

# AFRICA'S CHILDREN, AFRICA'S FUTURE

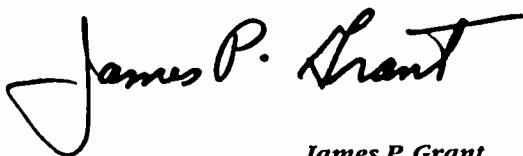
Implementing the World Summit Declaration



With a Foreword by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda  
and a Preface by President Moussa Traore of Mali

Addressing the economic crisis, which has had such a tragic impact on Africa's young, will require more than increased international assistance, including debt relief. It will take a two-pronged approach, based on the principles of "adjustment with a human face", which UNICEF has often stated: first, a vigorous defence of the importance of social investment to the overall future of a society so that social sectors do not carry disproportionate cut-backs, as too often has been the case; and second, a restructuring within the social sectors themselves, to put higher priority on those programmes which result in the most benefit to the most vulnerable.

There will be hard choices. We must overcome the inertia of those elements of the past that have not worked, and dare to commit ourselves to building on successes. The World Summit has been a starting point. The persistent challenge is to transform new and renewed commitments into action—for the children—and the future—of this noble continent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James P. Grant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "J".

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

# INTRODUCTION

The "African Decade for Child Survival, Protection and Development" opens amidst dreadful conditions for children in Africa. But at the same time, there are extraordinary opportunities to overcome difficulties.

Africa has the highest average under-five mortality rate in the world and is the only continent where child deaths are projected to increase during the 1990s. The reality reflected in these sad figures explains the priority UNICEF accords to Africa and the expansion of the Agency's presence on the continent.

Even in the hostile environment of the last decade there were signs of hope in demonstration of what *can* be done when an effective strategy and the political will to work together for its achievement exist. A fine example is Africa's remarkable progress toward Universal Child Immunization. In sub-Saharan Africa, no fewer than 25 countries are expected to achieve their 1990 goals of protecting 75 per cent of children against the six main child-killer diseases.

The accomplishment of remarkable advances for child health has not occurred automatically, nor by conducting business as usual. African countries have had to radically restructure their health systems, placing greater emphasis on primary health care than in the past. Throughout this process, and especially during the last half of the 1980s, UNICEF has substantially increased its volume of assistance to Africa and has opened and upgraded offices of Representatives to administer an increasing number of programmes. Its work is very much a *partnership* with governments, implementing country programmes that are designed by and for countries themselves. Popular participation has been indispensable to all of these joint programmes. The strengthening of national capacities is a key to sustaining individual programmes, and to development progress itself.

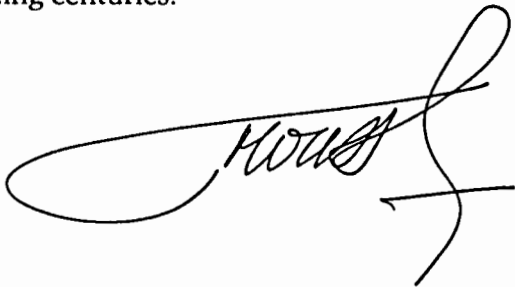
Just as UNICEF has been consistently increasing its involvement in Africa, so too the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been devoting more and more attention to child-related issues. The OAU commitment to children reached a new height this year when African Heads of State and Government adopted a record number of landmark resolutions on child survival, protection and development. Six years of collaboration stand behind the seven resolutions—a testament to African concern, at the highest levels, for meaningful development progress through attention to children.

In these resolutions, and in other multilateral fora, African governments, often through their Heads of State and Government, have committed themselves to the "goals for children and development in the 1990s", which are described in this booklet, and include such targets as reducing child mortality by one-third. Are the goals feasible in Africa? UNICEF is convinced that they are. The World Summit for Children has nurtured a solidarity among nations for a new mode of operation.

Implementing the goals for children, like all other broad development efforts in Africa, will take not only strong popular and political *will* at all levels, from families and communities to Heads of State and the international community; it will also take courage to mount the kind of extraordinary efforts that will be necessary. It will require reallocating resources to basic education, with an emphasis on universal primary education, and to primary health care approaches such as the Bamako Initiative. It will involve a major effort to soften the blow of AIDS through health care and support for orphans, as well as expanded initiatives to slow its spread, through education. It will take bringing life to the principles codified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, through active implementation.



It will be the turn of succeeding generations to ensure that nations and communities worldwide carry that dedication to the survival, protection and development of children in the coming centuries.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moussa Traoré', with a large loop on the left and a long, sweeping stroke extending to the right.

**Moussa Traoré**  
*President of the Republic of Mali*  
*Co-Chairman of the World Summit for Children*

# PREFACE

**F**irst and foremost, in my capacity as co-chairman of the World Summit for Children, the first Summit of its kind ever to be held, I would like to extend the congratulations of Mali to all participants.

It was my good fortune to be associated with this noble undertaking from its early days. When the Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. James P. Grant, with characteristic vigour, outlined to me the proposal for a high-level meeting to be devoted solely to children, he transmitted his enthusiasm to me. I immediately agreed to his request that I promote the concept among my fellow Heads of State and Government.

As a result of his advocacy, the question began to appear on the agenda of bilateral discussions among leaders. Then, as support for holding the World Summit gained momentum, we went to scale by introducing the topic in multilateral gatherings.

We achieved a major success at the Francophone Summit, held in Dakar in May 1989. The final communiqué issued at the close of the meeting, which was attended by no fewer than 44 delegations, called on all Heads of State and Government "to endorse the idea to convene a World Summit for Children as put forward by UNICEF in its 1989 edition of the *State of the World's Children* report." In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the issue was twice addressed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Resolutions adopted in 1989 and again in 1990 urged all African Heads of State and Government to participate in the World Summit for Children.

From Africa, enthusiasm for the World Summit spread to other fora. The Non-Aligned Summit, which took place in September 1989 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, "welcomed the proposal for a World Summit for Children as a constructive means for mobilizing national and international efforts with a view to promoting a collaborative global effort to address a common challenge." In its final communiqué, the Commonwealth Summit, which was held in October 1989 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, urged attendance by all Member States.

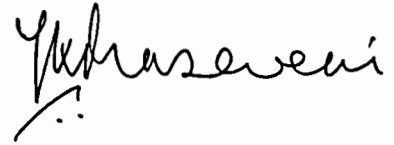
Other regional groups, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Andean Pact nations, as well as the leaders of Central America, added their voices to the chorus of support.

These exhortations were so successful that more than 70 Heads of State or Government accepted the invitation to participate in the World Summit for Children. Nearly 100 other nations sent distinguished representatives as State Observers.

Furthermore, the enthusiasm generated in support of the World Summit was harnessed to mobilize leaders, governments and communities around the world for the survival, protection and development of children. We are determined that the momentum generated in the preparatory stages and by the meeting itself should carry us forward to ensure implementation of the Summit Declaration and the Plan of Action. In the coming decade, we shall see the fruits of these efforts in the form of a dramatic reduction of child deaths, vast improvements in child health and stronger measures for their protection and development.



However, we have taken the view that crises are opportunities for important decision-making. Therefore, we are undaunted by these problems. With the necessary political will at home, and with international co-operation based on mutual respect, we are confident that we shall succeed in securing for our children not merely survival but also protection and development. We must not—dare not—fail in this.



