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**Meeting of the Planning Committee for the World Summit for Children. New York, 19 March 1990. Brief for the Bangladesh Delegation.**

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**MEETING  
OF THE  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
FOR THE  
WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN**

**NEW YORK  
19 MARCH 1990**

**BRIEF  
FOR  
BANGLADESH DELEGATION**

United Nations Children's Fund's report on "The State of the World's Children 1989" suggested that a meeting of the Heads of State or Government should take place to bring the highest levels of political attention in the urgent needs and historic opportunities - confronting the world's children for the 1990s. Many countries of the world supported this proposal. Encouraged by widespread support, the Presidents of Egypt, Mali, Mexico and the Prime Ministers of Canada, Pakistan and Sweden initiated consultations among themselves and with other governments to explore the possibilities for a meeting of the Heads of State or Government on the situation of children. They finally agreed to hold a "World Summit for Children" to take place from 29 to 30 September 1990 at United Nations Headquarters in New York coinciding with the opening of the 45th General Assembly.

#### Purpose

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 and human society. The meeting will also emphasize the particular impact on children of critical global problems. 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. The meeting will result in a Declaration of commitment to achieving these goals in the 1990s. It is believed that the Summit also can accelerate ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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

involvement 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.

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

A new commitment is expected by the world's leaders to protect the lives of children and to promote their well-being as a reaffirmation of the obligation 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 affirm that the ultimate purpose of development is to enhance human capabilities and the human condition.

#### Date and Venue

The Summit will be held from 29 to 30 September 1990, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

#### Secretariat

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will offer Secretariat facilities to the Summit.

#### Planning Committee

A Planning Committee for The World Summit for Children has been constituted of personal representatives of the six initiating Heads of State or Government, as well as following other countries : Bangladesh, China, France, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, USSR, UK, USA, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe.

The Planning Committee shall undertake preparatory activities of the summit. The meeting of the expanded Planning Committee will be held at the United Nations Headquarters at New York on Monday, 19 March 1990. Two subsequent preparatory meetings are anticipated to take place prior to the Summit in September.

Agenda for the meeting of the Planning Committee

- i. Review of development since the last meeting of the Planning Committee.
- ii. Secretariat operations,
- iii. Participation of Heads of State or Government in the Summit,
- iv. Credential issues,
- v. Objectives and themes of the summit,
- vi. Structure and format of the summit and ancillary activities,
- vii. Proposal for the schedule and work plan of the Planning Committee,
- viii. Summit related mobilization activities and
- ix. Other matters.

Bangladesh Position

Welcoming holding of the first ever World Summit for Children, Bangladesh delegation may underscore the need on effective participation at the Summit by the World leaders. The Summit is taking place against the background of high child mortality, malnutrition, ill-health, illiteracy and absence of basic community services that persist in today's child community. Bangladesh may propose that special fund be set up to facilitate participation of the ~~leave~~

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developed countries in the summit and also in its preparatory meetings.

Draft Agenda for the Summit

1. Opening of the Summit, election of two co-chairs, adoption of agenda.
2. Statement by the Secretary General of the United Nations.
3. Address by the Executive Director of UNICEF.
4. General discussion on objectives for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s.

Other possible formats for the structure of the general discussion have been suggested as follows :

(a) 5- minute plenary statements by each participating Head of State or Government, or by representative Heads of State or Government;

(b) a free exchange of views on key issues, in either closed or public session; or

(c) some combination of the above.

5. Adoption and signing of a World Declaration for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s.

6. Conclusion of the Summit.

Banqladesh position

While discussing the draft agenda for the Summit, Bangladesh delegation may give suggestion on possible formats for the structure of the general discussion. Bangladesh may suggest that it would be wise, if the world leaders are allowed for five-minute statements at the

plenary, while the senior officials are engaged in exchanging views on key issues.

#### Budget and administration

The initiating countries requested the Executive Director of UNICEF to propose a Budget and Plan of Administration for the preparation and organization of the Summit. They requested earliest possible review of this Budget by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and its advice to guide the Planning Committee in the establishment of a Budget. Voluntary contributions to this Budget by all Member States and non-governmental sources have been encouraged.

