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WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN
INTER-AGENCY INFORMATION KIT

This kit is a joint contribution of 15 United Nations agencies and organizations to the information and mobilization efforts being undertaken in relation to the World Summit for Children.

The World Summit, to be held at the United Nations, New York, 29-30 September, is a unique effort by leaders from North and South, East and West, joining hands for the first time to try to resolve some of the universal problems that children encounter in surviving and developing to adulthood. The intention is to draw attention to the serious plight of children world-wide and to mobilize support on a large scale for improving their situation.

The 15 United Nations agencies contributing to this kit outline the situation for children in the areas of their operations and speak of the opportunity that the World Summit provides to improve the quality of life of the young. The articles represent the views of the respective agencies.

The agencies that contributed to the kit are:

- International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome.
- International Labour Organisation, Geneva.
- International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva.
- United Nations Centre for Human Rights, Geneva.
- United Nations Children's Fund, New York.
- United Nations Development Programme, New York.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris.
- United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi.
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome.
- United Nations Population Fund, New York.
- The World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- World Food Council, Rome.
- World Food Programme, Rome.
- World Health Organization, Geneva.

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A SUMMIT OF HOPE TO WIPE OUT CAUSES OF POVERTY

"The first priority is the achievement of the fundamental right to food."

Idriss Jazairy, President, IFAD

The reports and publications of UNICEF remind us that every year in the developing countries some 14 million children die before they reach the age of five. The number of children living in ill health and suffering from stunted growth is increasing despite the formidable efforts UNICEF has undertaken to overcome this trend. As UNICEF notes in *The State of the World's Children 1990*, "For many parents, feeding children properly is made virtually impossible by famine, war or absolute poverty".

During this decade, another 1.5 billion children will be born. Most of them will be born in the developing world to rural families struggling to feed and clothe the children they already have or in the cities of the Third World where their parents have fled from the countryside that could no longer feed them.

All the factors that contribute to perpetuating rural poverty and malnutrition in the developing countries directly affect the welfare of children. These include high population growth, the crushing debt burden that hampers agricultural and rural development efforts, the lack of essential technologies, services and rural employment opportunities and progressive environmental degradation. If children are to have a better chance, not only to survive but also to enjoy a healthy and productive future, the basic causes of chronic poverty must be eliminated, especially in the rural areas.

To this end, agricultural inputs and tools must be made available. Credit, market facilities, extension services and training are also needed. Increased employment opportunities must be created. Guidance and incentives must be provided so as to encourage ecologically sound agricultural practices and to promote environmental conservation and rehabilitation. All these are measures that may aim directly at adults, but they are indispensable in ensuring the future health and development of children.

Created in 1977, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is one of the youngest specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The specific mandate of IFAD is to increase food production and alleviate rural poverty. Its exclusive target group are the most destitute and vulnerable of the inhabitants of the poorest rural regions of the developing countries.

Through the projects and programmes it conceives and finances, IFAD has addressed many of the issues which have a bearing on the health and welfare of the young. Small farmers, herdsmen and fishermen, the rural landless and women in many regions of the developing world have been helped to increase their food production and to improve their socio-economic situation.

IFAD credit projects give the poor an opportunity to become more autonomous. Credit has permitted vital on-farm improvements as well as off-farm activities through the creation of income-generating small enterprises. Recognizing the central role women play in household food security and child health, IFAD has increasingly made them a specific target group. A large number of its projects include components directly related to promoting the economic role of women. Expanding women's capacity to earn income has a significant bearing on the welfare of children. Experience has shown that when women have more control over household income, children's basic needs are more likely to be met.

Other areas of IFAD involvement include small-scale irrigation schemes, drainage, soil conservation, crop research projects and livestock development. Although IFAD is not an organization dealing primarily with environmental issues, measures have been introduced in its projects to promote ecologically sustainable agriculture and to help arrest environmental degradation of farmland, rangeland, forests and waters that threaten the short- and long-term productive capacities of the poor.

The crushing debt burden of the developing countries and subsequent internal structural adjustment policies many governments have to apply in order to return to a sounder economic situation have, as a consequence, severely limited their capacity to finance agricultural and rural development programmes. The plight of poor farmers and their children during the implementation of these structural adjustment programmes has become a major focus for the Fund. IFAD projects are increasingly helping governments to provide poor farmers with the inputs they need for their agricultural production or to help them promote alternative crop cultivation.

