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Primary Contact **James Grant (Former Executive Director)**
Owner Location **Office of the Executive Director, UNI = 5001**
Home Location **Q, F1 04, Rm 400, Row 031, SU 003, Lev 04, Pos 10**
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Preparatory & Reference Documentation on the World Summit for Children: this reference book contains background & preparation material for the World Summit in Five Chapters: 1-The Planning Committee; 2-Schedule & Program of the World Summit for Children; 3-draft Declaration of the World Summit for Children and draft Plan of Action; 4-Report of Meetings; 5-UNICEF Executive Board

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JOHN MANFREDI

John Manfredi

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DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION
for Implementing the World Declaration on the
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I. Introduction

1. This Plan of Action is intended as a guide for national governments, international organisations, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and all other sectors of society in formulating their own programmes of action for ensuring the implementation of the Declaration of the World Summit for Children.

2. The needs and problems of children vary from country to country, and indeed from community to community. Individual countries and groups of countries, as well as international, regional, national and local organizations, may use this plan of action to develop their own specific programmes in line with their needs, capacity, and mandates. However, parents, elders and leaders at all levels throughout the world have certain common aspirations for the well-being of their children. This plan of action deals with these common aspirations, suggesting a set of goals and targets for children in the 1990s, strategies for reaching those goals, and commitments for action and follow-up measures at various levels.

3. Progress for children should be a key goal of overall national development. As today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection and development is the pre-requisite for the future development of humanity. Empowerment of the younger generation with knowledge and resources to meet their basic human needs and to grow to their full potential should be a primary goal of national development. As their individual development and social contribution will shape the future of the world, investment in children's health, nutrition and education is the foundation for national development.

4. The aspirations of the international community for the well-being of children are best reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989. This Convention sets universal legal standards for the protection of children against neglect, abuse and exploitation as well as guaranteeing to them their basic human rights, including survival, development and full participation in social, cultural, educational and other endeavours necessary for their individual growth and well-being. The Declaration of the World Summit urges all Governments to consider earliest possible ratification and implementation of the Convention.

5. In the past two years, a set of goals for children and development in the 1990s have been formulated in several international fora attended by virtually all Governments, relevant UN agencies and major non-governmental organizations. In support of these goals and in line with the growing international consensus in favour of greater attention to the human dimension of development in the 1990s, this Plan of Action calls for concerted national action and international cooperation to strive for the achievement of the following major goals for the survival, protection and development of children by the year 2000.

- i. Reduction of 1990 under-5 child mortality rates in all countries by one-third or to a level of 70 per 1000 live births, whichever is the greater reduction;
- ii. Reduction of maternal mortality rates by half of 1990 levels;
- iii. Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by one half of 1990 levels;
- iv. Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;
- v. Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school age children;
- vi. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country), with emphasis on female literacy;
- vii. Protection of children in especially difficult circumstances, particularly in situations of armed conflicts.

6. A list of more detailed sectoral goals and specific actions which would enable the attainment of the above major goals can be found in the Annex to this Plan of Action. These goals will first need to be adapted to the specific realities of each country in terms of phasing, priorities, standards and availability of resources. The strategies for the achievement of the goals may also vary from country to country. Some countries may wish to add other development goals that are uniquely important and relevant for their specific country situation. Such adaptation of the goals is of crucial importance to ensure their technical validity, logistical feasibility, financial affordability and to secure political commitment and broad public support for their achievement.

II. Specific Actions for Child Survival, Protection and Development

7. Within the context of these overall goals, there are promising opportunities for eradicating or virtually eliminating age-old diseases that have afflicted tens of millions of children for centuries, and for improving the quality of life of generations to come. Achievement of these goals would also contribute to lowering population growth, as sustained decline in child death rates towards the level at which parents become confident that their first children will survive is, with some time lag, followed by even greater reduction in child births. To seize these opportunities the Declaration of the World Summit for Children calls for specific actions in the following areas:

Child Health

8. Preventable childhood diseases such as measles, polio, tetanus, tuberculosis, whooping cough and diphtheria, against which there are effective vaccines; and diarrhoeal diseases, pneumonia and other acute respiratory infections which can be prevented or effectively treated through relatively low-cost remedies, are currently responsible for the great majority of the world's 14 million deaths of children under 5 years, and disability of millions more. Effective action can and must be taken to combat these diseases by strengthening primary health care and basic health services in all countries.