**Yoweri K. Museveni**  
*President of the Republic of Uganda  
Chairman, Organization of African Unity*



*There is no doubt that Africa has encountered and continues to face harsh and formidable political, social and economic difficulties. These are development problems. But development in Africa cannot be measured by statistical indicators alone. For, behind these statistics are people whose initiatives, resourcefulness, dignity and hope cannot be quantified. The overwhelming majority of African people are hardworking people who have a desire to take care of their lives and to improve their lot. They want and hope to make better their state of living. With this spirit, the African development problems are not insurmountable. They can be overcome. With the creation of an enabling political environment, proper planning and foresight, African people can bring about economic development in the 1990s and face the challenges of the next century with confidence.*

**Salim A. Salim**  
*Secretary-General, OAU*

# FOREWORD

“Children are the flowers of our struggle,” Amilcar Cabral once said. We must re-orient our thinking to ensure that development is undertaken primarily for the betterment of the human being and not for materialistic ends; and the child must be the cornerstone of development. The child is the natural link in the chain of human survival. Yet this link is fragile. And since a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, the greatness—indeed the survival—of the human race ultimately depends on how we treat our most vulnerable members.

In order to overcome this fundamental vulnerability in our societies, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has established a comprehensive framework for addressing the situation of children in Africa. In this gigantic task, we are singularly fortunate in having UNICEF as one of our closest allies. It is in recognition of the significance and relevance of UNICEF's programmes and the quality of its leadership that Mr. James P. Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF, was invited to address the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in May 1988. Since then, the partnership between the OAU and UNICEF has grown, and I am happy to cite a number of concrete steps which have been taken to institutionalize Africa's concern for its children.

In 1989 the African Heads of State declared the 1990s the “African Decade for Child Survival, Protection and Development.” To give practical value and meaning to this, the OAU Summit of July 1990 adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child, as well as resolutions on the World Summit for Children, the African Decade for Child Survival, Protection and Development, on specific child-related issues such as reducing the effects of armed conflicts on children, immunization of children, and the control of AIDS. In commemoration of the Soweto massacre of children, in June 1976, the Summit also designated the 16th day of June as the “Day of the African Child.”

While we cannot speak of durable achievements for African children, we can firmly point to bold steps which we have taken. We have critically reviewed the existing infrastructure for health care delivery with a view to strengthening our public health care systems and facilitating implementation of the Expanded Programme on Immunization; in implementing economic reforms, we are paying particular attention to the social cost to children; in those African countries where there is armed conflict or civil unrest, we have accepted the principle of unimpeded access to children on both sides of the conflict by United Nations personnel and other *bona fide* humanitarian workers through “corridors of peace” and “periods of tranquillity.” Finally, we have also come to the full realization that the communities themselves are capable of playing the role of full and responsible partners in the management and financing of local health services, thus ensuring their long-term sustainability.

The child is, in the nature of things, a challenge. The odds for Africa are great in trying to meet the challenge of ensuring the survival, protection and full development of African children. These include the prevailing inequitable international economic order; the dynamics of social and economic change resulting in very rapid rates of population growth and urbanization; man-made and natural disasters such as armed conflicts, drought, floods and famine; environmental degradation; and scourges such as AIDS.



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# **AFRICA'S CHILDREN, AFRICA'S FUTURE**

## **Implementing the World Summit Declaration**

**With a Foreword by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda  
and a Preface by President Moussa Traoré of Mali**

# 1 THE SITUATION OF AFRICAN CHILDREN

The 1980s were a lost decade for Africa—a period in which the continent faced its worst crises in living memory. The hard-won economic gains of the 1970s were erased and development was thrown into reverse in most of Africa. Not surprisingly, children were the hardest hit. They paid for large-scale man-made and natural disasters with their health, and very often their lives.

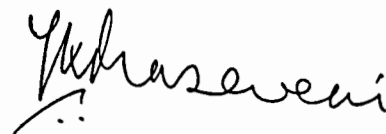
One of the biggest tragedies of the decade was that African countries could no longer meet the challenge of progress, and found themselves instead devoting increasingly limited resources toward halting a backward slide into more poverty. Every economic signal indicated that development had been derailed.

Africa now enters the 1990s in a very difficult economic position. In some respects it is worse than it was at the beginning of the 1980s. Debt has mounted to unprecedented levels, while commodity prices remain low. As a result, national budgets have been highly constrained. Most projections for the 1990s envisage little improvement in per capita income before the turn of the century. Without substantial action by the international community—in particular some form of debt relief and major increases in assistance—there seems only the most limited prospect for economic improvement.

Economic crises, war and natural disasters have had a devastating impact on the well-being of millions of African children. The proportion of urban and rural Africans afflicted by poverty is close to 75 per cent. According to UNDP's *Human Development Report 1990*, 33 out of 44 countries with the lowest human development index (HDI)—a rating that combines measures of life expectancy, adult literacy, and the purchasing power needed to satisfy basic needs—are in Africa. Average government expenditures for education and health have declined from an estimated 25 per cent in 1986 to around 18 per cent in 1989. The World Bank's latest World Development Report estimates that without action to change current trends, Africans in poverty will account for one-third of all the world's poor by the year 2000.

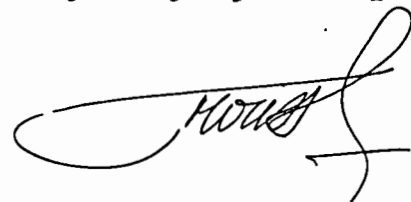
In part the result of serious environmental degradation, the droughts and famines that devastated parts of the continent during the 1980s were the most visible symptoms of a deep malaise which intensified from one year to the next. As problems grew, the widening gap between Africa and the rest of the world was given considerable international attention, but it was not met with sufficient action in part because African countries were engulfed in an economic crisis. In 1986, the United Nations General Assembly held a special session on Africa culminating in the adoption of a programme for African economic recovery and development. In response, African countries have acted. But supporting resources have been limited because international assistance has increased slowly while debt service payments have mounted rapidly, thus leaving national governments with increasingly fewer resources to devote to growing social problems. Resources generated within African countries for children's programmes have declined. Tragically, most of the highest national infant and child mortality rates in the world are in Africa. If current trends are not reversed, Africa's share of global infant and child deaths will increase to 40 per cent by the end of the century—up from 15 per cent in 1950 and 30 per cent in 1986.