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In its continuous search to find better instruments to target benefits at the poor, the IFAD approach is based on the following five strategy elements:

- Effective beneficiary participation in development is the key to poverty alleviation. Participation should be conceived as both an objective and an instrument of poverty alleviation.
- Targetting through well-conceived eligibility criteria and careful screening of the beneficiaries are necessary to ensure that resources do reach the poor.
- Addressing the negative linkage that has emerged between poverty and environmental degradation is also necessary. The rural poor are being pushed into increasingly marginal areas, which are further degraded by over-use, thus lowering yields and rendering the inhabitants even poorer. This cycle has to be reversed by integrating poverty alleviation with environmental preservation.
- The rural poor need both land-based and non-land-based support. The latter, especially small-scale rural enterprises in the informal sector, are also critical for alleviating pressure on land, thus protecting it from further degradation.
- Within the framework of carefully designed credit programmes which do really target the needs of the poor, experience has shown that the poor are credit-worthy. It is possible to deliver credit to them in a cost-effective way.

This approach could obviously only be helped by an improvement in the general economic situation of the countries concerned. A broad-based national growth that would generate more income-earning opportunities, including for the poor, raises the questions of the alleviation of the debt burden of the developing countries and the channelling to these countries of additional financial resources.

In his foreword to the 1989 *Annual Report* of IFAD, the Fund's President, Idriss Jazairy, stated:

"Throughout history, human society has successfully met many challenges. No hurdle has proved too high to overcome. With new achievements, higher goals have been set and pursued vigorously. Frontier after frontier has fallen before the onward march of science and technology. In this progress, rural poverty alleviation has always had to take a back seat. As this century approaches its twilight zone, what could augur better than to welcome the dawn of the new century with the face of an Earth rid of the most acute forms of poverty and hunger?

"Poverty is the new frontier which must be conquered before the curtain is closed on the current world stage, which has witnessed wonders enacted, not least of all the beginning of a process to liberate the body and soul of all people from bonds perpetrated in different guises. Voices are being echoed everywhere, seeking the establishment of democratic values and principles and the recognition of human rights. To gain further credibility, these voices must put first as a matter of priority the achievement of the fundamental right to food—the right of people to have enough to eat and to ensure minimum nutritional requirements for their children."

The world today has the resources, the technologies and the know-how to tackle effectively what is becoming the greatest challenge of tomorrow: poverty. Where there is a will there is hope; and if the interest shown by so many world leaders at this World Summit for Children is indicative of the will to combat poverty and thereby ensure a brighter future for the children of the world, then this is indeed a Summit of hope.

CHILD LABOUR: CAN THEY SURVIVE THIS TOO?

"Child labour must stop. The world community has the resources to do it."

Michel Hansenne, Director-General, ILO

Over 100 million children are working today around the world in exploitative conditions that are hurtful to their physical, mental and moral development. They are locked into unskilled, simple but hard jobs that offer little opportunity for moving upwards. They have no rights as workers and cannot join trade unions. They are being deprived of their childhoods.

It is impossible to have an exact count of the number of child workers in the world. But in developing countries more than 18 per cent of the children between 10 and 14 years of age are working. At least 7 per cent of the children in Latin America, 18 per cent in Asia and 25 per cent in Africa are at work.

Concentrated in agriculture, domestic service and the urban informal sector, they are hidden from public scrutiny. The abuse of child labour today depends greatly on the invisibility of its victims; employers often enclose their child workers in a tight veil of secrecy; in many countries most exploited children are not covered by child labour laws. They have to be discovered and reached before they can be helped.

Children are injured on the job because of inattention, fatigue, poor judgement or insufficient knowledge of work processes. Large numbers are at risk because of the very early age at which they begin work, sometimes even before the age of eight. Small girls with sharp eyes and nimble fingers make good carpet weavers, but the work in the long run is harmful to health and eyesight. Malnutrition and other health-related problems are especially high among children who work on the streets, of whom there are growing numbers today.

There has been some progress in the fight to protect childhood. A growing number of both industrialized and developing countries have adopted child labour legislation that on the whole is progressive and reasonably close to international standards. A workable legal foundation has already been laid.

But little of this has penetrated agriculture, the urban informal sector and domestic service, where child labour is most widespread.