The Initiators recognize that the Executive Board of UNICEF may also wish to authorize supplemental expenditures in support of activities related to the Summit, and to appeal for voluntary contributions to finance those activities.

The Initiators further requested to the Executive Director of UNICEF to propose a Workplan for the Planning Committee, including identification of those issues which can be addressed by a working group in New York to be designated by the Planning Committee, and those issues which should be reserved for action by the formal Planning Committee.

#### Bangladesh position

Underscoring the need on successful holding of the Summit, Bangladesh delegation may propose establishment of a voluntary fund. UN Secretary General and the Secretariat of the conference, UNICEF may approach all member countries for voluntary contribution to this fund, Bangladesh welcomes the proposal of a Work Plan for the Planning Committee and stress the need that the plan should encompass all issues related to preparatory activities of the Summit.



Convention on the Rights of the Child

On 20 November 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly at New York. The year of 1989 also coincided with the tenth anniversary of the "International Year of the Child" and thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child signed in 1959.

As on 31 January 1990, sixty-one countries from all continents of the world signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as it was officially opened for signature at the UN Headquarters in New York on 26 January. Bangladesh was one of the first day signatories of the Convention. Nepal and Sri Lanka were the other two countries from the sub-continent to have signed the convention.

The convention on the Rights of the Child is a comprehensive Human Rights Convention drafted in full partnership between developed and developing nations. It emerged from the UN General Assembly as the international community's first universal and binding policy statement on children's rights. The Convention consisting of 54 articles dealt with the definition, rights, survival and development name and nationality, identity, freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion of a child. The Convention also emphasized on parental responsibilities and death with child labour, drug abuse, sexual exploitation, sale, trafficking, abduction and other forms of exploitation of children.

Salient features of the new convention are as follows :

- (a) It addresses the neglect and abuse which children face in all countries to varying degrees every day.
- (b) It recognizes their special vulnerability and addresses their civil, political economic, social

and cultural rights.

- (c) If breaks new ground, which acknowledges that although a child may be adequately nourished, his rights to develop fully is not adequately protected from such things as arbitrary detention and exploitation at work.

Under the Convention, survival rights include adequate living standards and access to medical services. Development rights include access to information, education, play and leisure, cultural activities, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Protection embraces all of the above, but also covers all forms of exploitation and cruelty, arbitrary separation from family, and abuses in the criminal justice system. Participation rights include the freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting one's own life - as well as the right to play and active role in society at large.

Other pressing issues covered by the Convention include: the problems of refugee children - sexual and other forms of child exploitation - drug abuse - children in trouble with the law; inter-country adoptions, and children in armed conflicts. Also covered are the needs of the disabled, and the children of minority or indigenous groups.

#### Bangladesh Position

Bangladesh could be proud of being among the first few countries to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, when it was opened for signature at the UN Headquarters in New York on 26 January 1990. Bangladesh's decision reflected the leading role that the Hon'ble President had been playing in all regional and international fora on survival, protection and development of children. Expressing the need for early ratification of the Convention, Bangladesh delegation may state that necessary formalities are being undertaken by the

government in order to ratify the convention.

Role of Bangladesh in promoting Child's cause

Bangladesh has been playing a pioneering role in all international fora on issues relating to child and rights of the child. Bangladesh had played a prominent and very constructive role in the preparation and unanimous adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the UN General Assembly, UNICEF Executive Board and the UN Human Rights Commission session. She has become one of the first few countries to sign the Child Convention in early January 1990. The decision reflected the continuing leading role that the Hon'ble President Hussain Muhammad Ershad had played in securing support for the Convention at various summit-level international gatherings. In his speeches at the SAARC Summits held in Bangalore, Kathmandu and Islamabad, he put much emphasis on child and child's rights. Hon'ble President also raised the issue of rights of the Child at the Ninth NAM Summit held in Belgrade and the Commonwealth Summit held in Kuala Lumpur. He is also one of the signatories supporting the first World Summit for Children to be held in New York from 29 to 30 September.

At national level, "Pathokoli Trust", a trust for the working children has been established to develop their working condition and also to impart basic education and training. Hon'ble President and the First Lady Begum Rawshan Ershad underscored the need for survival, protection and development of children in their messages of 1 November 1990 on the occasion of tenth anniversary of the "International Year of the Child".

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