*... First, we have finally recognized that we have one common fate and that solutions to problems must be commonly worked out; secondly, we have realized that meaningful development must begin with the human being, especially the child.*



Yoweri K. Museveni  
President of Uganda

*What do children want? First of all, they want love, as well as peace and security, without which nothing can be done. Then they want their rights to be preserved. . . . Lastly, they want justice, equity and a healthy environment in which they can fully develop.*



Moussa Traoré  
President of Mali

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*It is ironic that  
14 million children  
should die each year  
by causes which could  
easily be prevented at  
very low cost.*

*/kew/*

Joseph S. Momoh  
President of Sierra Leone

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*If apartheid is removed,  
then necessarily there  
will also be a better  
condition for the child  
and a better environ-  
ment in which we,  
using our national  
policies, can improve  
the lot of our children.*

  
Robert Mugabe  
President of the Republic  
of Zimbabwe

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*Apart from being  
deprived of access  
to health care and  
education, the  
Mozambican child  
is also a victim of  
brutalization by the  
armed bandits who  
teach them how to kill  
their own parents.*

  
Joaquim Alberto Chissano  
President of Mozambique

In Africa over 10,000 children die each day, often from the commonest childhood illnesses; another 10,000 are crippled for life. For those who survive, the picture is hardly bright. Malnutrition is increasing among the rural and urban poor, and has been gaining ground among school-aged children. Some 14 per cent of infants born each year in Africa weigh less than 2.5 kilos, which is double the percentage found in the industrialized world. About 25 per cent of Africa's children—in some cases up to 60 per cent of under-fives—suffer from protein/energy malnutrition. In its efforts to address these problems, Africa must contend with effects of harmful traditional practices and discrimination against women that are among the most inhibiting in the world.

Both child morbidity and mortality will be severely affected by AIDS, which threatens to slow or even reverse the momentum generated by child survival and development initiatives during the 1980s. A UNICEF study estimates that in 10 African countries seriously affected by AIDS, between one-quarter and one-half of a million children will die from AIDS per year by the year 2000. The indirect effects of AIDS on children are also grave, as the epidemic disrupts the economic and social viability of families and communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that by the end of this decade 10 million children worldwide will have been orphaned by AIDS.

War and civil strife have diminished populations of women and children with particular ferocity, generating a statistical portrait of tragedy that may be unequalled on any other continent. Women and children account for 92 per cent of war-related deaths. For every child killed in war-torn areas of the continent, as many as three more are wounded or physically disabled. Many others are traumatized. Half of the world's 25 million refugees and displaced persons are in Africa, again the majority of them women and children. Such poignant horrors of war only add to a more generalized trauma that has penetrated almost all corners of African society. The number of children in especially difficult circumstances continues to increase: hundreds of thousands of street children are appearing in every major city in Africa, and accounts of child neglect, abuse and exploitation dominate local newspaper headlines. In southern Africa millions of children are constant victims of apartheid and of the Pretoria regime's destabilization of its neighbours.

In many countries, malaria—once thought to have been conquered through the intervention of modern medicine—again represents a growing threat to the lives of women and children. It is still the leading child-killer in sub-Saharan Africa. The incidence and geographical spread of drug-resistant parasites are on the rise, contributing substantially to the more than 70,000 deaths from malaria of children under five each year.

Many childhood deaths could be prevented by improvements in access to adequate supplies of clean water. But as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade nears its end in 1992, many African families continue to suffer from diseases fostered by improper hygiene and unclean water.

For those children who do survive the traumas of early childhood, there are no firm guarantees for a productive and prosperous future. Economic recession and mounting external debts have led to severe reductions in basic educational services and a consequent deterioration of educational quality. While primary school enrollment increased from 46 per cent of those eligible to attend school in 1970 to 77 per cent in 1980, it dropped back down to 72 per cent in 1987. And even though illiteracy rates have been declining, the absolute numbers of illiterates continue to grow as the population increases.

## 2 AFRICAN INITIATIVES FOR CHILD SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

**W**hile they have not yet been able to offset or overcome all of the problems in the 1980s, most countries have taken actions in support of children that are beginning to show results. Following are some significant examples:

► Some 25 African countries are expected to achieve their goal of Universal Child Immunization by 1990 (UCI/1990) by protecting 75 per cent of children against the six main child-killer diseases. Even in a number of countries afflicted with armed conflicts, UCI has been reached in the main urban centres and other accessible areas. A wide range of other *mother and child health interventions* have been effective—including oral rehydration therapy, ante-natal care and the treatment of malaria and acute respiratory infections.

► Important community action has been taken in more than 25 African countries to *revitalize national health systems*. Village-level involvement in the promotion of maternal and child health care has increased, leading to increased community financial support for health services and improved management of scarce resources. Such efforts have been supported by expressions of political commitment at national and international levels.

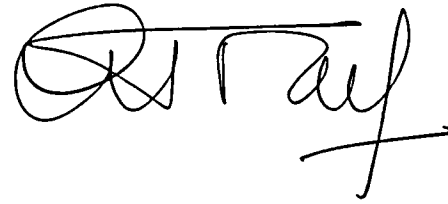
► The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, adopted in 1989, calls for more “*democratic space*” by stressing the need for an opening of the political process to accommodate divergent opinions and provide alternative choices. Through the Bamako Initiative of 1987, African countries have begun establishing new partnerships between governments, international donors and local communities aimed at designing health policies and programmes that serve the interests of all.

► Despite persistently high rates of malnutrition across the continent, *maternal and child nutrition* programmes have led to an improvement in the nutritional status of women and children in some countries. They have provided an important defence against the ravages of poverty and famine.

► While the objectives of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade have not been met, the number of people with *access to clean water increased more than 60 per cent* during the 1980s, amounting to an estimated 140 million people. In urban areas, the number of people with access to sanitation facilities doubled.


► There is now a *growing consensus* in support of the use of affordable technologies suited to the particular needs of rural and semi-urban areas, where the vast majority of people live.

*There is nothing to indicate that the developing countries will be able to get back on track for healthy and lasting growth unless the debt crisis, which is still seriously handicapping their development, is resolved.*



Abdou Diouf  
President of Senegal

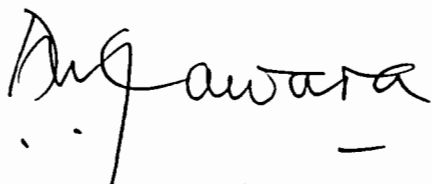
*I consider provision of safe drinking water and improved sanitation very vital to our child survival efforts. . . .*



Augustus Aikbomu  
Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

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*The international community has a moral responsibility to increase the level of aid to primary education in the developing countries.*



Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara  
President of the Gambia

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*Our Plan of Action is undoubtedly ambitious, but given the will on the part of Governments, it can be achieved.*



João Bernardo Vieira  
President of Guinea-Bissau

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*Sudan's achievements in the two major areas of child protection are: first, . . . "Operation Lifeline Sudan," . . . and second, the comprehensive campaign of immunization. . . .*



Omer Hassan Ahmed el Basbir  
President of the Sudan

► Between independence in the early 1960s and the late 1970s, African governments greatly expanded the number of schools. As a result, school enrollment increased dramatically. During the 1980s that progress was reversed when school enrollment started to decline in response to increasing economic hardship. The 1990 World Conference on Education for All has generated a new momentum for *basic education* by encouraging policies that will improve the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of school systems.

► There has been a growing recognition among African leaders that development cannot succeed without the participation of *women as full partners*. Their roles as nurturers of their children and families and their dominant contributions to food production and community development have met with increased appreciation, resulting in the gradual incorporation of women into mainstream economic and social programmes.

► Throughout the 1980s, the *social mobilization* of Africa's leaders, religious and educational institutions, artists and intellectuals, women's and youth movements, and mass media contributed greatly to an increase in public awareness of the importance of primary health care. This has often been symbolized by the participation of African heads of state in national immunization campaigns.