The bucolic urban view of farm work is one of fresh air and the wide-open spaces. The reality of today's farms is too much land drenched in hazardous insecticides and herbicides, and use of modern farm machinery. As modernization of world agriculture continues, the number of children vulnerable to exploitation will grow.

Studies by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) show that children working as domestic servants may be among the most vulnerable and exploited children of all, and the most difficult to protect. The vast majority are girls, frequently pre-adolescents who are completely dependent on their employers.

Children work because they have to. Poverty is the root cause. But it is "unacceptable", says an ILO report, "that generations of children should be condemned to exploitation and abuse until poverty is abolished".

The most extensive international standards on child labour have been produced by ILO in more than 20 Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference. These instruments define the conditions, terms and areas of employment, allowing flexibility to cover the needs of countries in different stages of development.

A comprehensive Minimum Age Convention was adopted in 1973 (No. 138), laying down a minimum age for employment of not less than the age of completion of obligatory schooling—but not less than 15 years. It includes special provisions, excluding children under 18 from hazardous work. Together with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted last year by the General Assembly), the ILO Convention is part of the wide-ranging United Nations effort to protect children.

But beyond national legislation, which places the authority of the State behind the protection of children, other forces have to be motivated to combat child labour. The media, voluntary groups, employers and unions have often worked hard in promoting legislation and enforcement measures. There also need to be new approaches to the problem, including the provision of education and training as well as the creation of protected income-earning opportunities for working children.

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In recognition of the enormous high-level attention that the World Summit for Children will direct to all problems faced by the world's children, ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne has sent the following message:

"The existence of child labour in almost all sectors and in a very large number of countries, often under conditions offensive to decent and accepted human values, is an affront to our conscience and a violation of the obligations which countries have entered through international covenants and conventions. The abuse, exploitation and subjugation of children at and through work is perhaps the single most common form of child abuse and neglect in much of the world today. Child labour must stop. The world community has the resources to do it. Almost all countries, however poor, have the option and possibility of confronting it and extending protection of the child to the very young and to the very vulnerable.

"I hope and trust that this World Summit will be an occasion for us to rededicate ourselves to the universally recognized goal of the abolition of child labour and the protection of child workers. May it be also a time to reflect in words and deeds the call first made by the League of Nations in 1924 in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 'that mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give'."

CHILD REFUGEES — SUFFERING IN SILENCE

"It is of imperative importance to insure that the refugee issue appears on the new international agenda."

Thorvald Stoltenberg, High Commissioner, UNHCR

Half the world's 15 million refugees are children. But they are much more than half the world's refugee problem. Their vulnerability, their unique needs, and the fact that individual refugee crises, if not solved, will be passed on to succeeding generations in a painful legacy of bitterness all make them a case for special consideration.

Refugee children live under especially difficult circumstances. Having fled from their homes, sometimes amid cross-fire and across minefields, they often find themselves in refugee camps where the necessities of life are scarce, if not almost non-existent: Water supplies can be erratic, food supplies can be minimal, health and hygiene standards low. Today the limited resources of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are concentrated on programmes designed to keep refugees alive. There are inadequate funds to provide them with much else.

The refugees and displaced persons in Africa, Central America and South and South-East Asia are those who have survived bitter civil strife, communal violence and persecution in their homelands. The high proportion of children among them reflects both the demographic patterns of the developing world as well as the circumstances in which they have to leave their homes. When refugees flee armed conflicts, it is sometimes the children who manage to escape while the adults are killed, imprisoned or stay behind to fight.

In Fugnido, western Ethiopia, for example, over 30 per cent of the total population of 69,000 refugees are unaccompanied children, most of them between 6 and 15 years old. It is a unique situation which calls for special measures. These children have been traumatized by their experiences and are in great need of psychological support. But before this, the priority is to satisfy their physical needs — to provide them with adequate food, water and clothing and to ensure that they receive basic health care, above all immunization against disease.

While Fugnido remains, thankfully, an exceptional case, other situations of mass exodus, such as the Vietnamese 'boat people', have involved the exile of many unaccompanied children.

Generalizations about refugee children are not easy to make. There are no facile diagnoses for their condition and no simple remedies. Traditionally, the focus has been on adult refugees, whose rehabilitation, it was hoped, would benefit the children as well. But, over the years, we have come to recognize that the needs of refugee children are more complex. In emergency situations, UNHCR must aim at satisfying the basic needs of the community as a whole. But refugee children have special needs, physical, social and psychological, that must be urgently addressed.

