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STATEMENTS

BY HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

at the
**World Summit
for Children**

UNITED NATIONS

29-30 September 1990





STATEMENTS

BY HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

at the
World Summit for Children

UNITED NATIONS
29-30 September 1990

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United Nations Children's Fund
Room H-12G
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New York, N.Y. 10017
USA

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December 1990

Foreword

This book contains the statements made by Heads of State or Government, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Director of UNICEF during official proceedings at the World Summit for Children on 29 and 30 September 1990 in New York, and the statement by the President of the General Assembly in formally receiving the Summit Declaration on 1 October 1990.

Among the 159 delegations participating in the proceedings, 71 were led by Heads of State or Government, forming the largest gathering of world leaders in history. Eighty-eight additional countries were also represented, most at ministerial level.

Deliberations focused on four main areas: the survival, protection and development of children and implementation of the conclusions of the Summit. The statements in this book are arranged according to those four main topics, in the order in which they were delivered.

The conclusions of the Summit include great promises to the children of the world, recorded in the Declaration adopted and signed at the final session. For example, an extraordinary new commitment was made to try to end child deaths and child malnutrition on today's scale by the year 2000, and to provide for the normal physical and mental development of all the world's children. Accompanying the Declaration is a detailed Plan of Action to help guide implementation by all sectors of society in all countries.

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HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT ATTENDING THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN, UNITED NATIONS, 29-30 SEPTEMBER 1990



UNICEF/Eastman Kodak Company

Heads of State or Government as they appear in the photograph, from left to right, from back (Row 4) to front (Row 1):

Row 4: Chairman Alia of Albania • President Menem of Argentina • President Ershad of Bangladesh • Prime Minister Sandiford of Barbados • King Baudouin of Belgium • President Collor of Brazil • President Zhelev of Bulgaria • Chairman Dementei of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic • President Kolingba of the Central African Republic • President Aylwin of Chile • President Gaviria of Colombia • President Calderón of Costa Rica • President Havel of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic • Prime Minister Schlüter of Denmark • Prime Minister Hamadou of Djibouti • Prime Minister Charles of Dominica • President Cristiani of El Salvador • Prime Minister Holkeri of Finland.

Row 3: President Jawara of Gambia • President von Weizsäcker of the Federal Republic of Germany • President Vieira of Guinea-Bissau • Secretary of State Casaroli of the Holy See • President Callejas Romero of Honduras • Prime Minister Hermannsson of Iceland • Prime Minister Haughey of Ireland • Prime Minister Andreotti of Italy • Prime Minister Kaifu of Japan • Sheikh Al-Sabah of Kuwait • Prime Minister El-Hoss of Lebanon • Prime Minister Brunhart of Liechtenstein • Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg • President Gayoom of Maldives • Minister of State Ausseil of Monaco • President Chissano of Mozambique • President Nujoma of Namibia.

Row 2: President Barrios de Chamorro of Nicaragua • Vice President Aikhomu of Nigeria • Prime Minister Syse of Norway • President Endara Galimany of Panama • Prime Minister Namaliu of Papua New Guinea • Prime Minister Hurtado Miller of Peru • Prime Minister Mazowiecki of Poland • President Iliescu of Romania • President Habyarimana of Rwanda • Prime Minister Simmonds of St. Kitts and Nevis • Prime Minister Compton of St. Lucia • Prime Minister Alesana of Samoa • President Diouf of Senegal • President Momoh of Sierra Leone • Prime Minister González of Spain • President El Bashir of the Sudan • President Shankar of Suriname • Prime Minister Dlamini of Swaziland.

Row 1: Prime Minister Karoui of Tunisia • President Özal of Turkey • President Museveni of Uganda • Chairman Masol of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic • Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom • President Mwinyi of the United Republic of Tanzania • President Bush of the United States • President Salinas de Gortari of Mexico (Initiating Country) • Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada (Initiating Country) • President Traoré of Mali (Initiating Country) • Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden (Initiating Country) • Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar of the United Nations • President Lacalle of Uruguay • Prime Minister Lini of Vanuatu • President Pérez of Venezuela • President Jović of Yugoslavia • Prime Minister Bululu of Zaire • President Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Prime Minister Rocard of France also participated in the Summit.

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**WELCOME / INTRODUCTORY
TOASTS AND MESSAGES**

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**Toast by the Prime Minister of SWEDEN,
His Excellency Mr. Ingvar Carlsson,
at the Dinner for Heads of State or Government
Participating in the World Summit for Children,
New York, September 29, 1990**

Mr. Secretary-General,

Dear Dignitaries,

The gathering here tonight of all of us, Heads of State and numerous colleagues, is a unique event.

It is a sign of a new era.

It is also the start of a new commitment.

Reality changes fast. Major changes in the political climate have brought us to a new period in world politics. It has led to progress in many fields. It has also made this gathering possible.

On behalf of the six initiators, I wish to welcome you all, on the eve of the first-ever World Summit for Children.

It is an honour to greet you all, from every part of our planet. We meet in our common forum, to share experiences and concerns, to exchange ideas and visions about our common lives.

The children of the world are not just another generation. They are the future—the future of all of us.

How children live, how children grow up, how children are—this will decide the whole shape of human civilization.

The way we respect the right of the child is, in a way, how we determine our own future.

And that is what this Summit is all about.

It marks a commitment from all of us to do more—for the survival of children, for their protection, and for their development.

It marks a commitment to work in our countries—but also to work together.

This Summit is an outstanding event—but it is no solitaire. It is part of a process, in which we all have important roles to play.

