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National Committees' responses - Reference Book: Preparatory & Reference Documentation on the World Summit for Children (1990: July); Special Session for Children

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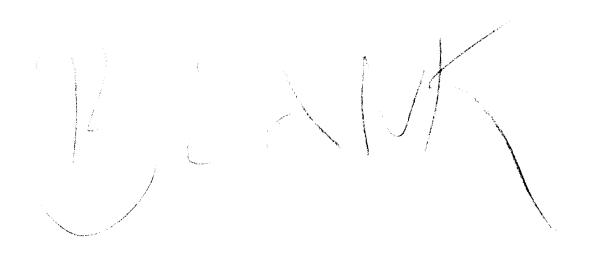
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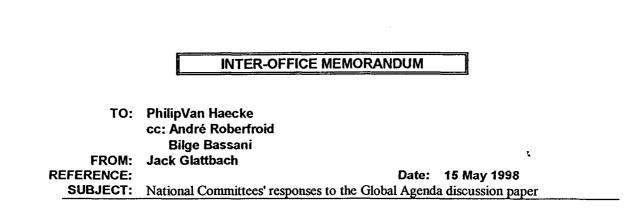*Alt Bar code = RAMP-TRIM Record Number* **CF/RAI/NYHQ/SP/SSC/2002-01065**

Notes
[Archives: CF/NYH/SP/SUM; Folder: S0355.] Contents: Section 1: Members of the Planning Committee - Schedule of (remaining) meetings and activities; Section 2: Schedule and Programme of the World Summit for Children; Section 3: Draft Declaration of the World Summit for Children - Draft Plan of Action; Section 4: Report of Meetings: - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Meetings of the Planning Committee - Meetings of the Working Group on Format - Meetings of the Working Group on the Declaration - Statement of Agreement of the six Initiating Governments -

Print Name of Person Submit Images **Signature of Person Submit** Number of images without cover

Corin Ramirez

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TO: PhilipVan Haecke
    cc: André Roberfroid
        Bilge Bassani
FROM: Jack Glattbach
REFERENCE: Date: 15 May 1998
SUBJECT: National Committees' responses to the Global Agenda discussion paper

Dear Philip,

Here is a summary of responses by the National Committees at the Martigny Annual Meeting to the "Global Agenda for Children Beyond 2000" discussion paper, intended for quick feedback to Maria Calivis.

The points are taken both from responses to Carol's speech in the plenary and from the reports of the five working groups, which were asked to focus on three areas: (a) general comments (b) potential of the seven themes for fundraising/resource mobilisation and (c) potential of the themes for being "flagship issues for UNICEF".

I think it's important to say upfront that the overall reaction to the paper was **strongly positive.** The strongest criticisms came from those who also made the best proposals for follow-up (and these were the strongest Committees). In these meetings there's always a tension between the fundraisers and the "care-givers", between traditionalists and progressives, which is on-going -- and every small group exercise never has enough time. But it's fair to say that all were genuinely engaged by the paper. The appreciation expressed for the consultation was also genuine, for three main reasons: one, it happened early in the development of the paper; two, after a couple of years of internal focus, it's reassuring to know work is on-going on the "big issues" of helping children; and, three, the paper is leading us to a new articulation of substantive issues and policies on which "year 2000" activities by the NatComs can be focussed.

A. General comments:

1. Many speakers wanted our "new directions" to be founded on a major evaluation and analysis of what happened, and did not happen, for children in the 1990s. "How far have we got with the 1990s goals," asked one. The development of new themes should be based on what we have learned. This is not to say there is disagreement with the new themes proposed but, as major advocates for UNICEF, the NatComs need to able to explain why and how we are taking these new directions. " We want to maintain UNICEF as the international gold standard for children," said the UK. But with a broadening agenda UNICEF must focus on those specific areas where it has proven superiority and set very clear targets and objectives. One working group hoped for a 5 to 10-year action plan which was "SMART": Specific, Measurable, Achieveable, Relevant and Timebound. Another group expressed the concern that UNICEF remains needs-driven rather than goals-driven.

2. There was no adverse comment to the seven specific themes proposed: gender equity, early child care and development, violence and exploitation, and education were the most frequently mentioned. (And this debate was before Stephen's strong presentation on

progress and report on results;

. monitor an supervise the Brussels office and manage effectively and
efficiently the administrative, human resources, finance and training
functions of the Regional Office in accordance with all applicable
rules, regulations and policies.

