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Memo to the Secretary-General (1990: 13 January): Update on the World Summit for Children

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Notes

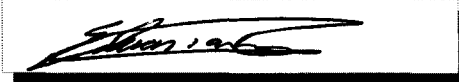
Includes copy of invitation letter [Copy in room 1326-2.]

Print Name of Person Submit Images

Signature of Person Submit

Number of images
without cover

EDWIN RAMIREZ

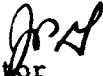


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13 January 1990

TO: The Secretary-General

FROM: James P. Grant 
Executive Director

RE: Update on the World Summit for Children

We had an excellent first meeting of the expanded Planning Committee for the World Summit for Children on Friday, preceded the evening before by a session of the six Initiators. Ambassador Fortier reported his conversation with you of Thursday afternoon, including your assurance that you would be actively involved in making the Summit a full success, and that you would be willing to sign the letters of invitation as early as this coming week. This was very much appreciated.

All 12 additional Governments which had been invited to join the Planning Committee were represented on Friday, either by Personal Representatives of their Head of State/Government, or by their Permanent Representative to the UN. (I might particularly mention that the Permanent Representatives of 4 of the 5 permanent members of the Security Council participated.) Italy and Netherlands, which had requested to also be added to the Planning Committee, were also represented as Observers. I was pleased that Jane Joplin was able to be present for much of the meeting. The following reviews several key issues which were addressed.

Terms of Reference: The Committee adopted the Initiators' "Statement of Agreement" from Geneva (November 1989) and the UNICEF Executive Board resolution (December 1989) as their "constitutional documents". This included endorsement of a continuing leadership role of the Initiators.

Additional members: It was agreed that any other country (presently including Bangladesh, Italy, Netherlands and Nigeria) which expresses a serious interest in participating in the Planning Committee would be invited to join via the same procedure that has applied to all 18 present members: I will address a letter to the Head of State/Government inviting him to designate a high-level Personal Representative to participate in the Committee. Any such additional members would be full participants.

Date for the Summit: To relieve the problems posed by their original proposal of Wednesday afternoon and Thursday, 26-2 September, the Initiators proposed a new option: to begin with a working dinner on Saturday, 29 September; to have

two business sessions on Sunday; and a concluding ceremony on Monday morning, 1 October. It was proposed that you might host one social function (the opening dinner?), and the co-chairs of the Summit would host another (Sunday dinner?). This weekend schedule would, as you can appreciate, eliminate or reduce to a minimum all of the various complications which other dates pose.

The Planning Committee discussed the range of possibilities, and four options were identified: Thursday-Friday, 20-21 September; Monday-Tuesday, 24-25 September; Wednesday-Thursday, 26-27 September; and Saturday-Monday AM, 29 September-1 October. It was agreed that capitals would be consulted, and each member would reply by 24 January, characterizing each option as either: "preferred", "acceptable" or "impossible". On the basis of these comments, the Executive Director is authorized, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to select the date.

Public announcement: It was agreed that public announcement of the call for the Summit should be made as soon as the date is determined, and that the invitations should be issued at that time. We are tentatively planning a press conference for Tuesday morning, 30 January, at 11:00 at the United Nations. Our idea is that the representatives of the six Initiators, accompanied by representatives of the additional members of the Planning Committee, should participate. The group would be very pleased if you would also be involved. One approach could have a representative of the Governments announce the call for the Summit and their request for your assistance, and you could respond by welcoming the request and announcing that you are, indeed, issuing the invitations. Another approach would be for it to be your press conference, at which you announce that you have received the request and are responding positively to it; the representatives of the Governments would be present as witnesses. A third approach would be an announcement by the Governments, to which I report, on your behalf, that you have accepted their request and are issuing the invitations. The Governments plan simultaneous press statements in their capitals.