Physical vulnerability is a constant and critical fact. Young children are particularly susceptible to illnesses resulting from malnutrition and from changes in climate, diet, water supply and sanitary conditions. The continuing stress of separation, the exhaustion of travel during flight and initial residence in cramped, overcrowded conditions accelerate the spread of disease.

Approximately 10 per cent of refugee children suffer from malnutrition. Food rations may be high in carbohydrates and provide sufficient calories for daily needs, but the nutritional balance is often missing. Without sufficient vitamin C, scurvy sets in, children's joints swell and internal bleeding can take place. Without niacin (vitamin B3), pellagra occurs, which, in severe cases, can lead to insanity and death. Anaemia is common when refugees have little iron in their food rations, and recent studies indicate that severe anaemia in children can lead to retardation.

Psychological factors increase the vulnerability of refugee children. They start off with a significant disadvantage, being doubly dependent: dependent for life, nourishment and sustenance on parents or other adults, who are themselves dependent on the protection and assistance of others. It is not difficult to imagine the traumatic effect on a young child of an abrupt uprooting from the place which she or he has always called home; of flight, often preceded or accompanied by violence; of being thrust into a new, unfamiliar environment; and of the uncertainty of exile and readjustment. The child fears for the future, and finds little or no security in his or her parents, who seem to share the same fears and pass on a great deal of stress to their children. As the accounts and the drawings of many uprooted children

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reveal, the refugee child's life becomes a series of fears and bad dreams; even nights provide no release from the perils of the day.

Sadly, the physical safety of refugee children is not always guaranteed. In different areas of the world, refugee children have been killed, tortured, physically abused, neglected, abandoned and abducted. They may be subjected to exploitation, such as forced labour, or prostitution and other forms of sexual abuse. They are among the victims of piracy, especially in the waters of South-East Asia. And they are all too often victims of unjustified detention because of their own illegal entry or as a consequence of the detention of one or both of their parents.

Adequate educational facilities are crucial to the future well-being of every refugee child. School is much more than a place for children to realize their intellectual potential. It is at school that refugee children develop their personal and cultural identities, learn the languages, customs and ways of life necessary for them to integrate successfully into a society, be it a new one or that of their country of origin following return. Refugee children need more help than most so that their future is not overcome by the trauma of the present. All too often, however, refugee children have to go without schooling, especially at primary level.

In 1987, less than one in ten of the children receiving assistance from UNHCR were enrolled in schools. The financial crisis currently confronting UNHCR has made the situation even worse. Funds for educational programmes have been reduced by around 23 per cent in 1990, so that the organization's limited resources can be concentrated in life-sustaining areas such as the provision of food, water and health services.

We cannot afford to forget that refugee children are subject to disadvantages distinct from those suffered by other underprivileged children in the developing world. Refugee children have been displaced and uprooted from all their familiar assumptions. They are often trapped in circumstances of complete unfamiliarity, forced to learn new customs, adapt to strange diets and to live in unusual, frequently uncomfortable or even hostile surroundings. Worse, they have to do this sometimes in an ambiance of bewilderment and despair while serving as the link, or bridge, between their parents and a strange society.

The mere satisfaction of children's material needs will not dramatically alter these circumstances. Yet any effort children may themselves make to overcome their deep-seated problems can only succeed if they are not weighed down by unfulfilled basic needs. This is why UNHCR is anxious to seek support for its projects designed to benefit refugee children. These are not an end in themselves; rather, they constitute a minimal effort to help the refugee children to help themselves.

The World Summit for Children provides an opportunity for focusing the world's attention on the situation of children, not least on the plight of those children who have been forced to flee their homelands to seek safety in another country—refugee children.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS — A FIRST PRIORITY

"The 1990s will be a decade of unique opportunities to turn international law protecting the rights of the child into living reality."

Jan Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, UN

The World Summit for Children and the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child —coming within less than one month of each other—mark crucial steps in the coming decade's efforts to make children's rights a living reality for each child in the world. As United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has stated:

"The way a society treats children reflects not only its qualities of compassion and protective caring but also its sense of justice, its commitment to the future and its urge to enhance the human condition for coming generations. This is as indisputably true of the community of nations as it is of nations individually."