My colleagues and I in the group of initiators have been extremely encouraged by the response to our invitation.

We thank you for coming—but above all, we thank you for what it means.

It means a personal commitment, at the highest political level, for a better future for every child in this world.

I propose a toast to the success of the World Summit for Children.

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Address by His Majesty the King of the BELGIANS
at the Dinner for Heads of State or Government
Participating in the World Summit for Children,
New York, September 29, 1990

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have been brought together here by the children of all nations. We are gathered to confront the task of preparing a better future for them. I am extremely grateful to the Heads of State and Government who took the initiative to convene this meeting, and also to UNICEF.

For far too long in the history of mankind, the child has been seen as an object of private property, as an instrument of power, often for exploitation, or as a source of purely personal happiness.

As the twentieth century draws to a close, we must see the child as a subject in his or her own right and with his or her own legal rights. It is in this context that the Convention on the Rights of the Child represents real progress in the sphere of legal rights. It constitutes an important step forward in the history of childhood and hence in our human development. We recognize that the child needs specific protection. This was enunciated thirty years ago in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. "The child by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth".

Yet despite all the efforts that have been made in the legal sphere, we know only too well that today many children are suffering, be they victims of man's cruelty, or of unjust economic and social conditions.

In the face of this major problem, I hope that this Summit will be able to come forward with at least four clear lines of action.

First of all, we must demonstrate the genuine intention of all our countries to ratify, as soon as possible, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, bearing in mind the legislative processes of individual countries. Furthermore, we must ensure that, after ratification, it is put into practical operation without delay.

However, it is evident that legal rights alone cannot lead to the attainment of the ideal sought by the Convention.

Governments, working hand in hand with political groupings, religious, lay and cultural bodies and, above all, non-governmental organizations, must do all that is in their power to make public opinion—and by that I mean every individual citizen—aware of the spirit and the contents of the Convention. They must identify the desired changes and improvements in the plight of children and take steps to implement these changes. It is only with the support and practical backing of a population which is squarely behind it that governmental action has a chance of succeeding in an area affecting so intimately human beings, above all the most vulnerable, i.e., the children.

I come to our third line of action. We must insist on the essential role of the family in policies pertaining to children. The signatories of the Convention understood this well when they stated they are "convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community".

Many of the deficiencies and illnesses from which children suffer, much of the behaviour which leads to their being rejected by society, have their origins in the breakdown of the family. The family must, I believe, be the centre of a child's existence where he or she is cared for, understood, listened to and given unstinting support. Such a family is a source of strength for society as a whole. It is not inward looking. On the contrary, it enables its members to be more outward looking, to help others, particularly those less fortunate than themselves.

As the humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations have stressed, this objective must be pursued by "strengthening the role of the family and its capacity to care for children, developing family life education, and promoting and supporting the goals of the forthcoming International Year of the Family", planned for 1994.

Finally, in the elaboration of specific programmes very great attention must be paid to children in especially difficult circumstances, notably children deprived of family care, abandoned and street children, those with a handicap, those who are victims of abuse, be it physical, mental or sexual, those who are victims of commercial or industrial exploitation, and those deprived of their liberty and children in situations of extreme poverty.

We cannot allow ourselves to become resigned to the fact that 40,000 children die every day of hunger and malnutrition, of disease, from lack of drinking water and medical care, or from the effects of drugs. It is a fundamentally immoral and unjust situation, and we must do all in our power to ensure that it is not allowed to continue.

Finally, there are children—and alas we observe this today—who are drawn into armed conflicts or who become refugees.

In this context, I wish to conclude by making an urgent appeal to all those Heads of State and Government concerned to resolve the present conflict in the Gulf region peacefully and in accordance with international law. And therefore the resolutions of the United Nations must all be applied without exception.

If this path is not followed, if war breaks out, there will also be hundreds of thousands of children among the first innocent victims. Let us not forget this, let us not forget them.

**Reply by the President of the REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma,
at the Dinner for Heads of State or Government
Participating in the World Summit for Children,
New York, September 29, 1990**

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your Excellencies,

Dear friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a source of great satisfaction and honour to me to respond to a toast just proposed by the honourable Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Ingvar Carlsson.

I cannot agree more that one of the greatest joys in life is the birth of a child. That's why our gathering here this night as world leaders from all parts of our planet signifies the beginning and a resolve to start a new commitment towards the plight of children all over the world.

Many children, especially in developing countries, face multiple problems of gross inequalities, such as access to primary health care, basic education, adequate shelter, safe drinking water and proper sanitation.

This World Summit for Children must emulate our commitment and dedication to the survival and protection of our children.

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.

I would like to thank the initiators of this most important World Summit for Children, for their imagination.

The fact that so many of us have responded to the invitation is a testimony that we all recognize that the children are the cream of the world and the hope for the future.

Let us move forward and make the world a better place for our children to live in. It is possible! It can be done!

Thank you.

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**Statement by the Foreign Minister of PAKISTAN,
His Excellency Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan,
at the Dinner for Heads of State or Government
Participating in the World Summit for Children,
New York, September 29, 1990**

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

I am deeply conscious of the honour I have of addressing this distinguished gathering of world leaders on the eve of the World Summit for Children—an event of truly historic magnitude.

I feel privileged to bring to Your Excellencies the greetings and salutations of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. He was most anxious to personally participate in the Summit and was looking forward to exchanging views with his peers on a subject of such fundamental and universal relevance as the survival, protection and development of our children. He has asked me to convey to Your Excellencies his profound regrets at his inability to be present here tonight. His preoccupation with the grave and momentous events in our region has compelled him to forgo the opportunity of making a personal contribution to the Summit.