► The principle that the lives and normal development of children should have "first call" on society's concerns and resources has moved higher on the political agenda in many African countries. There is now a growing recognition that children and other vulnerable groups need special protection during periods of economic adjustment. The principle is embodied in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, a document unique in its breadth of universal standards for the survival, protection and development of children. As of 15 October 1990, 41 African countries have signed the Convention, and 20 African states out of a worldwide total of 50 countries have ratified it.

► "Operation Lifeline Sudan" is one example of the kinds of initiatives taken to protect children during even the most intractable conflicts. The OAU has demonstrated its support for such operations by calling for "days of tranquillity" and "children as zones of peace."

### 3 THE CHALLENGE OF THE 1990s

The best estimates available indicate that the child-oriented goals for the 1990s can be achieved with some additional US\$7 billion annually for all of sub-Saharan Africa. Depending on the circumstances of each country, as much as half could come from their own resources, and an equivalent amount from foreign assistance. If these resources are made available, then the decade of the 1990s may witness the saving of some 18 million young children in sub-Saharan Africa. Comparable numbers will be spared the crippling disabilities and side-effects of childhood disease. If accompanied by appropriate family planning measures, reduction in child death rates to targeted levels can be followed by an even greater reduction in births, as parents become confident that the children they get will indeed survive. If these resources are not available, the child death rates of 1990 will continue and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa will suffer more than 40 million young child deaths during the decade.

But are these resources available? Yes, they are, if certain priorities are re-ordered. It is worth noting that the additional US\$7 billion required to achieve these far-reaching, yet basic, goals is considerably less than the US\$9.7 which sub-Saharan African countries spent on servicing their debt in 1989. The amount need-

*As a result of the growing poverty in many developing countries. . . millions of children are growing up in circumstances which mean that they will never fulfill the mental and physical potential with which they were born.*

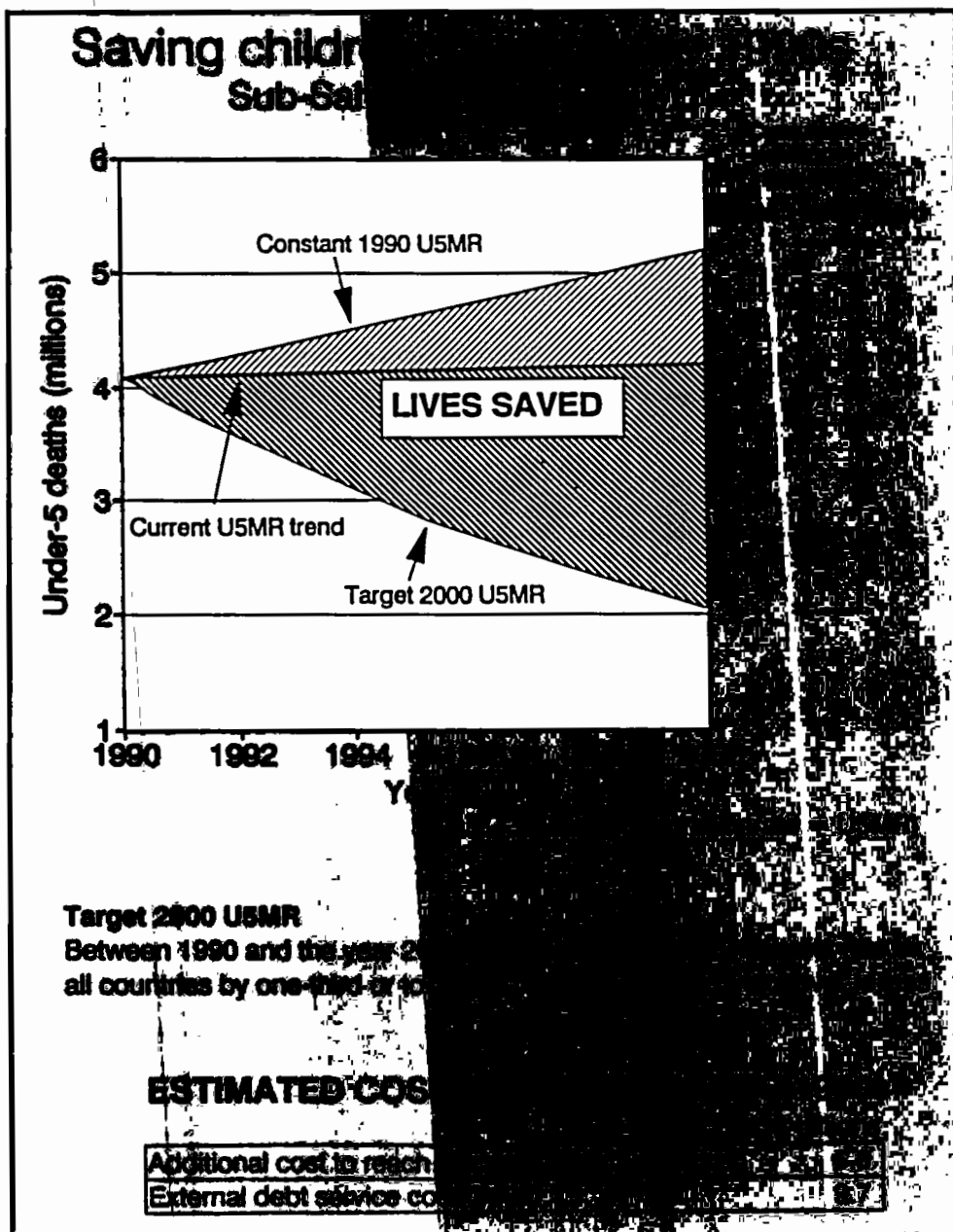


Ali Hassan Mwinyi  
President of Tanzania

*It is our collective responsibility as world leaders to make planet earth a happy and safe place for children to grow up freed from misery.*

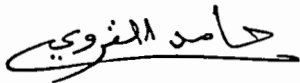


Sam Nujoma  
President of Namibia



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*Certain challenges. . .  
can be dealt with only  
through a concerted  
effort to usher in a  
new economic order  
that would bridge  
the enormous gap  
between the industrial  
countries and the  
developing countries.*



**Hamed Karout**  
**Prime Minister of Tunisia**

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ed from the countries themselves—roughly US\$4 billion—is considerably *less* than the US\$5 billion of sub-Saharan military expenditures in 1988. A reduction of Africa's military expenditures would provide much of the additional resources needed to achieve the goals.

To achieve the goals articulated by world leaders at the World Summit for Children, Africa will require a greater mobilization of people and resources than most other parts of the world. In the 1980s, mobilization centred largely on survival concerns and was often focused around catalytic events. But a more sustained mobilization will be required to attack the underlying causes and effects of many of the continent's problems.

The effort has been given important direction by the OAU's adoption in 1990 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child and its designation of the 1990s as the African Decade for Child Survival, Protection and Development.

It has been given a popular mandate by the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, adopted in 1989, which incorporates many of the lessons learned from mobilization efforts in the 1980s.

