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Talking Points for Statement by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
On the occasion of the
World AIDS Day Ceremony
and "Youth and AIDS: Act Now!" Exhibit

New York
30 November 1993



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World AIDS Day Ceremony, Youth and AIDS: Act Now. Talking 1
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director

FROM: Robert Cohen

DATE: 30 November 1993

RE: TALKING POINTS/ World AIDS Day Ceremony

1. You will be introduced by Ms. Scullion of the US NatCom. Greetings to Secretary General; U.S. Postmaster General Marvin Runyon; Dr. Michael Merson, Executive Director of WHO's Global Programme on AIDS; Dr. Mathilde Krim, Founding Co-Chair and Chairman of the Board of AMFAR; and Ms. Liza Minnelli. Welcome to this exhibit on the occasion of World AIDS Day. The theme of this UNICEF exhibit is "**Youth and AIDS: Act Now!**"

2. **Why Youth?** -- In our rapidly changing world, it is young people who are most able to adapt and change with it. They embrace new ideas with energy and idealism. They are the key to making tomorrow's world a healthier and safer one.

3. **Why AIDS?** -- AIDS is a new global problem. Every nation is threatened by it, and as many as 13 million people may already be infected with the AIDS virus worldwide. AIDS is also a compelling example of how youth can be at the center of change. As many as 70% of all new HIV infections are in young people between the ages of 15 and 24; but at the same time, youth are also the most effective in stopping the spread of AIDS. Where young people know the risks and are empowered to take positive action against AIDS, the pandemic can be beaten back. There are so many examples of youth taking the situation in hand:

- * They are forming AIDS prevention clubs
- * They are establishing peer education programmes in schools and communities
- * There are many out-reach programmes run by street youth
- * Young people have formed "rap" and other artistic groups against AIDS

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* Young people are in the forefront of grassroots education efforts and citizens' movements working to accelerate action to halt the pandemic.

5. At the moment, the most effective weapon against the spread of AIDS is public education tied to social action. Changing individual behaviour is key, but it is not enough. We must also address the unsafe societal practices that influence personal lifestyle choices. We must mobilise the very fabric of society to help communities, families and individuals help themselves live better and healthier lives. The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women** provide a framework for the shifting of social priorities that is so desperately needed today.
6. Mobilisation to prevent AIDS must be increased and this will require more outspoken, high-profile leadership, from presidents and prime ministers to religious leaders, entertainers, scientists and community activists. All parents should know how HIV is spread and tell their children how to prevent it. All young people must become leaders in this cause. A positive example of how to raise awareness is here with us today, as we welcome the Postmaster General of the United States. The AIDS awareness stamp that he is issuing today will surely help get AIDS on the front burner and encourage greater action.
7. Welcome/introduce Postmaster General Marvin Runyon (named 70th Postmaster General on May 5, 1992).
8. Following remarks by Mike Merson you will cut ribbon and invite visitors to tour exhibit.