9. Besides these readily preventable or treatable diseases and some others, such as malaria, which have proved more difficult to combat, children today are faced with the new spectre of the AIDS pandemic. In the most seriously affected countries HIV/AIDS threatens to offset the gains of child survival programmes. It is already a major drain on limited public health resources needed to support other priority health services. The consequences of HIV/AIDS go well beyond the suffering and death of the infected child, and include risks and stigmas which affect parents and siblings, and the tragedy of "AIDS orphans". There is an urgent need to ensure that programmes for the prevention and treatment of AIDS, including research on possible vaccines and cures which can be applicable in all countries and situations, and massive information and education campaigns, receive a high priority for both national action and international cooperation.

Maternal Health, Family Planning and Care of the Newborn

10. Maternal health, nutrition and education are important for the survival and well-being of women in their own right, and are key determinants of the health and well-being of the child in early infancy. The causes of the high rates of infant mortality, especially neonatal mortality, are linked to untimely pregnancies, low birth weight and pre-term births, unsafe delivery, neonatal tetanus, high fertility rates, etc. These are also major risk factors for maternal mortality claiming the lives of 500,000 young women each year, and resulting in ill health and suffering of many millions more. To redress this tragedy, special attention should be given to family planning and to the health and nutrition of women.

11. Access by all couples to information on the many advantages of child spacing is of vital importance, as are family planning services to avoid pregnancies that are too early, too late, too many or too frequent. Pre-natal care, clean delivery, access to referral facilities in complicated cases, tetanus toxoid vaccination and prevention of anemia and other nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy are other important interventions to ensure safe motherhood and a healthy start in life for the newborn. There is an added benefit of promoting maternal and child health and family planning programmes together in that acting synergistically, these services help accelerate the reduction of both mortality and fertility rates, and contribute to population stabilisation sooner and at lower levels than either type of programme alone.

Food and Nutrition

12. Hunger and malnutrition in their different forms contribute to about half of the deaths of young children. More than 20 million children suffer from severe malnutrition, 150 million are underweight and 350 million women suffer from nutritional anemia. Improved nutrition requires a) adequate household food security, b) healthy environment and control of infections, and c) adequate maternal and child care. With the right policies and political priority, the world is now in a position to feed all the world's children, and to overcome the worst forms of malnutrition, viz. to drastically reduce diseases which contribute to malnutrition, to halve protein-energy malnutrition, to virtually eliminate vitamin A deficiency and iodine deficiency disorders, and to significantly reduce nutritional anemia.

13. For the young child and the pregnant woman, provision of adequate food during pregnancy and lactation; promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, including frequent feeding; growth monitoring with appropriate follow-up actions, and nutritional surveillance, are the most essential needs. As the child grows older, and for the adult population as a whole, an adequate diet is an obvious human priority requiring employment and income generating opportunities, dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production and distribution as key action within broader national strategies to combat hunger and malnutrition.

Water and Sanitation

14. Availability of clean water and safe sanitation are not only basic to human health and well-being, but also contribute greatly to the emancipation of women from the drudgery that has pernicious impact on children, especially girls. Progress in child health is unlikely to be sustained if one-third of the developing world's children remain without access to clean drinking water, and half of them without adequate sanitary facilities.