Allow me, Your Excellencies, to convey to you the good wishes of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Jatoi for the success of the World Summit, and their sincere belief that your deliberations would foster a better future for the children of our world.

As an initiating country, Pakistan has made its modest contribution to the organization of this Summit and to the elaboration of the Declaration and the Plan of Action to be adopted tomorrow.

Let me assure Your Excellencies, on behalf of our Prime Minister, that the commitment which moved us to initiate this idea would continue to motivate the Government of Pakistan in ensuring the implementation of these historic documents both in letter and in spirit.

Thank you, Your Excellencies.

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OPENING SESSION

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**Opening of the World Summit for Children
by the President of the REPUBLIC OF MALI,
His Excellency General Moussa Traoré,
Co-President of the World Summit for Children**

(interpretation from French)

I declare open the World Summit for Children.

On this historic occasion devoted to children, it is an honour for me to share the podium with the Prime Minister of Canada, His Excellency Mr. Brian Mulroney. On behalf of the six initiating countries—Canada, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, Sweden and my own country, Mali—I wish to extend a warm welcome to all the participants in this Summit for Children.

On behalf of all of you, we express our thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for agreeing to convene this Summit on our behalf and for offering the facilities of the United Nations Headquarters for that purpose. We also express our appreciation to UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, which, under the stewardship of Mr. James P. Grant, has been the driving force behind this unprecedented event. Indeed, never before have so many Heads of State or Government gathered around the same table, and children are the reason for this historic event.

Above all, I extend a special welcome today to the children whose clear young voices charmed us a few moments ago. Their presence in this stately Hall of the United Nations General Assembly adds a refreshing note. Above all, it is a reminder of our obligations, as leaders of our fragile planet, to build peace and safeguard the future by ensuring the survival, the protection and the development of children.

Your Excellencies, ladies, gentlemen and dear children, before calling on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, I would urge you to respect the self-imposed discipline that is required for the success of this Summit.

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Address by the Secretary-General of the UNITED NATIONS, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

This is a most moving occasion. Leaders from every corner of the world are gathered here to address a unifying human concern—the concern for the survival and welfare of children. In doing so, they strikingly demonstrate humanity's loyalty to itself.

This World Summit represents a commitment at the highest level to build a world order that will guard what is the most precious resource of the human race, its children. Such a world means a world that is not ravaged by violent conflict, disfigured by poverty, plagued by crime and scarred by repression.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I extend to the distinguished Heads of State and Government attending this Summit the warmest welcome on behalf of the United Nations family. I should also like to congratulate and thank the six initiating Governments for their vision in calling this meeting, and the United Nations Children's Fund for its tireless efforts in defending and promoting the cause of children.

As we look at the world's social and economic landscape, we marvel at the extraordinary advances that have been made in civilization as a whole. Yet with all this, we also see that children continue to be the most vulnerable segment of society. Two sets of anxieties cry to be addressed. One arises from the global social crisis, which robs children of the emotional shelter and the moral sustenance that they need. The other cause of distress is the poverty that stalks the larger part of the world and that denies children the enjoyment of their rights. To this are added the effects of conflict, internal or external. One in two among the 8 million refugees in the world today is a child.

There is no way we can reconcile humanity's remarkable progress with the continuance of the misery that counts children among its victims. The one element of reassurance is our awareness that what the survival and welfare of children demands from us is systematic action that goes to the root of the problems involved.

Through a sustained effort over the years, the United Nations has sought to give focus and structure to this awareness. From the establishment of the United Nations Children's Fund in 1946 to the adoption last year of the Convention on the Rights of the Child—the first legal instrument to define and lend content to children's rightful status in society—it has been engaged in defining the goals and strategies for ensuring the protection and well-being of children. It has set out the issues that critically affect children. Let this Summit be the high point of the campaign to strengthen international co-operation in addressing those issues.

Poverty, I repeat, is the main enemy of children. Hunger, disease, illiteracy, despair: these constitute the enemy's fearful train. There is no way in which issues relating to children can be segregated from the issues of the overall social and economic environment.

We now have a unique opportunity to establish a world order which encompasses not only the maintenance of peace and security but also the better management of the world's economic and social affairs. With the ideological gulf bridged, the removal of the disparity between the North and the South demands a high-level dialogue. Such a dialogue should aim at a global consensus. The moving concern which has occasioned this Summit must now guide the international community in that endeavour.

Children personify the world's future. In ensuring their welfare, we transcend all divisions of the present. We participate in the shaping of human destiny. This unique occasion should serve as an inspiration to that end.

**Opening Statement by the Prime Minister of CANADA,
His Excellency The Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney,
Co-President of the World Summit for Children**

I would like to begin by speaking directly to the children who are here today. In a real way, you represent all of the children of the world. And so this is your Summit. You are here to represent the hopes and expectations and the aspirations and needs of your generation. It is your generation that will eventually judge how well we have understood your own special problems. And it is you who will hold us to account for our efforts to resolve them.

Our job here today is to ensure that when the children assume positions of leadership in their own nations, and around the world, they will not face the same problems of poverty and suffering that prevail in so many countries, bringing us all so much tragedy and loss.

The fact is, as UNICEF and the World Health Organization have explained persuasively, both here and around the world, many of the problems that children face can be solved, readily and at a very modest cost. Children need not die for lack of immunization or clean water or adequate food. Children need not grow up illiterate, neglected and abused. These are ills that can be remedied.