The contrast is stark between the norms society has fixed for itself and the actual conditions in which children must struggle to survive the world over. Reports of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights paint a sombre picture of millions of children subjected to forced or bonded labour, slavery or slave-like conditions or to prostitution; of children exposed to hazardous or debilitating working conditions or who are separated from their parents to be sold. Children are forced into armed forces and are often the first to be killed. Some disappear, cut off forever from their real families. Others are tortured and executed. Many millions of children suffer from *apartheid*, discrimination or foreign occupation, or because they belong to minorities, or indigenous peoples, or are the children of migrant workers.

Instead of giving the child "the best it has to give"—in the words of the 1959 Declaration on the Rights of the Child—humankind often seems to reserve for its children the worst. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, appalled by the cases of torture of children presented to him, told the 1990 session of the Commission on Human Rights:

"Torture is horrifying in all its forms and emanations, but the idea of children, who are still in their formative stage, being tortured is mind-boggling indeed. The fact that these alleged events took place about the same time as the adoption by the international community of the Convention on the Rights of the Child glaringly illustrates how far this world is still removed from practising the standards it sets itself."

In the 45 years since it was established, the United Nations has steadily increased its efforts to ensure respect for the rights of children. International rules have been drafted, investigations have been carried out and governments have been called upon to cease practices which violate children's rights and to take steps to ensure respect for them.

Today we are witnessing an awakening of world public opinion to the real conditions in which many children are forced to live and a renewed commitment to do something to reverse such injustices. This is reflected in the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the holding of the World Summit. We must seize this occasion to save children's lives and ensure a brighter future for all of them.

"The 1990s", in the words of United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights Jan Martenson, "will be a decade of unique opportunities to turn international law protecting the rights of the child into living reality for children all over the world; this must be a first priority of the United Nations and the Centre for Human Rights."

The key element in facing this challenge will be the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Adopted by consensus after 10 years of hard work, the Convention, more than any other international treaty, incorporates the whole spectrum of human rights—civil, political, economic, social and cultural. It provides that respect and protection of all children's rights are the starting point for the full development of the potential of the individual in an atmosphere of freedom, dignity and justice. The Convention attempts to respond to the fundamental needs of the whole child and to provide the framework within which the child, in light of his or her growing capacities, can make the difficult transition from infancy to adulthood.

The set of rights covered in the Convention can be grouped under three main headings: 1) those setting forth fundamental rights and freedoms, such as the right of a child to life, to equality, to a name and a nationality as well as to freedom of conscience, expression and religion; 2) those providing certain special protections from dangers to which children are particularly susceptible, such

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as physical or mental abuse or maltreatment, abduction or trafficking, and economic or sexual exploitation; and 3) those that seek to promote a child's education, information, leisure, play and cultural activities. In a number of areas, such as adoption, the protection of children from sexual exploitation, drug abuse and neglect, and safeguarding a child's identity, the Convention goes well beyond existing legal norms and practices and charts entirely new territory.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, set up under the Convention and which will be serviced by the Centre for Human Rights, will be the main focal point of international efforts to translate the rights of the child into national law and practice. This Committee of 10 experts, in cooperation with the States parties and with the assistance of organizations such as UNICEF and specialized non-governmental organizations, will seek to identify problems preventing the child's full enjoyment of her or his rights, point out possible solutions and try to mobilize resources to respond to those needs.

The Convention is already changing attitudes. Several countries have carried out revisions of their laws in light of the Convention's provisions, thus affecting many millions of children.

Focusing on the Convention must not lead us to forget the other activities of the United Nations in the field of human rights, which can continue to help protect the rights of the child. The special procedures of urgent intervention with governments in cases of disappearances, torture or threatened arbitrary or summary executions can continue to protect the physical integrity and lives of children. The United Nations Programme of Action for Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the subject will have important contributions to make in the future. The existing Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which receives reports each year on the sale of children, the exploitation of child labour, child prostitution, children in armed conflicts, child debt bondage and adoption for commercial purposes, will continue its work to bring about an end to such practices.

The challenge of the 1990s will be to turn the abstract international statements of children's rights into concrete laws, practices and realities in every corner of the world. For that—and with the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the centrepiece—the wide scope of United Nations human rights activities must be mobilized. The World Summit will certainly make a decisive contribution to achieving that objective.

FOR LASTING SOLUTIONS, AN EMPHASIS ON SAFE MOTHERHOOD

"Solutions to the problems of child survival and development must be lasting ones."