For Africa as a whole, initiative has been taken in a series of resolutions by the OAU on the survival, protection and development of children. These resolutions must now lead to *appropriate policies, strategies and programmes* in each African country which stimulate action at the community level. A prerequisite for the adaptation of these resolutions to national realities is the mobilization of political will needed to *keep children high on the development agenda*.

By uniting various sectors of society around commonly accepted aims and aspirations, mobilization efforts can strengthen a sense of national purpose. A dedication to equity and achievement of long-term benefits encourages broad acceptance of mobilizing actions and provides a solid basis for a wide variety of development initiatives.

# **WORLD DECLARATION ON THE SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN**



1. We have gathered at the World Summit for Children to undertake a joint commitment and to make an urgent universal appeal—to give every child a better future.

2. The children of the world are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope. Their time should be one of joy and peace, of playing, learning and growing. Their future should be shaped in harmony and co-operation. Their lives should mature, as they broaden their perspectives and gain new experiences.

3. But for many children, the reality of childhood is altogether different.

### **The challenge**

4. Each day, countless children around the world are exposed to dangers that hamper their growth and development. They suffer immensely as casualties of war and violence; as victims of racial discrimination, apartheid, aggression, foreign occupation

and annexation; as refugees and displaced children, forced to abandon their homes and their roots; as disabled; or as victims of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

5. Each day, millions of children suffer from the scourges of poverty and economic crisis—from hunger and homelessness, from epidemics and illiteracy, from degradation of the environment. They suffer from the grave effects of the problems of external indebtedness and also from the lack of sustained and sustainable growth in many developing countries, particularly the least developed ones.

6. Each day, 40,000 children die from malnutrition and disease, including acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), from the lack of clean water and inadequate sanitation and from the effects of the drug problem.

7. These are challenges that we, as political leaders, must meet.

### **The opportunity**

8. Together, our nations have the means and the knowledge to protect the lives and to diminish enormously the suffering of children, to promote the full development of their human potential and to make them aware of their needs, rights and opportunities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a new opportunity to make respect for children's rights and welfare truly universal.

9. Recent improvements in the international political climate can facilitate this task. Through international co-operation and solidarity it should now be possible to achieve concrete results in many fields—to revitalize economic growth and development, to protect the environment, to prevent the spread of fatal and crippling diseases and to achieve greater social and economic justice. The current moves towards disarmament also mean that significant resources could be released



Heads of State and Government as they appear in the photograph left-to-right. Row 4: Chairman Alia of Albania, President Menem of Argentina, President E of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, President Kolingba of the Central African Republic, President Aylwin of Chile, President Gaviria of Colombia, of Djibouti, Prime Minister Charles of Dominica, President Cristiani of El Salvador, Prime Minister Holkeri of Finland. Row 3: President Jawara of Gambia, Hermannsson of Iceland, Prime Minister Haughey of Ireland, Prime Minister Andreotti of Italy, Prime Minister Kaifu of Japan, Sheikh Al-Sabah of Kuwait, Aussenel of Monaco, President Chissano of Mozambique, President Nujoma of Namibia. Row 2: President Barrios of Nicaragua, Vice-President Aikhomu of I Mazowiecki of Poland, President Iliescu of Romania, President Habyarimana of Rwanda, Prime Minister Simmonds of St. Kitts & Nevis, Prime Minister Cc El Bashir of Sudan, President Shankar of Suriname, Prime Minister Dlamini of Swaziland. Row 1: Prime Minister Karoui of Tunisia, President Ozal of Turkey of the United Republic of Tanzania, President Bush of the United States of America, (Initiating Countries) President Salinas of Mexico, Prime Minister Mulroir Prime Minister Lini of Vanuatu, President Pérez of Venezuela, President Jovic of Yugoslavia, Prime Minister Bululu of Zaire and President Mugabe of Zim

for purposes other than military ones. Improving the well-being of children must be a very high priority when these resources are reallocated.

### The task

10. Enhancement of children's health and nutrition is a first duty, and also a task for which solutions are now within reach. The lives of tens of thousands of boys and girls can be saved every day, because the causes of their death are readily preventable. Child and infant mortality is unacceptably high in many parts of the world, but can be lowered dramatically with means that are already known and easily accessible.

11. Further attention, care and support should be accorded to disabled children, as well as to other children in very difficult circumstances.

12. Strengthening the role of women in general and ensuring their equal rights will be to the advantage of the world's children. Girls must be given

equal treatment and opportunities from the very beginning.

13. At present, over 100 million children are without basic schooling, and two-thirds of them are girls. The provision of basic education and literacy for all are among the most important contributions that can be made to the development of the world's children.

14. Half a million mothers die each year from causes related to childbirth. Safe motherhood must be promoted in all possible ways. Emphasis must be placed on responsible planning of family size and on child spacing. The family, as a fundamental group and natural environment for the growth and well-being of children, should be given all necessary protection and assistance.

15. All children must be given the chance to find their identity and realize their worth in a safe and supportive environment, through families and other care-givers committed to their

welfare. They must be prepared for responsible life in a free society. They should, from their early years, be encouraged to participate in the cultural life of their societies.

16. Economic conditions will continue to influence greatly the fate of children, especially in developing nations. For the sake of the future of all children, it is urgently necessary to ensure or reactivate sustained and sustainable economic growth and development in all countries and also to continue to give urgent attention to an early, broad and durable solution to the external debt problems facing developing debtor countries.

17. These tasks require a continued and concerted effort by all nations, through national action and international co-operation.

### The commitment

18. The well-being of children requires political action at the highest



of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sandiford of Barbados, King Baudouin of Belgium, President Collor of Brazil, President Zhelev of Bulgaria, Chairman Dementel Calderón-Fournier of Costa Rica, President Havel of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Prime Minister Schlüter of Denmark, Prime Minister Hamadou nt Von Weizsäcker of Germany, President Vieira of Guinea Bissau, Secretary of State Casaroli of the Holy See, President Callejas of Honduras, Prime Minister Minister El-Hoss of Lebanon, Prime Minister Brunhart of Liechtenstein, Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg, President Gayoom of Maldives, Minister of State Prime Minister Syse of Norway, President Endara of Panama, Prime Minister Namaliu of Papua New Guinea, Prime Minister Hurtado of Peru, Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Prime Minister Alesana of Samoa, President Diouf of Senegal, President Momoh of Sierra Leone, Prime Minister Gonzalez of Spain, President ident Museveni of Uganda, Chairman Masol of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom, President Mwinyi anada, President Traoré of Mali, Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar of the United Nations, President Lacalle of Uruguay, Prime Minister Rocard of France also participated in the Summit.

level. We are determined to take that action.

19. We ourselves hereby make a solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection and development. This will also ensure the well-being of all societies.

20. We have agreed that we will act together, in international co-operation, as well as in our respective countries. We now commit ourselves to the following 10-point programme to protect the rights of children and to improve their lives:

- (1) We will work to promote earliest possible ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Programmes to encourage information about children's rights should be launched world-wide, taking into account the distinct cultural and social values in different countries.
- (2) We will work for a solid effort of national and international action to enhance children's health, to promote pre-natal care and to lower infant and child mortality in all countries and among all peoples. We will promote the provision of clean water in all communities for all their children, as well as universal access to sanitation.
- (3) We will work for optimal growth and development in childhood, through measures to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and famine, and thus to relieve millions of children of tragic sufferings in a world that has the means to feed all its citizens.
- (4) We will work to strengthen the role and status of women. We will promote responsible planning of family size, child spacing, breastfeeding and safe motherhood.
- (5) We will work for respect for the role of the family in providing for children and will support the efforts of parents, other care-givers and communities to nurture and care for children, from the earliest stages of childhood through adolescence. We also recognize the special needs

of children who are separated from their families.