There can be no doubt that this Summit highlights the gap between the hopes we have for our children and the conditions in which many children find themselves, through no fault of their own. Despite the welcome successes of UNICEF and other international agencies, much more needs to be done.

Resources always seem to be scarce. By way of illustration, the "peace dividend" that many expected from the end of the cold war has already been diluted very seriously by aggression in the Persian Gulf. Once again, the neediest children have lost—in large measure, because so few voices among the powerful have spoken out strongly on their behalf.

Today may represent the beginning of a change in the lives of the world's children. Today, in this Hall, the children may finally have found the voices and the friends they have long been seeking.

With all the demands on Governments to fund worthwhile activities, there will never be enough money to do everything. Priorities will have to be established, and difficult choices made. Funding is important. But it is not, in the end, the decisive factor in the war on children's suffering; the decisive factor is political will.

Mr. Secretary-General: The endorsement today of the Declaration—with its principles and precepts—and the Plan of Action will, in the judgement of Canada, be an indispensable step in marshalling political will and transforming the lives of our children. Colleagues, I commend the Declaration and the Plan of Action to all of you. And to the children who are here today—and to those who are listening—I say I invite you to listen carefully to what we say and, in the coming years, to hold us to our commitments. I hope that none of us will be found wanting.

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**Statement by the President of MEXICO,
His Excellency Lic. Carlos Salinas de Gortari**

(interpretation from Spanish)

Mr. Secretary-General, Co-Presidents, Heads of State and Government, children of the world: today we are focusing the attention of States on the need to give priority to our children, to whom we must hand over a more humane world, infused with sensitivity. This is perhaps the first world summit of the new age. We are calling here for new times.

I come to this meeting at a time when the world is immersed in profound and continuous change. The future is still uncertain. Today, the international agenda is full of new dilemmas, as well as new hopes, though it has not completely left behind other problems, long-standing and difficult, of mankind. It is my country's conviction that no challenge is as great, or will have such devastating future effects, as the problems faced by the world's children. Of us all, children are those most affected. These topics merit a new international awareness. Above all, they demand a commitment to action. This is the starting-point.

The end of the cold war has altered our way of viewing the world. Events once considered impossible are now taking place one after the other, and mankind's capacity for amazement has been renewed. Concern about the virulence of regional conflicts is also growing. For children, death, abandonment, separation from their families, refuge in foreign and inhospitable lands and hunger are the tragic consequences of local crises, though the possibility of total war is growing more distant. We therefore devoutly hope that the outcome of détente will be resources devoted to peace.

In Mexico, more than 40 per cent of the population are under 14 years old. We are a country of young people, who are especially sensitive to the vulnerability of children. That is why we are particularly concerned about the need for international solidarity in dealing with the grave problems of children, both in our own country and throughout the world. The threat to family unity affects not only the developing countries, but is also frequently present in the fringes of even the richest cities. Poverty is the absence of equity and the weakening of solidarity.

I should like to call your attention to the plight of migrant children, child refugees and the illegal traffic in minors. Seeing brave and courageous men and women emigrate has not been the least painful consequence of the economic crisis. Often those who make the decision to emigrate have to face the violation of their human rights and the break-up of their family life. The main victims are the children. In areas where emigration is widespread, children sometimes spend their whole lives waiting for the return of an absent father or mother. Nations without sound family units are divided societies.

For many years, along its southern border, my country has experienced the presence of child refugees from Central America. With the support of UNICEF, and in accordance with our law, these children have met with assistance, understanding and

respect in our country. We should defend the principle of the family unit to the utmost. Consequently, it is also important for the world community to put an end to the illegal international traffic in minors. We need to act promptly to establish rules for cooperation in eradicating this cruellest commerce of all.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the basic document which answers these needs. Its strict enforcement by the States will be our most significant legacy to the generations living at the end of this century and the beginning of the next. We must not allow this valuable instrument to be set aside owing to a lack of political will on the part of nations or insufficient support by society and its organizations. If each nation elaborates a detailed plan of action geared to the specific circumstances of its own children, and along with UNICEF periodically evaluates its results, then the world will have found in this meeting the means to turn words into deeds.

Few things are so valuable as the first effort of life and the soul. Childhood is the valiant heart of hope and fantasy. The deaths of nearly 40,000 children in the world every day seem to arouse indignation only because of the general indifference with which they are met. We must reverse this situation through our deeds, turning our presence here today into a political affirmation and a commitment to take action and mobilize society to that end.

Let us turn our concern over war, debt or stagnation into an obsession with peace, growth and justice. We no longer want to witness images of children with eyes that are devoid of hope, eternally questioning, enveloped in sadness. These children, the essence of life, bear within them a premature death. Their eyes convey with unparalleled eloquence the failure of development schemes among the nations of the world. Let us work together with energy and determination to put a new look on the faces of the world's children. That is the true crusade for the new millennium.

**Statement by the First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak,
on behalf of the President of the ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT,
His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak**

(interpretation from Arabic)

Mr. President, Heads of State and Government, it gives me great pleasure to convey to you warm greetings from the people of Egypt and their leadership, a people whose ancestors realized, thousands of years ago, that children were the mainstay of the future.

Against this historical background and having recognized the importance of childhood issues and their related problems, Egypt joined in calling for the convening of the World Summit for Children last year. President Mubarak would have headed the Egyptian delegation to this Summit, had it not been for the current circumstances in the Middle East.

