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Message from Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
for the
Asahi Shimbun Children's Art Exhibit

Tokyo, Japan
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Asahi Shimbun Child Art Exhibit. Message from Mr. James P
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Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

for the

Asahi Shimbun Children's Art Exhibit

On behalf of UNICEF I would like to congratulate and thank the Asahi Shimbun for continuing to organize a creative children's drawings contest and exhibit, with the support of Mitsui Real Estate Sales Co., Ltd. We are particularly delighted that this year's contest, in which children from some 50 countries participated, has as its theme: "Working for a Child-friendly Environment".

This contest has provided children in different parts of the world with an opportunity to depict their dreams and ideas about their own homes and environment, while broadening their understanding of how children in other countries live, under very different circumstances.

As we reflect on the success of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, I believe even more firmly what I said in my address to the conference: "As we begin to address the wounds we are causing in the earth, let us give a priority to healing the earth's rightful owners, the children. If we can't heal our children through readily 'do-able' actions already agreed upon at the first truly global summit -- the 1990 World Summit for Children -- what will the prospects be for healing the planet as we follow up on the more difficult undertakings of this second historic gathering?"

The world is now ready to launch a renewed effort for a better future for children, by keeping the promises made by the world's leaders at both summit meetings. We now know what must be done to resolve the problems and overcome the difficulties that children encounter in surviving and developing into adulthood.

Children, live, play and grow in developing countries and industrialized countries, and in countries at war and countries at peace. However, 87 per cent of the 14 million children who die each year before the age of five live in the developing world. Millions of children are deprived of protection against disease, adequate nutrition, and minimum educational opportunities -- due to an unhealthy environment of poverty and underdevelopment. Their survival and development are intimately bound up with the survival and development of the earth.

We must better preserve our planet in order to nurture our children and, equally, we must better nurture our children if we are to preserve our planet.

I sincerely hope that every one who will visit this exhibit will join with UNICEF in working to better nurture our children and preserve our planet. A "child-friendly" environment can be created -- and I know the young artists whose work is represented here will help create it.

James P. Grant
Executive Director
10 July 1992