II. HEADQUARTERS

18. Through the course of the management excellence program, the role of
headquarters was clarified as one of providing overall strategic direction and
guidance that reflects linkages to the United Nations system and the policy
guidance of the Executive Board, with responsibility for strategic planning
and oversight for the organization as a whole. Headquarters also provides
leadership in developing the global UNICEF perspective by integrating the
experience and contribution of all parts of the UNICEF system and by ensuring
that the global perspective informs planning, policy development and
guidelines for management and quality assurance.

A. Office of the Executive Director

19. The Office of the Executive Director (OED) is responsible for the general
direction of UNICEF operations under policy directives of the UNICEF Executive
Board, ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly.

20. OED consists of the Executive Director; two Deputy Executive Directors;
the Director, Change Management; the Principle Adviser; the Chief of Staff;
and professional and general service support staff. The Deputy Executive
Directors support the Executive Director in fulfilling the functions of the
Executive Office, and are responsible for oversight of Division Directors in
New York, Copenhagen, Tokyo and Florence.

21. The accountabilities of the Executive Director are to:

(a) guide UNICEF in the pursuit of its mission and set strategic objectives
for the organization;

(b) serve as a global advocate for children, creating a global constituency
for children and advocating the objectives UNICEF seeks to achieve;

(c) mobilize political will at the highest level to take action and/or provide
resources in support of the First Call for Children and the 20/20 initiative;

(d) serve as the lead advocate for children within the UN system and maintain
coordination with relevant UN organizations, and maintain contact with
delegations to the United Nations;

(e) provide leadership in the planning, coordination and direction of UNICEF
activities, leading organizational strategic planning and setting
organizational priorities;

(f) ensure the organization is structured, directed and managed to fulfill its
mission in accordance with all applicable rules, regulations and policies;

(g) provide leadership in management excellence, including ensuring that
accountabilities are understood, strengthened and exercised;

(h) recommend to the Executive Board changes in, or development of, policies
as required;

(I) recommend to the Executive Board approval of programmes of cooperation and
budgets, and report on progress, key activities and organizational

violence.) Child participation was supported but the lack of specific actions noted. Several speakers referred to the absence of significant mention of disabled children and many thought that family issues should be strengthened, perhaps added as an eighth theme. But discussion did raise several "operational" concerns, including:

(a) the paper needs to describe **what** will be undertaken and **how** for these new themes. In these areas the paper was criticised for being ambiguous or simply not mentioning implementation.

(b) several questions related to how do these "new" themes relate to existing " traditional" activities and approaches. As our traditional activities seem to be included in the proposed themes, I think this was essentially a concern about emphasis, and perhaps resource allocation. The Natcoms want clarity, confirmation, continuity and improvement. Hence many said that our "unfinished business" of the 1990s must go on. Some also wondered if the term "unfinished business" did sufficient justice to a world in which 35 million children died annually: "UNICEF must speak with a loud voice on the situation of children everywhere, but with resources declining we must set keen priorities."

(c) the paper does not focus at all on our work in humanitarian emergencies, which is vital to the NatComs in both advocacy and fundraising. We may not want to think about emergencies in the 21st Century but they will almost certainly still be with us.

(d) a related issue was the tension between developing programming/advocacy partnerships with NGOs/Civil Society and the increasingly tough competition with NGOs for resource mobilisation. Hence the frequent demands by NatComs for UNICEF to have clarity and specificity of vision, mission, targets and concentrating on its areas of proven superiority.

(e) some Committees also asked if they could afford a broader, rights-based role for the proposed activities, given both the tensions with NGOs and the limitations of present retention percentages. The role of UNICEF country offices in better-off developing countries (NICs), many of which have income levels similar to several NatCom countries, was also questioned (particularly from the fundraising perspective). But there was general agreement that there is no easy transition from recipient to donor status.

3. Understandably perhaps, Lisbet Palme, as a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, felt that the paper would be strengthened by a stronger articulation of the values which underpin all our work, including, of course, the CRC which will be our foundation stone for the foreseeable future. Other speakers also mentioned that our rights-based approach could be expressed more forceably.