I avail myself of this unique opportunity to stress that we consider that all matters relevant to child development are a part of the comprehensive development process, and a logical approach towards a human development that considers the human being as the main object and not merely a tool of development.

Hence it was necessary that childhood and its problems should acquire top priority in national as well as international action. The significance of this Summit is that it has included child issues in the international agenda at summit level. This 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.

I should like from this rostrum to say a few words of the Egyptian child, a typical example of the children of the third world. I should like to highlight the fact that Egypt has already embarked on realizing the goals of this Summit in the following manner.

First, the President of Egypt has declared the period 1989-1999 a decade of the Egyptian child. The aim is to provide all-embracing child care and bring up our younger generation in a healthy, both environmental and psychological, milieu. We have already begun to reap the first fruits of such efforts in Egypt's urban and rural communities.

Secondly, the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood was established in 1988 with a view to formulating a permanent and consistent policy for children.

Thirdly, Egypt has contributed to child welfare at the international level. It has contributed effectively and significantly to the process of drafting the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was among the first countries to ratify that Convention immediately after its adoption.

You may agree, Mr. Chairman, that all these efforts, notwithstanding Egypt's increasing economic difficulties, reflect Egypt's political will to accord a high priority to the issues of childhood in its national development planning.

Ladies and gentlemen, from Egypt, the gateway to Africa and the heart of the Middle East, from a region where innocent children are faced with the heavy legacy of the past, and the uncertainties of the arduous present, I should like to express the hope that we will continue to work together, strongly united in our determination to dry the tears of our children and put a smile on the faces of our future generations.

**Statement by the President of the UNITED STATES,
His Excellency Mr. George Bush,
the Head of State of the Host Country**

Mr. Secretary-General, President Traoré, Prime Minister Mulroney and my distinguished colleagues from around the world, thank you all, and welcome to the United States. I am proud to address you here today as the President of this country in which this special Summit is being held.

At the outset, let me join all in expressing our appreciation to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and then to the kids here with us today.

President Traoré, our thanks to you, Sir, and may I extend my special respects and special thanks to the Prime Minister of Canada. It was largely his foresight and persistence that resulted in this impressive turnout.

In recent days the world community has acted decisively in defence of a principle, that small States shall not become souvenirs of conquest. It was just three weeks ago that I spoke to the American people about a new world order, a new partnership of nations, freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, more secure in the quest for peace.

Today we are holding this unprecedented World Summit to work for the well-being of those who will live in and lead this new world. Their voices are still faint and unheard, so we have come together, more than 70 strong, Chiefs of State, and Heads of Government, to speak for the children of the Earth.

But first we should acknowledge that for many children the only blessing they will ever know is their innocence. The facts are as stark as they are oppressive. There are almost 3 billion young people on Earth today, and more than 14 million of them will die this year. In the next hour alone a thousand babies will perish.

But I think we are all gathered here to defy these statistics. We have seen children—swollen bellies; we have seen the pleading eyes of starvation. We have heard the cries of children dying of disease. So let us affirm at this historic Summit that these children can be saved. They can be saved when we live up to our responsibilities, not just as an assembly of Governments but as a world community of adults, of parents.

In my time as President I have heard the heart-rending cries of AIDS babies. I have stood helpless over infants born addicted to cocaine, their tiny bodies trembling with pain. But I have also been to many classrooms across America where the influence of love and well-being can be seen instantly in bright faces and wondering eyes.

From all these experiences, and many more, I have learned that our children are a mirror, an honest reflection of their parents and their world. Sometimes the reflection is flattering, and at other times we simply do not like what we see; but we must never turn away.

Let me tell you what the American people intend to do. This month our Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Sullivan, announced ambitious new health objectives that we as a nation—citizens, family, business and government—hope to reach by the year 2000. We seek to reduce infant mortality and low-weight births, to increase child-immunization levels and improve the health of both mothers and children. And we want to see the day when every American child is part of a strong and stable family. We are working in partnership with other Governments and international organizations to eliminate child-killing diseases. Of course, many diseases are but a manifestation of an even more basic disorder—malnutrition—and to combat world starvation the United States will continue to help food production in many countries. It will send almost 150 million metric tons of food abroad this year.

Sadly, there is another child killer loose in the world that knows no cure, AIDS, and nowhere is this killer taking more lives than in Africa. So I have asked Dr. Sullivan and Dr. Ronald Roskens, Administrator of the Agency for International Development (AID), to go to Africa to see what else America and the world can do to advance child survival across that continent and across the world.

So far I have spoken here just briefly of the most urgent issues of survival. But simple survival is not enough for a child lacking in health or learning or denied the love of family and time for play. One year and two days ago I met with the governors of our 50 states on a single topic of national importance. We agreed to set ambitious education goals for the year 2000. For America this is a stiff challenge, self-imposed, and I see among us today many leaders who should take pride in giving the world examples of educational excellence, examples the next generation of Americans will not leave unchallenged.

But of course education is a mystery to the 100 million children not in school. It is an outrage that so many spend their childhood in mines, in factories and in the twilight world of the streets. The United States outlawed most forms of child labour decades ago. Let us strive together to make education the primary work of all children.

All children must be given the chance to lead happy, healthy and productive lives. Let me be the first to say that the United States can learn from many of the nations represented here today.

But what my countrymen have learned from hard experience is that progress begins when we empower people, not bureaucracies. Programmes can best enhance the welfare of children by strengthening the mutual responsibilities of public institutions and individual families. We should also look to the private sector as an essential partner. Public efforts on behalf of children should encourage experimentation among neighbourhoods and local governments, not stifle it. When it comes to improving the welfare of children, empowerment should begin first with their parents, as President Salinas de Gortari so eloquently stated a minute ago.

