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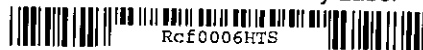
Message from Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
for
YOU CAN DO IT, Edited by Bob Budler

"Never Stop Asking Why"

1991



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Never Stop Asking Why You Can Do It Bob Budler Book . Mes:
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Never Stop Asking Why

Most healthy children, at around age two or three, go through a period sometimes referred to as "the whys", when they constantly bombard their parents with questions about why things are the way they are. No answer seems to satisfy children in this stage of innocent inquisitiveness, often to the exasperation of adults.

A few months later the "why" phase is over. I suspect that, all too often, it is because children soon learn through bitter experience that grownups get uncomfortable or even angry when asked too many questions -- especially hard-to-answer questions about why the world is as it is.

My colleagues and I at UNICEF have never gotten over "the whys".

We look at a world in which one out of every five people -- over a billion human beings -- lives in dire poverty and we ask "why". We ask why it is that every day 40,000 children die of largely preventable causes. We ask why more than 100 million children are denied primary education and more than 30 million live on the streets. We ask about military budgets, about environmental destruction, about bias against women and girls, about foreign aid that doesn't aid people.

I would like to invite young people to join us in asking these and other critical questions as we approach the 21st century, for you will be inheriting the planet -- whatever shape it may be in -- from the adults of the last decade of the 20th century. The problems we face may be complex and immense, but their solution starts with each one of us asking "why". Young people make the best activists because of your energy, your enthusiasm and your ability to imagine better ways of doing things.

I urge you to continue asking the hard questions and challenging the adult world to provide sensible answers. It's your right...and our responsibility.

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