- (6) We will work for programmes that reduce illiteracy and provide educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of their background and gender; that prepare children for productive employment and lifelong learning opportunities, i. e. through vocational training; and that enable children to grow to adulthood within a supportive and nurturing cultural and social context.
- (7) We will work to ameliorate the plight of millions of children who live under especially difficult circumstances—as victims of apartheid and foreign occupation; orphans and street children and children of migrant workers; the displaced children and victims of natural and man-made disasters; the disabled and the abused, the socially disadvantaged and the exploited. Refugee children must be helped to find new roots in life. We will work for special protection of the working child and for the abolition of illegal child labour. We will do our best to ensure that children are not drawn into becoming victims of the scourge of illicit drugs.
- (8) We will work carefully to protect children from the scourge of war and to take measures to prevent further armed conflicts, in order to give children everywhere a peaceful and secure future. We will promote the values of peace, understanding and dialogue in the education of children. The essential needs of children and families must be protected even in times of war and in violence-ridden areas. We ask that periods of tranquillity and special relief corridors be observed for the benefit of children, where war and violence are still taking place.
- (9) We will work for common measures for the protection of the environment, at all levels, so that all children can enjoy a safer and healthier future.
- (10) We will work for a global attack on poverty, which would have

immediate benefits for children's welfare. The vulnerability and special needs of the children of the developing countries, and in particular the least developed ones, deserve priority. But growth and development need promotion in all States, through national action and international co-operation. That calls for transfers of appropriate additional resources to developing countries as well as improved terms of trade, further trade liberalization and measures for debt relief. It also implies structural adjustments that promote world economic growth, particularly in developing countries, while ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable sectors of the populations, in particular the children.

**The next steps**

- 21. The World Summit for Children has presented us with a challenge to take action. We have agreed to take up that challenge.
- 22. Among the partnerships we seek, we turn especially to children themselves. We appeal to them to participate in this effort.
- 23. We also seek the support of the United Nations system, as well as other international and regional organizations, in the universal effort to promote the well-being of children. We ask for greater involvement on the part of non-governmental organizations, in complementing national efforts and joint international action in this field.
- 24. We have decided to adopt and implement a Plan of Action, as a framework for more specific national and international undertakings. We appeal to all our colleagues to endorse that Plan. We are prepared to make available the resources to meet these commitments, as part of the priorities of our national plans.
- 25. We do this not only for the present generation, but for all generations to come. There can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future.

## 4 CONCLUSION: A CALL TO ACTION

The Declaration of the World Summit for Children and the Plan of Action for its implementation have a unique appeal and application to Africa. Africa has one of the youngest populations in the world, and yet has the farthest to go in terms of realizing the objectives and attaining the goals of child survival, protection and development. The task is compounded by Africa's continued economic crisis. If Africa's children are to be adequately prepared for the world of the twenty-first century, the challenge must be urgently addressed with concerted and comprehensive efforts that must be sustained into the next century.

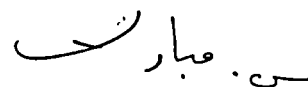
Full implementation of the agenda for children, set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, will require decades of work. Several international fora have been attended by virtually all Governments, relevant United Nations agencies and major non-governmental organizations (NGOs) over the past two years. Collectively they have formulated the following set of goals for children and development in the 1990s:

- 1 Reduction of 1990 under-five child mortality rates by one-third or to a level of 70 per 1000 live births, whichever is the greater reduction;
- 2 Reduction of maternal mortality rates by half of 1990 levels;
- 3 Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among children under five by one-half of 1990 levels;
- 4 Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;
- 5 Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children;
- 6 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;
- 7 Protection of children in especially difficult circumstances, particularly those in situations of armed conflict.

A list of more detailed sectoral goals and specific actions can be found in the appendix to the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

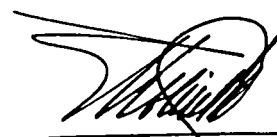
The Plan of Action calls for concerted national action and international co-operation to strive for the achievement, in all countries, of the major goals for the survival, protection and development of children by the year 2000. The above goals and the programme of the Declaration and the Plan of Action together provide a framework for national and international action in support of Africa's children. Their achievement will require a broad, multi-pronged approach, with the support of the following strategies:

*This summit marks the birth of a common vision and a common philosophy which will be at the heart of international planning for the future of our children and of ways to address their problems.*



*Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady  
of the Arab Republic of Egypt*

*In the past 10 years, with the scant resources at our disposal, my country has made great efforts on behalf of children.*



*André Kolingba  
President of the Central  
African Republic*

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*Every child, whether  
born in or out of  
wedlock, has the right  
to equal protection  
by society.*

*Fr. Lunda - Bululu*

**Lunda Bululu**  
**Prime Minister of the**  
**Republic of Zaïre**

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- ▶ *mobilization* of both national and international political commitment to implement the goals for Africa's children in the 1990s;
- ▶ *adoption* of specific action plans in each African country for the achievement of basic goals in or before the year 2000;
- ▶ *establishment* of priorities given to children's welfare in national plans and appropriate budgetary allocations or reallocations of resources to meet the priority needs of children during current plan periods;
- ▶ *empowerment* of the younger generations, in particular young women, to enable them to take initiative and play their full part;
- ▶ *enhancement* of a framework of international co-operation that will considerably increase net resource flows to Africa, and ensure that an adequate proportion of these support priority needs of children in health, education and other forms of social investment.

It will be particularly important to develop an appropriate and efficient infrastructure that can help Africans achieve the child survival, protection and development goals of the 1990s. This must be supported by a pattern of economic growth directed at human development. There must also be clear priorities given to an intensification of peace initiatives, the reduction of poverty, increased popular participation in the development and maintenance of social programmes, and the organization of campaigns to fight environmental degradation.

African leaders must lead efforts to implement the Plan of Action with appropriate policy guidelines intended to transform today's disadvantaged youth into tomorrow's productive workforce and enlightened citizenry.

The World Summit for Children was in the end a Summit on the future of our planet, and its essential focus was on the survival of the human race. The best way to preserve the human race in peace and harmony is to give all the children of the world an equal chance in life.

# APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPATION BY AFRICA AT THE HEAD OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT LEVEL

1	<i>Central African Republic</i>	André Kolingba
2	<i>Djibouti</i>	Barkat Gourad Hamadou
3	<i>Gambia</i>	Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara
4	<i>Guinea-Bissau</i>	João Bernardo Vieira
5	<i>Mali</i>	Moussa Traoré
6	<i>Mozambique</i>	Joaquim Alberto Chissano
7	<i>Namibia</i>	Sam Nujoma
8	<i>Nigeria</i>	Augustus Aikhomu
9	<i>Rwanda</i>	Juvénal Habyarimana
10	<i>Senegal</i>	Abdou Diouf
11	<i>Sierra Leone</i>	Joseph S. Momoh
12	<i>Sudan</i>	Omer Hassan Ahmed El Bashir
13	<i>Swaziland</i>	Obed Dlamini
14	<i>Tanzania</i>	Ali Hassan Mwinyi
15	<i>Tunisia</i>	Hamed Karoui
16	<i>Uganda</i>	Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
17	<i>Zaire</i>	Lunda Bululu
18	<i>Zimbabwe</i>	Robert Mugabe

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*Egypt*

President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak was  
represented by Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak

## APPENDIX 2: STATE OBSERVERS FROM AFRICA

1	<i>Algeria</i>	Sid Ahmed Ghozali, Minister of Foreign Affairs
2	<i>Angola</i>	Manuel Pedro Pacavira, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
3	<i>Benin</i>	Theophile Nata, Minister of Foreign Affairs
4	<i>Botswana</i>	Legwaila J. Legwaila, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
5	<i>Burkina Faso</i>	Prosper Vokouma, Minister of External Affairs
6	<i>Burundi</i>	Cyprien Mbonimpa, Minister of Foreign Relations and Cooperation
7	<i>Cameroon</i>	Jacques Roger Booh-Booh, Minister of External Relations
8	<i>Cape Verde</i>	Humberto B. Santos, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
9	<i>Chad</i>	Acheik Ibn Oumar, Minister of External Relations
10	<i>Comoros</i>	Mtara Maecha, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
11	<i>Congo</i>	Martin Adouki, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
12	<i>Côte d'Ivoire</i>	Amara Essy, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
13	<i>Ethiopia</i>	Shimelis Adugna, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs
14	<i>Gabon</i>	Ali Bongo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
15	<i>Ghana</i>	Obed Y. Asamoah, PNDC Secretary (Minister) for Foreign Affairs
16	<i>Guinea</i>	Ibrahima Sylla, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation
17	<i>Kenya</i>	Wilson Ndolo Ayah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
18	<i>Lesotho</i>	Tom Thabane, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Broadcasting and Information
19	<i>Liberia</i>	William Bull, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
20	<i>Libyan Arab Jamahiriya</i>	Jadullah Azuz Talhi, Secretary for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation
21	<i>Madagascar</i>	Noël Rakotondramboa, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations
22	<i>Malawi</i>	Dalton S. Katopola, Minister for Transport and Communications
23	<i>Mauritania</i>	Hasni Ould Didi, Minister of External Affairs and Cooperation
24	<i>Mauritius</i>	Murlidas Dulloo, Minister of Agriculture, etc. and Minister of External Affairs and Emigration
25	<i>Morocco</i>	Aziz Hasbi, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
26	<i>Niger</i>	Sani Bako, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
27	<i>Seychelles</i>	Marc Marengo, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
28	<i>Somalia</i>	Ahmed Mohamud Farah, Vice-President
29	<i>Togo</i>	Ahlonkoba Aithnard, Minister of Social Affairs and Welfare for Women
30	<i>Zambia</i>	L.J. Mwananshiku, Minister for Foreign Affairs

**PLAN OF ACTION  
FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WORLD DECLARATION  
ON THE SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF CHILDREN IN THE 1990s**



## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Plan of Action is intended as a guide for national Governments, international organizations, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations (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. It should also form an integral part of the broader international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. As today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection and development is the prerequisite 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 calls on all Governments to promote 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 has been formulated in several international forums attended by virtually all Governments, relevant United Nations agencies and major NGOs. 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 co-operation to strive for the achievement, in all countries, of the following major goals for the survival, protection and development of children by the year 2000.

- (a) Reduction of 1990 under-5 child mortality rates by one third or to a level of 70 per 1,000 live births, whichever is the greater reduction;
- (b) Reduction of maternal mortality rates by half of 1990 levels;

(c) Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by one half of 1990 levels;

(d) Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;

(e) Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school age children;

(f) 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;

(g) 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 appendix 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:

### **The Convention on the Rights of the Child**

8. 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 promote 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 already been ratified, to promote its implementation and monitoring.

### **Child health**

9. 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 that 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 every year.

Effective action can and must be taken to combat these diseases by strengthening primary health care and basic health services in all countries.

10. 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 acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (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 that 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 that can be applicable in all countries and situations, and massive information and education campaigns, receive a high priority for both national action and international co-operation.

11. A major factor affecting the health of children as well as adults is the availability of clean water and safe sanitation. These are not only essential for human health and well-being, but also contribute greatly to the emancipation of women from the drudgery that has a 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.

12. 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 co-operation, to aim at 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.

### **Food and nutrition**

13. 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 anaemia. 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, appropriate institutional arrangements 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, i.e. drastically to reduce diseases that contribute to malnutrition, to halve protein-energy malnutrition, virtually to eliminate vitamin A deficiency and iodine deficiency disorders and to reduce nutritional anaemia significantly.

14. 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. Meeting this need requires employment and income-generating opportunities, dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production and distribution. These are key actions within broader national strategies to combat hunger and malnutrition.

### **Role of women, maternal health and family planning**

15. Women in their various roles play a critical part in the well-being of children. The enhancement of the status of women and their equal access to education, training, credit and other extension services constitute a valuable contribution to a nation's social and economic development. Efforts for the enhancement of women's status and their role in development must begin with the girl child. Equal opportunity should be provided for the girl child to benefit from the health, nutrition, education and other basic services to enable her to grow to her full potential.

16. 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 for many millions more. To redress this tragedy, special attention should be given to health, nutrition and education of women.

17. All couples should have access to information on the importance of responsible planning of family size and the many advantages of child spacing 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 anaemia 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 programmes and family planning together in that, acting synergistically, these activities help accelerate the reduction of both mortality and fertility rates, and contribute more to lowering rates of population growth than either type of activity alone.

### **Role of the family**

18. The family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children from infancy to adolescence. Introduction of children to the culture, values and norms of their society begins in the family. 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 parents and other care-givers to nurture and care for children in a family environment.

19. Every effort should be made to prevent the separation of children

from their families. Whenever children are separated from their family owing 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. Extended families, relatives and community institutions should be given support to help to meet the special needs of orphaned, displaced and abandoned children. Efforts must be made to ensure that no child is treated as an outcast from society.

### **Basic education and literacy**

20. 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 increase significantly educational opportunity for over 100 million children and nearly 1 billion 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, (d) vocational training and preparation for employment and (e) 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.

21. 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 co-operation.

### **Children in especially difficult circumstances**

22. Millions of children around the world live under especially difficult circumstances—as orphans and street children, as refugees or displaced persons, as victims of war and natural and man-made disasters, including such perils as exposure to radiation and dangerous chemicals, as children of migrant workers and other socially disadvantaged groups, as child workers or youth trapped in the bondage of prostitution, sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation, as disabled children and juvenile delinquents and as victims of apartheid and foreign occupation. Such children deserve special attention, protection and assistance from their families and communities and as part of national efforts and international co-operation.

23. 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 work to end such child-labour practices and see how the conditions and circumstances of children in legitimate employment can be

protected to provide adequate opportunity for their healthy upbringing and development.