Saving one child is a miracle. As world leaders we can realize such miracles, and then we can count them in millions.

My friends and colleagues, thank you very much, and may God bless the children of the world.

Script of a Video Presentation on the Situation of Children in the World, Especially Produced for the Summit by UNICEF

We were all children once.

But some children never grow up to their potential.

And some never grow up at all. Every day in our world, 40,000 children die. Each death, the death of a child ... who had a personality ... and a potential. A family ... and a future.

40,000 a day ... A quarter of a million a week. A child every two seconds ...

And behind every child who dies ... ten more live on with malnutrition ... unable to grow normally ... in body or in mind ...

By any measure ... this is the greatest tragedy of our times.

But because it happens every day ... it simply isn't news.

But if we *could* see inside the millions of ordinary homes where this daily disaster happens ...

If we could sit for a while with the parents ...

We would see then that more than half of today's child deaths ... and half of today's child malnutrition ... are caused by the sheer frequency of a few common illnesses ...

Five specific illnesses ...

diarrhoeal dehydration ...

measles ...

whooping cough ...

tetanus ...

pneumonia ...

These five ... half of all child deaths.

No earthquake, no famine, no flood, ever killed 40,000 children in a single day. Yet this is the toll taken by malnutrition and disease every day. And though these children of the quiet catastrophe never make the headlines ... they are just as dead ... and the love and the hopes of their families ... are just as surely turned to grief.

And parents grieve not only for the dead ... but for the millions of the malnourished.

This is not the visible malnutrition of famine. It's subtler by far. But it afflicts a quarter of our world's young children ... and saps the development of people and of nations.

The voice of the past says that this has always happened. That it's inevitable. But in the 1990s, that's simply no longer true. Today's knowledge holds out the chance, for

the first time in history, of protecting the lives and the normal growth of all the world's children ... and the breakthroughs are quite specific.

New vaccines and a new commitment ... have immunized three-quarters of the poor world's children. This year alone ... the immunization effort will save two and a half million young lives ... and prevent over a quarter of a million from being crippled by polio.

But 8,000 children are still dying every day from diseases which vaccines can prevent ... and 500 are still crippled every day by polio.

The biggest killer of all ... dehydration. It can now be prevented by low-cost oral rehydration therapy. In the last five years, this simple technique has been taught to one family in three in the developing world ... And it's saving over a million lives a year ... But it could save more than twice as many—if only it were used by every country ... and by every family.

It's also now known that longer intervals between births could reduce by as much as one third the heavy toll of deaths ... among mothers as well as children ... And with new knowledge ... especially about growth monitoring, breastfeeding, weaning, and preventing and coping with illness ... even the age-old problem of malnutrition could now be solved ... The annual cost ... less than \$10 per child.

... The simple ... the obvious ... the affordable ... can now reduce ... the toll of frequent illness, poor growth, and early death.

Specifically, today's knowledge could defeat the top five causes of child death and child malnutrition in virtually every developing country. The total cost might be an extra two-and-a-half billion dollars a year ... Less than the world now spends on the military ... every single day.

But today's knowledge can do more than reduce the quantity of death—it can improve the quality of life. It can bring ... adequate food ... clean water ... and primary health care.

And even in some of the world's poorest countries ... education has been provided for all at an affordable cost. In particular, the education of girls is probably the world's best investment. For improving the lives and the health of children ... For reducing birth rates ... And for ending the wasteful and shameful discrimination against girls and women in almost every country.

Last year, there was even a breakthrough against the abuse of children in all its forms ... Like many such documents in history, the Convention begins life as just a piece of paper ... but a paper which will one day become the standard below which any civilized nation, rich or poor, will be ashamed to fall.

A standard at work ... a standard at war ... in our streets ... and in our homes ...

But the Convention is also concerned about the children of the industrialized world ... where one child in ten lives with poverty and hunger in the midst of plenty ... where one child in six suffers the breakdown of the family ... where unknown numbers suffer mental or physical abuse ... and millions live with loveless affluence ...

Many are the problems ... many the causes ... but the greatest threat to our world's children remains ordinary, everyday poverty ...

Poverty which will not be overcome without ... a solution to debt ... a renewal of investment ... an increase in aid ... and the kind of economic growth in which the poor have a share. But as part of that struggle ... the children of the world ... have a right to ask that we do what can now be done to protect them through the vulnerable years. They have a right to ask, simply because they are children, for a "first call" on our concern.

Today ... whether a child ... survives or not ... is well nourished or not ... is immunized or not ... has a school to go to or not ... should not depend ... on whether interest rates rise or fall ... on whether commodity prices go up or down ... on whether the economy is growing or in recession ... or on whether any one political party is in power.

Children only have one chance to grow normally in mind and body ... That one chance should be given a clear priority—and children should be able to depend on that commitment ... in good times and in bad.

Basic protection for all the world's children ... is no longer a question of possibility ... It's a question of political priority.

To put today's known solutions into action on the necessary scale depends on sustained leadership from the highest levels. From leaders who demand ... regular reports on immunization levels, on the war against preventable disease and malnutrition, on school enrollment rates, and on the progress of today's low-cost solutions. From leaders who insist ... that the growth of their nation's children should be as well monitored as the growth of their economies. From leaders who begin an information revolution for the poor ... to put today's knowledge and essential services at the disposal of all.

