

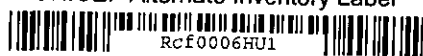
File Sub: CF/EXD/SP/1991-0027

Introductory Message from Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
for
"Partnership in Action: UNICEF and NGOs Working Together for Children"

1991



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Item # **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/1998-02241**

EXR/Code: **CF/EXD/SP/1991-0027**

Partnership in Action: UNICEF and NGOs Working Together for
Date Label Printed 20-Aug-2002

cover + 2pp + 06



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Introductory Message

from

Mr. James P. Grant, Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

for

"Partnership in Action: UNICEF and NGOs Working Together for Children"

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are playing a vital role in the world today -- and have been doing so for a very long time. They are growing in numbers and influence, both in the developing and industrial world. They have become a key partner in the development process, now providing over US\$5 billion per year to developing countries.

In Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and now much of Africa, the impetus for recent democratic change has come, more often than not, from grassroots popular movements inspired by alternative development models and participatory approaches offered by non-governmental organizations. As exemplary "do-ers" and advocates for social change, they often serve as the unofficial conscience of nations and passionate critics of policies of international agencies. The mistrust and misunderstanding of earlier times are, happily, being replaced by collaboration and partnership in country after country. On the international scene, NGO participation is now a "must" for the success of major initiatives, e.g., the International Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990); the process surrounding the World Summit for Children (New York, September 1990) and preparation for the International Conference on Environment and Development (Brazil, June 1992).

UNICEF has a long history of partnership with NGOs. We have always looked to the NGO community as close collaborators and as sources of inspiration in efforts to create the kind of world all children deserve. Their dedication, commitment, and ability to mobilize at the grassroots level have made many "impossibles" possible. NGOs, in fact, are responsible for much of the progress that has been achieved for children in the past few decades.

The challenges we face in the 1990s are greater than ever. At the World Summit for Children -- the first truly global summit -- priorities for children in the decade ahead were agreed upon by the world's leaders, who took the unusual step of adopting a comprehensive and detailed Plan of Action, complete with finite deadlines, monitoring mechanisms and periodic reporting requirements. This was a breakthrough of historic proportions. However, in order for the Summit goals to be reached, a broad movement in favour of

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children is needed...a movement not unlike the historic movements that put an end to slavery and colonialism, or those that are working today to protect the environment and secure women's rights...a peaceful movement with a global perspective and deep local roots...a movement for rather than a movement against. Unless all those concerned with improving children's lives mobilize around common goals, the promises made at the World Summit are likely to remain unfulfilled. Working together, we can ensure that children are given a "first call" on society's resources.

The role of NGOs as initiators and supporters of such a movement is a critical one. UNICEF is committed to working with NGOs and all parts of this organization are ready to explore new areas of co-operation. I hope this booklet, "Partnership in Action", will be helpful to the broad community of international and national non-governmental organizations in better acquainting them with UNICEF and describing the different ways we can work together in full partnership. By facilitating communication and encouraging consultation, I am sure we will be able to make significant strides toward ensuring a better future for all children.