Letters of invitation: As mentioned, the Governments are anxious that the letters of invitation be issued as soon as possible. I propose that they be dated for the date of the press conference (circa 30 January), and produced and ready to be mailed on that date. The date of the Summit appears only on page one of the letter. [Copy of the text is enclosed.] We could, if you wish, now prepare the second pages, to allow you to sign them over an extended period, and then produce page 1 as soon as the date is determined (circa 25 January).

Preparation of the draft Declaration: The Planning Committee agreed to a schedule and process for preparing the proposed Declaration of the Summit. This begins with invitations to the Governments and relevant UN agencies to submit ideas for topics to be addressed, by 9 February. A draft thematic paper will then be prepared and circulated for comment, with review at a second formal meeting of the Planning Committee on 19 March, and then further review by the UNICEF Executive Board in April.

Perhaps the most important news to report is that, clearly, as a result of both the UNICEF Executive Board special session in December and the process of

preparing for yesterday's meeting, the World Summit for Children is now "owned" by a very much larger group than the six Initiators and UNICEF. Now I know that we have a very historic opportunity in our hands.

cc: Mr. Virendra Dayal
Ms. Jane Jopling

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

30 January 1990

Excellency,

I write to Your Excellency at the request of Their Excellencies Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada, President Mubarak of Egypt, President Traore of Mali, President Salinas de Gortari of Mexico, Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan, and Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden. Their Excellencies have proposed that a World Summit for Children be convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on _____ 1990, in order to enhance political commitment for the benefit of children, nationally and internationally. This initiative was endorsed by the Executive Board of UNICEF at a special session on 22 December 1989.

The purpose of The World Summit for Children is to bring attention and promote commitment, at the highest political level, to goals and strategies for ensuring the survival, protection and development of children as key elements in the socio-economic development of all countries. The meeting will also emphasize the particular impact of critical global problems on children. The aim is to stimulate new initiatives in all countries, and among the international community, to address those issues that most critically affect children for the decades ahead. It is expected that the meeting will result in a declaration on achieving these goals in the 1990s. The Initiators believe that the Summit can particularly accelerate ratification and implementation of the new Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and commended to States for ratification.

Experience in recent years with the approaches known generally as the "Child Survival and Development Revolution" has demonstrated that dramatic progress can be achieved in reducing child deaths and improving child health and well-being. The necessary mobilization of multiple sectors of government and society to achieve this progress invariably requires the personal and active commitment of national leaders. It has also been demonstrated that this improvement in the survival of children through the involvement of parents contributes to a subsequent greater voluntary reduction in births.

His Excellency
M. _____
(Head of State or Government)
(Capital City, Country)

The growing impact on children of several critical global problems - notably war and violence, poverty, debt, degradation of the environment, and drugs - must be a major concern of all political leaders. These issues present a challenge which demands concerted international action.

The Initiators have asked that I convene this World Summit for Children on their behalf by inviting the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the United Nations or its Specialized Agencies to participate personally. I am pleased to respond with the good offices of the United Nations in support of this historic initiative. [[[SINCE YOUR COUNTRY IS A MEMBER OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD, CHARGED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUIDING THE WORLD COMMUNITY'S ATTENTION TO CHILDREN,]]] I especially hope that Your Excellency will be able to attend.

I would view a new commitment by the world's leaders to protect the lives of children and to promote their well-being as a reaffirmation of our obligations under the Charter of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations". Making the survival, development and well-being of children a focus and a test of successful development efforts would reaffirm that the ultimate purpose of development is to enhance human capabilities and the human condition.

The Initiators would appreciate Your Excellency advising me at your earliest convenience as to whether you intend to participate in the World Summit for Children.

The UNICEF Secretariat, led by Executive Director James P. Grant, will serve as secretariat of this meeting under the guidance of the Initiators and the Planning Committee for the Summit.

The Initiators, with the support of the UNICEF Executive Board, encourage voluntary contributions by Governments and non-governmental organizations toward the costs of the Summit and its related activities. In due course, the Initiators and the Secretariat will provide additional information to your appropriate authorities.

Accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Javier Pérez de Cúellar