I look forward to answering your queries and providing explanations so that the Board will have all the necessary information to make the very important decisions on the Secretariat's proposals next week.

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Madam Chairperson,

Two and one-half years ago, when we first had the notion of a "world summit" on children, it was surely a calculated risk. It was a gamble that the groundwork for great progress for children was being laid: through this Board's development of goals and strategies; through the success we were experiencing in immunization and other primary health care advances; through the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and through our effective enlistment of high levels of leadership in taking action for children. It was a gamble that all this could be brought together at a strategic moment and, through a gathering of the world's leadership, the momentum could be galvanized to carry hundreds of millions more children through to a decent condition of life in the 1990s.

The reports we have heard in this general debate, and the reports we have received and experienced from scores of countries worldwide, confirm that taking that calculated risk is paying off. It now appears that tens of millions of children who would have died if past trends had continued now will not die. Many other benefits for children are now in sight. The priority of children is being increased in country after country. Work for children is being accelerated. The prospects for children are rising. Dramatically.

Our challenge remains to position UNICEF to most effectively support this new potential to strengthen attention to children. We know from this opening debate that the castles are high in the sky; I'm confident that in the days remaining we shall continue to build solid organizational foundations under them.

Your Secretariat looks forward to the continuing exchange of views and ideas, and to a constructive dialogue to arrive at the right decisions for UNICEF to move forward into the 1990s. We look forward to explaining our positions on the issues requiring resolution; we look forward to hearing your guidance; and we look forward to carrying out your decisions.