Ms.Palme urged that the term gender equity should be replaced by gender equality through the paper, as recommended by the Beijing World Conference on Women..

4. A point of cultural sensitivity. Dr. Simai (Hungary) noted that many cultures count time differently, e.g. Muslims and Buddhists, for whom the year 2000 is not a new millenium, etc..

5. Despite being introduced as a "draft discussion paper to promote debate, not for line

by line editing" there were, inevitably, criticisms of the language ("too sociological", "too vague", "too general", "not easy to understand") and a few of the structure (unspecific, apart from one group proposing that it be refocussed on the theme of "Giving Children a Good Start in Life" and one speaker noting that "harmful social practices" appeared under more than one theme). This should be seen in the light of the strongly positive response to the paper and one of the critics also suggested what the NatComs would like to see with further articulations of the paper: it should describe *how* the new themes proposed would be achieved, include specific goals (timebound if possible) and be expressed in easy-to-understand language, accompanied by a shorter "popular version".

6. A final general indication of the positive response was that several (major) NatComs saw the substance of the paper as having the potential to lead to a second World Summit for Children. Robert Smith (UK) said that the internal process which had developed this document (a small task force of "bright minds") should be extended: "UNICEF needs to pick on the finest minds everywhere to develop the agenda for children in the 21st Century," he said. By broadening this process beyond UNICEF and the National Committees we would "help give a sense of ownership of the agenda to all those working for children" while maintaining UNICEF's authority. The climax of such a process could be a second world summit for children in 2001.

B. Potential of the Seven Themes for Fundraising/Resource Mobilisation.

Most groups said that they had not enough time to fully address the second and third questions but there were some valuable pointers.

1. The consensus position appeared to be that UNICEF should speak out for children everywhere but devote nearly all its resources to groups of children in greatest need.

2. Dietrich Garlichs (Germany) said NatComs always seemed to be telling UNICEF that its themes were too broad -- so NatComs must help UNICEF to focus its fundraising. As expressed, in rather theoretical and generalised language, the seven proposed themes did not have any direct popular fundraising appeal. But many good fundraising themes could be developed from them, for instance in three areas:

> (a) for "flexible basic services", of which health had the most appeal.

> (b) for education, "the most critical factor for human development".

> (These he described as "classical" UNICEF fundraising themes.)

> (c) from the rights perspective, there were many good themes, focussing on the grossest violations of children's rights and the most disadvantaged children, e. g. child victims of sexual exploitation, violence and child labour; disabled children, children in homes, children in war.

3. One group summarised our competitive strengths and weaknesses as being:

Strengths: Credibility, Popularity, Partnerships with NGOs, Strong Field and NatCom Networks, Delivery Capacity and our exclusive mandate for children.

Weaknesses: Shrinking Resources, Increasing Competition for Resources, Slow Reaction to Competition, More Oriented to Processes than Products, Negative aspects of association with the UN.

Priority should be given to "finishing unfinished business" while not "spreading ourselves too thin". The CRC had significantly changed the UNICEF landscape: in developing countries priorities were set by the countries themselves, not UNICEF, and there were few "one size fits all" solutions.

4. Another group noted that fundraising for children in conflicts had greatest popular appeal, followed by "basic services" themes -- while education was of acknowledged importance but "difficult to sell".

5. One speaker noted that there was a decreasing public understanding of the essential problems of development, for which he highlighted the need to sensitise the young, which could start by identifying with the problems of youth -- and appointing youth representatives to the boards of National Committees.

C. "Flagship" themes

The consensus appeared to be that there was insufficient time, and perhaps it was premature in the development of new themes, to achieve this.

The two "flagship issues" mentioned in the working group reports were "Giving Children a Good start in Life" and "Early Child Care and Development".

D. Response by Carol Bellamy

Several NatComs asked for information about the schedule for developing the paper.

Ms. Bellamy said that this discussion was a valuable contribution to remarks she will make to the June Executive Board. In the next two months all regional management teams and UNICEF staff had been asked for input on the paper. She hoped that by September a revised draft would be completed, which would be shared with the National Committees, so that by the end of the year "we should be able to say 'this is where we're heading'".

Mechanisms for discussions with UNICEF's major external partners were also being explored.

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