15. Based on the experience of the past decade, including the many innovations in simple, low-cost techniques and technologies to provide clean water and safe sanitary facilities in rural areas and urban shanty towns, it is now desirable as well as feasible, through concerted national action and international cooperation, to aim for providing all the world's children with universal access to safe drinking water and sanitary means of excreta disposal by the year 2000. An important related benefit of universal access to water and sanitation combined with health education will be the control of many water-borne diseases, among them elimination of guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis), which currently afflicts some 10 million children in parts of Africa and Asia.

Basic Education and Literacy

16. The international community, including virtually all the governments of the world, have undertaken a commitment at the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien, Thailand, to significantly increase educational opportunity for over 100 million children and nearly 1000 million adults, two-thirds of them girls and women, who at present have no access to basic education and literacy. In fulfilment of that commitment, specific measures must be adopted for a) the expansion of early childhood development activities, b) universal access to basic education, including completion of primary education or equivalent learning achievement by at least 80 per cent of the relevant school age children with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls, c) the reduction of adult illiteracy by half, with emphasis on female literacy, and d) increased acquisition of knowledge, skills and values through all educational channels, including modern and traditional communication media, to improve the quality of life of children and families.

17. Besides its intrinsic value for human development and improving the quality of life, progress in education and literacy can contribute significantly to improvement in maternal and child health, in protection of the environment and in sustainable development. As such investment in basic education must be accorded a high priority in national action as well as international cooperation.

Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances

18. Protection of and assistance to children in especially difficult circumstances - whether refugee or displaced children, children who are victims of war and natural disasters, orphans, street children, disabled children or youth trapped in the bondage of prostitution and other forms of exploitation - deserves special attention, both nationally and internationally.

19. More than 100 million children are engaged in employment, often heavy and hazardous and in contravention of international conventions which provide for their protection from economic exploitation and from performing work that interferes with their education and is harmful to their health and full development. With this in mind, all states should look again at the needs of working children, to see how their condition and circumstances can be changed to provide adequate opportunity for their healthy upbringing and development.

20. Drug abuse has emerged as a global menace to very large numbers of young people and, increasingly, children - including permanent damage incurred in the pre-natal stages of life. Concerted action is needed by Governments and inter-Governmental agencies to combat illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to counter this tragedy. Equally important is community action and education, which are vitally needed to curb both the supply of and demand for illicit drugs.

Protection of Children During Armed Conflicts

21. Children need special protection in situations of armed conflict. Recent examples in which countries and opposing factions have agreed to suspend hostilities and adopt special measures such as "corridors of peace" to allow relief supplies to reach women and children and "days of tranquility" to vaccinate and to provide other health services for children and their families in areas of conflict need to be applied in all such situations. Resolution of a conflict need not be a prerequisite for measures to explicitly protect children and their families to ensure their continuing access to food, medical care and basic services, to deal with trauma resulting from violence, and to exempt them from other direct consequences of violence and hostilities.

Children and the Environment

22. Children have the greatest stake in the preservation of the environment and its judicious management for sustainable development; their survival and development depends on it. The child survival and development goals proposed

for the 1990s in this Plan of Action seek to improve the environment by combating disease and malnutrition and promoting education. These contribute to lowering death rates as well as birth rates, improved social services, better use of natural resources and, ultimately, to the breaking of the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation.

23. With their relatively low use of capital resources and high reliance on social mobilization, community participation and appropriate technology, the programmes designed to reach the child related goals of the 1990s are highly compatible with and supportive of environmental protection. The goals for the survival, protection and development of children as enunciated in this Plan of Action should therefore be seen as helping to protect and preserve the environment. Still more action is needed, of course, to prevent the degradation of the environment in both the industrialised and developing countries, through changes in the wasteful consumption patterns of the affluent and by helping to meet the necessities of survival and development of the poor. Programmes for children that not only help meet their basic needs but which inculcate in them respect for the natural environment with its beauty and resourcefulness to enhance the quality of human life, must figure prominently in the world's environmental agenda.