William H. Draper III, Administrator, UNDP

"There are no excuses for the neglect of children and their mothers in the last decade of the 20th century", said William H. Draper III, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on the occasion of the World Summit for Children.

UNDP, the largest source of multilateral grant development assistance in the world, has helped children by supporting projects in every area of concern, from hunger to health to education to promoting women in development and providing safe drinking water.

The agency works with developing-country and donor-country governments, other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations and operates from 112 field offices to serve more than 150 developing countries and territories.

UNDP supports more than 250 projects valued at US$134 million to help women in their roles as mothers. In addition, UNDP has committed US$20 million to date to help governments and organizations to combat the AIDS epidemic, which presents a dire threat to both mothers and children in developing countries.

"Solutions to the problems of child survival and development must be lasting ones", Mr. Draper said. "That is one reason why UNDP is paying particular attention to women and safe motherhood." He added: "Every year, 500,000 women die of pregnancy-related causes, and 99 per cent of those deaths occur in developing countries. Mothers who die or become too ill to function have children who will probably suffer neglect, and some of them may die as well.

"We must respond on a broad front: Make sure that girls as well as boys get adequate nutrition and health care from infancy, that girls as well as boys become literate, that women catch up with men in income and become involved in all development activities, and that women gain access to health care and knowledge and means of family planning. Safe motherhood for all is within our power. It must become a top priority of human development."

In the area of children's health, UNDP is committed to work towards a 'children's vaccine', which would protect against several childhood killer diseases such as polio, pneumonia, measles, diarrhoeal disease and tetanus in a single dose. Recently, UNDP, together with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the Rockefeller Foundation, developed a proposal to speed such vaccines to market. UNDP and its partners will seek support for the vaccine project during the Summit.

While pursuing these and other specific activities on behalf of children, UNDP is also promoting broad 'human development' goals. This means, among other actions, showing how military spending—now estimated at US$200 billion a year in the developing world—could be spent to meet human needs. It also means offering to help countries institute human development programmes.

UNDP recently issued the *Human Development Report 1990*, a study which ranks countries according to a new human development index combining life expectancy rates, literacy levels and basic purchasing power into one measure. It concludes that countries can achieve relatively high levels of human development even at modest levels of income, depending on budget priorities. Child and maternal mortality rates and steps needed to reduce them were addressed in the report.

A sample of findings from the *Human Development Report* speaks volumes about children:

- Countries which have actively pursued human development see more children survive to become adults than have some of their richer regional neighbours. Thanks to spending in the social sectors in the 1970s, Jamaica's child mortality rate dropped more than 4 per cent per year from 1960 to 1988, so that it reached 22 per 1,000 live births in 1988. This compares with a rate of 85 per 1,000 in Brazil, a country with more than twice the per capita income of Jamaica, but with wide disparities of income distribution and public spending.
- Rural-urban disparities hit children hard. Data on the nutritional status of children in 31 countries, for example, show 50 per cent higher average rates of child malnutrition in rural areas than in cities.
- The female literacy rate in the developing world is only two thirds that of males. This hurts both women and children: High female literacy is conclusively associated with lower infant mor-

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tality, better family nutrition, reduced fertility and lower population rates.

"We know the appalling facts of death, disease, malnutrition, illiteracy and wasted lives", said Mr. Draper. "We know that there are means at hand, some of them quite inexpensive and available, to remedy the effects of neglect. It is a matter of facing the facts and being willing to direct national budgets and policies to the salvation of mothers and children."

Balance sheet of human development

Human progress

Life expectancy

- Average life expectancy in the South increased by a third during 1960-1987 and is now 80 per cent of the North's average.

Education

- The South now has more than five times as many students in primary education as the North, 480 million compared with 105 million.
- The South has 1.4 billion literate people, compared with nearly 1 billion in the North.
- Literacy rates in the South increased from 43 per cent in 1970 to 60 per cent in 1985.

Income

- Average per capita income in developing countries increased by nearly 3 per cent a year between 1965 and 1980.

Health

- More than 60 per cent of the population of the developing countries has access to health services today.
- More than 2 billion people now have access to safe, potable water.

Human deprivation

Life expectancy

- Average life expectancy in the South is still 12 years shorter than that in the North.