24. 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 intergovernmental 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 the demand for illicit drugs. Tobacco and alcohol abuse are also problems requiring action, especially preventive measures and education among young people.

### **Protection of children during armed conflicts**

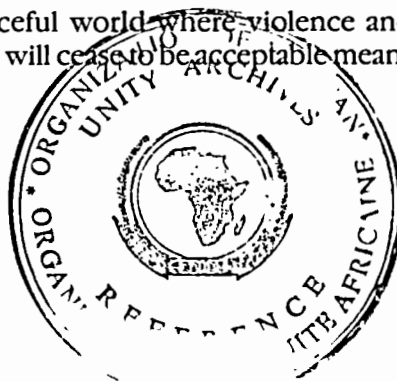
25. Children need special protection in situations of armed conflict. Recent examples in which countries and opposing factions have agreed to suspend hostilities and adopt special measures such as “corridors of peace” to allow relief supplies to reach women and children and “days of tranquility” to vaccinate 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 explicitly to 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. To build the foundation for a peaceful world where violence and war will cease to be acceptable means

for settling disputes and conflicts, children's education should inculcate the values of peace, tolerance, understanding and dialogue.

### **Children and the environment**

26. Children have the greatest stake in the preservation of the environment and its judicious management for sustainable development as their survival and development depend 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.

27. 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 industrialized and the 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 to meet their basic needs but which inculcate in them respect for the natural environment with the diversity of life that it sustains and its beauty and



resourcefulness that enhance the quality of human life, must figure prominently in the world's environmental agenda.

### **Alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth**

28. 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.

29. As affirmed by the international community at the eighteenth 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.

30. To foster a favourable international economic environment, it is essential to continue to give urgent attention to an early, broad and durable solution to the external debt problems facing developing debtor countries; to mobilize external and domestic resources to meet the increasing needs for development finance of developing countries; to take steps to ensure that the problem of the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries does not continue in the 1990s and that its impact is effectively addressed; to create a more open and

equitable trading system to facilitate the diversification and modernization 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.

31. In all of these efforts the fulfilment of the basic needs of children must receive a high priority. Every possible opportunity should be explored to ensure that programmes benefiting 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, including those benefiting children. Debt-relief schemes could 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 creditors. The international community, including private-sector creditors, 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 more development assistance 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.

32. The international community has recognized the need to stop and

reverse the increasing marginalization 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.

### **III. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS AND MONITORING**

33. Effective implementation of this Plan of Action will require concerted national action and international co-operation. As affirmed in the Declaration, such action and co-operation 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.

34. It is particularly important that the child-specific actions proposed must be pursued as part of strengthening broader national development programmes combining revitalized economic growth, poverty reduction, human resource development and environmental protection. Such programmes must also strengthen community organizations, 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 the national level**

(i) 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 NGOs, the private sector and civic groups to prepare their own programmes of action to help to implement the goals and objectives included in the Declaration and this Plan of Action;

(ii) 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;

(iii) Each country is urged to re-examine in the context of its particular national situation, 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. Every effort should be made to ensure that such programmes are protected in times of economic austerity and structural adjustments;

(iv) Families, communities, local governments, NGOs, 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 focus, 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 to all families the knowledge and skills required for dramatically improving the situation of children;

(v) 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 enrolment 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 alert policy makers quickly to any adverse trends to enable timely corrective action. Indicators of human development should be periodically reviewed by national leaders and decision makers, as is currently done with indicators of economic development;

(vi) 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 that do not have adequate contingency planning for disaster preparedness are urged to establish such plans, seeking support from appropriate international institutions where necessary;

(vii) Progress towards the goals endorsed in the Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action 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 mobilization 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 the industrialized countries of the world.

#### **Action at the international level**

35. Action at the community and national levels is, of course, of critical

importance in meeting the goals and aspirations for children and development. However, many developing countries, particularly the least developed and the most indebted ones, will need substantial international co-operation to enable them to participate effectively in the world-wide 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.

(i) 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 Action 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;

(ii) 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 ongoing monitoring;

(iii) Full co-operation and collaboration of all relevant United Nations agencies and organs as well as other international institutions are 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;

(iv) 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 United Nations statistical offices, the specialized 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;

(v) As the world's lead agency for children, the United Nations Children's Fund is requested to prepare, in close collaboration with the relevant specialized agencies and other United Nations organs, a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by individual countries and the international community in support of the child-related development goals for the 1990s. The governing bodies of the relevant specialized agencies and United Nations organs are requested to include a periodic review of the implementation of the Declaration and this Plan of Action at their 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.

36. The goals enunciated in the Declaration and this Plan of Action are ambitious and the commitments re-

quired 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 modest in relation to the great achievements that beckon. And the most essential factor—the provision to families of the information and services necessary to protect their children—is now within reach in every country and for virtually every community. 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 civilization—depends. Full implementation of the Declaration and this Plan of Action must therefore be accorded a high priority for national action and international co-operation.

## APPENDIX: GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s

The following goals have been formulated through extensive consultation in various international forums attended by virtually all Governments, the relevant United Nations agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and a large number of NGOs. 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, with respect for cultural, religious and social traditions. 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

- (a) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate by one third or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live birth respectively, whichever is less;
- (b) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of maternal mortality rate by half;
- (c) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half;
- (d) Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;
- (e) By the year 2000, universal

access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children;

(f) 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;

(g) Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.

### II. SUPPORTING/SECTORAL GOALS

#### A. Women's health and education

- (i) Special attention to the health and nutrition of the female child and to pregnant and lactating women;
- (ii) Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many;
- (iii) Access by all pregnant women to pre-natal care, trained attendants during childbirth and referral facilities for high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies;
- (iv) Universal access to primary education with special emphasis for girls and accelerated literacy programmes for women.

#### B. Nutrition

- (i) Reduction in severe, as well as moderate, malnutrition among under-5 children by half of 1990 levels;
- (ii) Reduction of the rate of low birth weight (2.5 kg or less) to less than 10 per cent;
- (iii) Reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one third of the 1990 levels;
- (iv) Virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders;

(v) Virtual elimination of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences, including blindness;

(vi) Empowerment of all women to breast-feed their children exclusively for four to six months and to continue breast-feeding, with complementary food, well into the second year;

(vii) Growth promotion and its regular monitoring to be institutionalized in all countries by the end of the 1990s;

(viii) Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production to ensure household food security.

#### C. Child health

- (i) Global eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000;
- (ii) Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995;
- (iii) Reduction by 95 per cent in measles deaths and reduction by 90 per cent of measles cases compared to pre-immunization levels by 1995, as a major step to the global eradication of measles in the longer run;
- (iv) Maintenance of a high level of immunization coverage (at least 90 per cent 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;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) Reduction by one third in the deaths due to acute respiratory infections in children under five years.

#### **D. Water and sanitation**

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

#### **E. Basic education**

- (i) Expansion of early childhood development activities, including appropriate low-cost family- and community-based interventions;
- (ii) Universal access to basic educa-

tion, 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;

(iii) 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;

(iv) 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.

#### **F. Children in difficult circumstances**

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



**Africa's Children, Africa's Future**  
**Public Participation Section, Division of Public Affairs**  
**UNICEF House, 3 U.N. Plaza, New York**  
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