Alleviation of Poverty and Revitalization of Economic Growth

24. Achievement of child related goals in the areas of health, nutrition, education, etc., will contribute much to alleviating the worst manifestations of poverty. But much more will need to be done to ensure that a solid economic base is established to meet and sustain the goals for long-term child survival, protection and development.

25. As affirmed by the international community at the 18th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (April 1990), a most important challenge for the 1990s is the need for revitalization of economic growth and social development in the developing countries, and to address together the problems of abject poverty and hunger that continue to afflict far too many people in the world. As the most vulnerable segment of human society, children have a particular stake in sustained economic growth and alleviation of poverty without which their well-being cannot be secured.

26. To create a favourable international economic environment, it is essential to continue the search for an early and durable solution to the massive debt problem facing many developing countries; to reverse the net transfer of resources from the developing to the developed countries; to create an open and equitable trading system to facilitate the diversification and modernisation of the economies of developing countries, particularly those that are commodity-dependent; and to make available substantial concessional resources, particularly for the least developed countries.

27. In all of these efforts the fulfilment of the basic needs of children must receive the highest priority. Every possible opportunity should be explored to ensure that programmes benefitting children, women and other vulnerable

groups are protected in times of structural adjustments and other economic restructuring. For example, as countries reduce military expenditures, part of the resources released should be channelled to programmes for social and economic development, especially those benefitting children. Debt relief schemes should be formulated in ways that the budget reallocations and renewed economic growth made possible through such schemes would benefit programmes for children. Debt relief for children, including debt swaps for investment in social development programmes, should be considered by debtors and lenders. The international community, including private sector lenders, are urged to work with developing countries and relevant agencies to support debt relief for children. To match increased efforts by developing countries themselves, the donor countries and international institutions should consider targetting an increase in their development assistance to give higher priority to primary health care, basic education, low-cost water and sanitation programmes and other interventions specifically endorsed in the Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action.

28. The international community has recognised the need to stop and reverse the increasing marginalisation of the least developed countries, including most countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and many land-locked and island countries that face special development problems. These countries will require additional long-term international support to complement their own national efforts to meet the pressing needs of children over the 1990s.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

29. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly contains a comprehensive set of international legal norms for the protection and well-being of children. All Governments are urged to consider earliest possible ratification of the Convention, where it has not already been ratified. Every possible effort should be made in all countries to disseminate the Convention and, wherever it has been already ratified, to monitor its implementation.

30. The Convention recognises that for the full and harmonious development of their personality, children should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. Accordingly all institutions of society should respect and support the efforts of families to nurture and care for their children. Every effort should be made to prevent the separation of children from their families. Whenever children are separated from their family due to force majeure or in their own best interest, arrangements should be made for appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement, due regard being paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing in his or her own cultural milieu.

III. Follow-up Actions and Monitoring

31. Effective implementation of this Plan of Action will require concerted national action and international cooperation. As affirmed in the Declaration, such action and cooperation must be guided by the principle of a

"first call for children" - a principle that the essential needs of children should be given high priority in the allocation of resources, in bad times as well as in good times, at national and international as well as at family levels.

32. It is particularly important that the child-specific actions proposed must be pursued as part of strengthening broader national development programmes combining revitalised economic growth, poverty reduction, human resource development and environmental protection. Such programmes must also strengthen family units and community organisations, inculcate civic responsibility and be sensitive to the cultural heritage and social values which support progress without alienation of the younger generation. With these broad objectives in mind, we commit ourselves and our Governments to the following actions:

Action at National Level

- a) All Governments are urged to prepare, before the end of 1991, national programmes of action to implement the commitments undertaken in the World Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action. National Governments should encourage and assist provincial and local governments as well as non-governmental organisations, the private sector and civic groups to prepare their own programmes of action to help implement the goals and objectives included in the Declaration and this Plan of Action.
- b) Each country is encouraged to re-examine in the context of its national plans, programmes and policies, how it might accord higher priority to programmes for the well-being of children in general, and for meeting over the 1990s the major goals for child survival, development and protection as enumerated in the World Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action.
- c) Each country is urged to re-examine its current national budget, 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 for development. Every effort should be made to ensure that such programmes are protected in times of economic austerity and structural adjustments.
- d) Families, communities, local governments, non-governmental organisations, social, cultural, religious, business and other institutions, including the mass media, are encouraged to play an active role in support of the goals enunciated in this Plan of Action. The experience of the 1980s shows that it is only through the mobilization of all sectors of society, including those that traditionally did not consider child survival, protection and development as their major responsibility, that significant progress can be achieved in these areas. All forms of social mobilization including the effective use of the great potential of the new information and communication capacity of the world should be marshalled to convey the knowledge and skills required for dramatically improving the situation of children to all families.

- e) Each country should establish appropriate mechanisms for the regular and timely collection, analysis and publication of data required to monitor relevant social indicators relating to the well-being of children - such as neonatal, infant and under-5 mortality rates, maternal mortality and fertility rates, nutritional levels, immunization coverage, morbidity rates of diseases of public health importance, school enrollment and achievement, and literacy rates - which record the progress being made towards the goals set forth in this Plan of Action and corresponding national plans of action. Statistics should be disaggregated by gender to ensure that any inequitable impact of programmes on girls and women can be monitored and corrected. It is particularly important that mechanisms be established to quickly alert policy makers of any adverse trends to enable timely corrective action. Such indicators of human development, as well as of economic development, should be regularly monitored by senior decision makers in all nations.
- f) Each country is urged to re-examine its current arrangements for responding to natural disasters and man-made calamities which often afflict women and children the hardest. Countries which do not have adequate contingency planning for disaster preparedness are urged to establish such plans, seeking support from appropriate international institutions where necessary.
- g) Progress toward the goals endorsed in this Plan of Action and the Summit Declaration could be further accelerated, and solutions to many other major problems confronting children and families greatly facilitated, through further research and development. Governments, industry and academic institutions are requested to increase their efforts in both basic and operational research, aimed at new technical and technological breakthroughs, more effective social mobilisation and better delivery of existing social services. Prime examples of the areas in which research is urgently needed include, in the field of health, improved vaccination technologies, malaria, AIDS, respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases, nutritional deficiencies, tuberculosis, family planning and care of the newborn. Similarly there are important research needs in the area of early child development, basic education, hygiene and sanitation, and in coping with the trauma facing children who are uprooted from their families and face other particularly difficult circumstances. Such research should involve collaboration among institutions in both the developing and industrialised countries of the world.

Action at International Level

33. Action at the community and national levels is, of course, of critical importance in adapting the goals and aspirations for children and development to national reality. However, many countries, particularly the least developed and the most indebted ones, will need substantial international cooperation to enable them to participate effectively in the worldwide effort for child survival, protection and development. Accordingly, the following specific actions are proposed to create an enabling international environment for the implementation of this Plan of Action.

- a) All international development agencies - multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental - are urged to examine how they can contribute to the achievement of the goals and strategies enunciated in the Declaration and this Plan of Actions as part of more general attention to human development in the 1990s. They are requested to report their plans and programmes to their respective governing bodies before the end of 1991 and periodically thereafter.
- b) All regional institutions, including regional political and economic organizations, are requested to include consideration of the Declaration and this Plan of Action on the agenda of their meetings, including at the highest political level, with a view to developing agreements for mutual collaboration for implementation and on-going monitoring.
- c) Full cooperation and collaboration of all relevant United Nations agencies and organs as well as other international institutions is requested in ensuring the achievement of the goals and objectives of the national plans envisaged in the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action. The governing bodies of all concerned agencies are requested to ensure that within their mandates the fullest possible support is given by these agencies for the achievement of these goals.
- d) The assistance of the United Nations is requested to institute appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of this Plan of Action, using existing expertise of the relevant specialised agencies, UNICEF and other United Nations organs. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to arrange for a mid-decade review, at all appropriate levels, of the progress being made towards implementing the commitments of the Declaration and Plan of Action.
- e) As the world's lead agency for children, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is requested to prepare periodically a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by individual countries and the international community in support of the child-related development goals of the 1990s. In addition, the Executive Board of UNICEF is requested to include a review of the implementation of the Declaration and this Plan of Action on its agenda at all its regular sessions, and to keep the General Assembly of the United Nations, through the Economic and Social Council, fully informed of progress to date and additional action required during the decade ahead.