And in the industrialized world ... From leaders who insist that a first call on aid programmes should be for the protection of the most vulnerable. And from leaders who commit their Governments to the principle of first call for children—at home.

The moral case is an obvious one. But the practical arguments too are becoming overwhelming. Poverty, turmoil, and environmental degradation are perpetuated by ill health, poor nutrition, and illiteracy. Unnecessary child deaths prevent the acceptance of family planning, pushing millions of parents into having more children than they want so that some may survive.

A renewal of the international effort to meet the needs of all children is therefore the greatest investment the human race could make ... in its economic prosperity ... political stability ... and environmental integrity ... An investment not only in today's children ... but in tomorrow's world.

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**Remarks by the Executive Director
of the UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF),
Mr. James P. Grant**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, children.

Now we know why there is a Summit for Children.

One week ago, over a million candles were lit for the success of this Summit—each candle a prayer, in whatever religion, that today will be a turning-point in the lives of children. A turning-point for children everywhere, but especially for the children of the quiet catastrophe.

Never before have these children taken centre stage. Never before has their voice been heard in a forum such as this, but as the Executive Director of UNICEF it is my prayer that with this Summit their time has come.

It is a prayer that this Summit will make the 1990s into a decade of doing the doable for the world's children. And the new horizons of the doable are defined for us in the Declaration and Plan of Action we will be considering today.

It shows that child deaths can be cut by a third—and it shows how. It shows that child malnutrition can be cut by half—and it shows how. It shows that a better quality of life can be achieved for our children—and it shows how.

To lead this effort, we here today can raise a new standard for children of the years to come, and on that standard, on that banner, is writ large a principle—the principle of a first call for our children, the principle that children should be the first to benefit from mankind's successes and the last to suffer from its failures.

I want to thank the agencies of the United Nations family who have widened the horizons of the doable. I want to thank the thousands of non-governmental organizations who have made this Summit of yours into a global mobilization. I want to thank the initiators who had the courage—I repeat, the courage—to call this. And on behalf of UNICEF and the world's children I also want to thank you—you who have found time for the important in the midst of the immediate, you who have made this the largest gathering of world leaders in history.

Your Excellencies, there could be no greater gathering, and there could be no greater cause. For we are confronted here today with the noblest goal which mankind could ever set for itself—protection for the lives and the normal growth of all the world's children. It is within the power of those gathered here to achieve that great goal in our time.

And it is within the power of those gathered here to make this Summit into a turning-point, not only for the world's children, but truly for us all. For it is on how we bring up our children that our civilization is measured, our humanity is tested and our future is shaped.

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Discussion Session I:

ENSURING CHILD SURVIVAL

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**Opening Remarks by the Prime Minister of CANADA,
His Excellency The Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney,
Co-President of the World Summit for Children**

I declare open the first discussion session of the World Summit for Children.

The four themes to be addressed during the discussion sessions reflect the urgent problems facing children today and are mirrored in the Declaration and Plan of Action which have been drafted for our adoption. Interventions should refer to the provisions in the Declaration and the Plan of Action. This morning, as agreed, we are going to focus on three of the themes: "Ensuring child survival", "Protection of children" and "Enhancing child development". When we resume in the afternoon, we shall focus on strategies for implementing the programmes in the areas we have identified for priority action.

A word in regard to timing and procedure. In accordance with the procedure agreed to by all of our personal representatives, we shall devote 55 minutes to each theme. The themes will be introduced by two speakers, who will each speak for up to five minutes, followed by four speakers who will comment on the introductory statements, each for up to four minutes. The general discussion will then be opened.

May I remind you as well that for the general discussion the limit of three minutes per intervention must be strictly observed in order, obviously, to allow for the widest possible range of views to be expressed. An electronic device will indicate to the presiding officer, President Traoré or myself, when there are 15 seconds left for each intervention, but I am confident that I can count on your full co-operation so that there will be no need for me to interrupt your remarks.

If you hear this [gavel] I want to assure you, on behalf of the people of Canada, it is not a hostile act. I am under strict instructions from my Co-Presidents to follow the time-limits rigorously, and I know we will have your co-operation.

Finally, a word on activating your own microphones: when you take the floor, please press the button and wait for the red light before speaking.

In regard to the end of the morning, lunch will be served at 1:30, immediately next door. It will be a working lunch, and we will return for the afternoon discussion session with President Traoré in the Chair.

Our first theme, "Ensuring child survival", President Bush has already spoken on. He came by to see President Traoré and me a few minutes ago to indicate that it appeared that he might have a resolution of his budgetary problems in Washington, as a result of which he was going down there now and hoped to return just as quickly as he could, and so he asked me to convey his regrets for his temporary absence from our deliberations.

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**Introductory Statement by the President
of the PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH,
His Excellency Mr. Hussain Muhammad Ershad**

Mr. President, in keeping with your request, I shall dispense with the customary salutations. I will, however, say how delighted I am to be here. So august a gathering, devoted to so noble a cause, is rare indeed.

Mr. President, today's children reflect the temper of our times. Theirs is no more a realm of unalloyed sweet dreams. Their domain is also frequently one of dark nightmares. The twilight of the twentieth century has been marked by transformations and trials on titanic scales. Changes and crises have moved in perfect tandem like Siamese twins.

The latest crisis is now riding roughshod over the Gulf region. The first tumult in the Middle East has interrupted the prospects of untroubled peace. Trouble seems to have become the way of life in our age.