34. The goals enunciated in the Declaration and this Plan of Action are ambitious and the commitments required to implement them will demand consistent and extraordinary effort on the part of all concerned. Fortunately, the necessary knowledge and techniques for reaching most of the goals already exist. The financial resources required are small in relation to the great achievements which beckon. And the most essential factor - the empowerment of families with the information necessary to protect their

children - is now within reach in every country and for virtually every community. As there is no cause which merits a higher priority than the protection and development of children, on whom the survival, stability and advancement of all nations - and, indeed, of human civilisation - depends, full implementation of the Declaration and this Plan of Action must be accorded a high priority for national action and international cooperation.

30 September 1990
New York

Annex

GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s

The following goals have been formulated through extensive consultation in various international fora attended by virtually all Governments, the relevant UN agencies including WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNDP and IBRD, and a large number of non-governmental organisations. These goals are recommended for implementation by all countries where they are applicable, with appropriate adaptation to the specific situation of each country in terms of phasing, standards, priorities and availability of resources. Additional goals that are particularly relevant to a country's specific situation should be added in its national plan of action.

I. Major Goals for Child Survival, Development and Protection

- Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate in all countries by one-third or to 50 and 70 per 1000 live births respectively, whichever is less.
- Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of maternal mortality rate by half.
- Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half.
- Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal.
- By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80% of primary school age children.
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level with emphasis on female literacy.
- Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.

II. Supporting/Sectoral Goals

1. Women's Health and Education

- Special attention to the health and nutrition of the female child, and pregnant and lactating women.
- Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies which are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many.
- Access by all pregnant women to prenatal care, trained attendants during child birth and referral facilities for high risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies.
- Universal access to primary education with special emphasis for girls, and accelerated literacy programmes for women.

2. Nutrition

- Reduction in severe as well as moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half of 1990 levels.
- Reduction of the rate of low birth weight (2.5 kg or less) to less than 10%.
- Reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one-third of 1990 levels.
- Virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders.
- Virtual elimination of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences, including blindness.
- Empowerment of all women to exclusively breast-feed their child for four to six months and to continue breast-feeding with complementary food well into the second year.

- Growth promotion and its regular monitoring to be institutionalised in all countries by the end of the 1990s.
- Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production to ensure household food security.

3. Child Health

- Global eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000.
- Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995.
- Reduction by 95 per cent in measles deaths and reduction by 90 per cent of measles cases compared to pre-immunisation levels by 1995, as a major step to the global eradication of measles in the longer run.
- Maintenance of a high level of immunisation coverage (at least 90% of children under one year of age by the year 2000) against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis and against tetanus for women of child bearing age.
- Reduction by 50 per cent in the deaths due to diarrhoea in children under the age of five years; and 25 per cent reduction in the diarrhoea incidence rate.
- Reduction by one-third in the deaths due to acute respiratory infections in children under five years.

4. Water and Sanitation

- Universal access to safe drinking water.
- Universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal.
- Elimination of guinea-worm disease (dracunculiasis) by the year 2000.

5. Basic Education

- Expansion of early childhood development activities including appropriate low-cost family and community based interventions.
- Universal access to basic education, and achievement of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school age children through formal schooling or non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls.
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy.
- Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living, made available through all educational channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness measured in terms of behavioural change.

6. Children in Difficult Circumstances

- Provide improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes leading to such situations.