The worst sufferers of our difficult times are those who are most beautiful, innocent and delicate: the children. We shall do well to recall that they are our future, our most precious resource. They are not just our responsibility but also our investment. We cannot afford to ignore them. With faith in ourselves we must work unitedly to ensure the survival and development of the child, even if the times are difficult and despairing. We may adapt the memorable words of Charles Dickens to our times and say: "This is the worst of times and the best of times."

If it is the winter of our discontent, it can also be transformed into a spring of our hope. The key is in our hands. Bangladesh has built the defence mechanism for its children on the basis of courageous confidence and coherent comradeship of social forces. Some of our non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have admittedly complemented our efforts. We have accorded top priority to helping and providing nutrition for needful children.

In 1985 our immunization coverage for children was only 2 per cent. It has now climbed to 65 per cent. By the end of 1990 we hope to achieve a target of 85 per cent.

Nearly 95 per cent of the people are now aware of the use of ORS. The extensive use of oral saline reduced the diarrhoea fatality rate to 0.02 per cent in 1990. The infant mortality rate (IMR), which stood at 153 and 117 per thousand live births, respectively, during 1965 and 1986, has been brought down to 110. Approximately 80 per cent of the people of Bangladesh now live within 150 metres of a hand-pump tube-well source of safe drinking water.

Education is crucial to the survival and development of children.

Bangladesh has passed the necessary law making universal primary education compulsory. My Government has also made female education up to grade 8 free. The Pathakali Trust, an organization for the education and welfare of disadvantaged and underprivileged working children, led by the First Lady, Begum Raushan Ershad, is

the epitome of planned governmental and non-governmental efforts in a good cause. The Trust has already set up 60 schools serving the educational, medical and skill-training needs of more than 12,000 working children.

We have also started a programme for the distribution of high potency vitamin A capsules among children twice a year with a view to preventing blindness.

In order to control iodine deficiency disorders in children, the sale of non-iodized edible salt has been prohibited by law.

To encourage breastfeeding, we have introduced legislation banning the advertisement of breast milk substitutes.

There are more than 2,000 family welfare centres and mother and child welfare centres throughout Bangladesh. These centres extend health care and health education to mothers and children. More such centres are in the process of installation.

Ensuring child survival and development is a very significant aspect of our relentless war against hunger, ill health and illiteracy. This is a struggle in which we are comrades in arms—the entire world in general and developing nations in particular. That is why Bangladesh became one of the earliest signatories of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We must win the war of welfare for our children. After all, what is the world worth without human beings with sound minds, robust health and generous hearts?

Excellencies, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen: In conclusion, may I submit that the crying need of the hour is to prevent rather than to cure. If we want our children to live a full and rewarding life in a better world, we must build protective fences now around the edges of the precipice rather than provide a fleet of ambulances down below after the inevitable fall. Timely and united action today can place the resources of an entire world at the service of the preservation and development of the children who will inherit our tomorrow.

Commentary by the President of TURKEY, His Excellency Mr. Turgut Özal

Mr. Co-Presidents, dear colleagues: It is an honour and, indeed, a privilege for me to address this Summit Meeting on a subject of vital importance. The theme of child survival has been eloquently presented by President Ershad.

Today, millions of children die from diseases that are in fact preventable or curable at costs which are affordable. For example, measles, which causes the death of one and a half million children annually, can be prevented by a single vaccine that costs 13 cents. Similarly, diarrhoea, which takes a toll of 2.5 million children every year through dehydration, can be treated by a 10-cent pack of oral rehydration salts.

The point I wish to emphasize is that the eradication of those and other preventable diseases which kill and maim children can be done, but that requires a high level of political will and efficient management. If the leaders of the world succeed in making use of the technology available to us, mobilize our people and restructure health services to emphasize prevention, it is estimated that two thirds of the 14 million children who die every year can be saved.

We have all observed the positive impact of child-immunization programmes. As we approach the twenty-first century, a global eradication of such diseases as polio and neonatal tetanus can be our common target. There are other diseases, like cancer and AIDS, which have proved much more difficult to combat. In 1985 Turkey demonstrated and proved to others, in those early days of the child-survival revolution, that a populous country of modest means and difficult terrain could bring the most menacing of childhood diseases, measles, close to the point of disappearance. As a result of the Turkish National Immunization Mobilization, an estimated 22,000 child deaths were averted over the next year. Steadily high rates of immunization have helped us to continue to suppress measles since then. I am pleased to announce that Turkey has now reached universal coverage of all our infants with protection against six vaccine-preventable diseases.

Apart from the vaccine-preventable illnesses, can more of these childhood killer diseases be brought under control, or put behind us entirely, during the 1990s? At this moment there is an important surge in that direction in the scientific community around the world. At the cutting edge is a renewed serious discussion of a single-dose super-vaccine that children could receive soon after birth to protect them against all of the major childhood infections. With such a vaccine, a mother would need to bring her infant for vaccination only once, instead of having to make her way to the vaccination point four times.

The prospects of a new children's vaccine combining polio with the present triple antigen were discussed by scientists from around the world earlier this month in New York as a step towards the disease-elimination goals that this Summit will declare. I urge that the world community pledge itself to raising, perhaps at this meeting, the funds needed to enable the research breakthrough required for that vaccine so that millions of children can be saved.

I pledge that Turkey, with or without a super-vaccine, will arrive at the eradication of polio at least two years ahead of the year 2000 world deadline. That is the kind of concrete follow-up action that this Summit seeks and deserves.

I would like to express the hope that, with the adoption of the Declaration and the Plan of Action, our collective efforts for our children's survival will be a major step forward to prepare a better future for our children.