Education

- There still are about 100 million children of primary school age in the South not attending school.
- Nearly 900 million adults in the South are illiterate.
- Literacy rates are still only 41 per cent in South Asia and 48 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

Income

- More than a billion people still live in absolute poverty.
- Per capita income in the 1980s declined by 2.4 per cent year in sub-Saharan Africa and 0.7 per cent a year in Latin America.

Health

- 1.5 billion people are still deprived of primary health care.
- 1.75 billion people still have no access to a safe source of water.

Human progress

Children's health

- Child (under-five) mortality rates were halved between 1960-1988.
- The coverage of child immunization increased sharply during the 1980s from 30 per cent to 70 per cent, saving an estimated 1.5 million lives annually.

Food and nutrition

- The per capita average calorie supply increased by 20 per cent between 1965 and 1985.
- Average calorie supplies improved from 90 per cent of total requirements in 1965 to 107 per cent in 1985.

Sanitation

- 1.3 billion people have access to adequate sanitary facilities.

Women

- School enrolment rates for girls have been increased more than twice as fast as those for boys.

Human deprivation

Children's health

- 14 million children still die each year before reaching their fifth birthday.
- Nearly 3 million children die each year from immunizable diseases.

Food and nutrition

- A sixth of the people in the South still go hungry every day.
- 150 million children under five (one in every three) suffer from serious malnutrition.

Sanitation

- Nearly 3 billion people still live without adequate sanitation.

Women

- The female literacy rate in the developing countries is still only two thirds that of males.
- The South's maternal mortality rate is 12 times that of the North.

AS LITERACY BECOMES ESSENTIAL FOR SURVIVAL, EDUCATION MUST BE FOR ALL

"The World Summit for Children will echo and amplify our call for universal primary education for children."

Federico Mayor, Director-General, UNESCO

Every child starts life as an illiterate. And every day close to 400,000 children are born. How many of these small children will grow up to be illiterate adults? The answer is largely dependent on the education their own parents and especially their mothers have received.

During the 1960s and '70s, rapid progress was made in increasing primary school enrolment rates. But this trend has now been reversed in many countries by economic recession and austerity. Massive drop-outs and repetition of grades are further eroding educational attainments in the developing world.

Today, more than one adult in four is illiterate. There are more than 1 billion illiterates in the world, two thirds of whom are women. In the developing world, nearly half of all women cannot read and write. In some countries, the rate approaches 90 per cent. In addition, an estimated 130 million children of primary school age do not attend school. Even the industrialized countries are not spared. Surveys show that 10-20 per cent of the population in many of these countries lack the educational skills they need in everyday life.

Disease and famine can kill quickly and directly, so illiteracy is often seen as a lesser evil. But development experts claim that, in today's society, literacy is becoming essential to survival. A woman who cannot read medical prescriptions or simple health instructions on the importance of breast-feeding and vaccinations is less able to keep her children healthy. A farmer who cannot read the instructions on fertilizer and pesticides may jeopardize not only his harvest but also his own and other people's health.

We know by now that one of the most important factors in providing primary education to children is the level of education of their parents. An educated mother will do everything she can to give education to her child. But that is not the only benefit.

Educated parents (and especially mothers) are more likely to have healthier children. The higher the mother's educational level, the lower the mortality rate of infants and the better the sanitation, nutrition and health practices.

According to a World Bank study, countries which specifically aim at educating women develop faster. Investing in women's education yields a higher economic productivity, longer life expectancy for both men and women and better social conditions. Education is the key to development. "It is not the progress of education alone which is at stake, but the very progress of society itself", says Federico Mayor, Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The United Nations has proclaimed 1990 International Literacy Year. Its bold aim is to initiate action to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000.

This daunting but necessary task has mobilized the world community. In Jomtien, Thailand, 1,500 delegates from 165 countries, invited by UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and the World Bank, came together from 5-9 March 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All.

The Conference reaffirmed the right of everyone to education. The ultimate goal agreed upon is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. A Framework for Action was endorsed, outlining a world-wide strategy for the 1990s, intended for concerted action by national governments, international organizations, bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations and all others committed to the goal of education for all.

UNESCO, through its member States, is launching an action plan for the eradication of illiteracy. The main action will be at the national level, but regional training and research activities will provide many opportunities for the exchange of information between countries and also for co-operation with partner agencies.

UNESCO will also continue to collaborate with other partners in early childhood care and development, and to this effect it has launched an intersectoral programme, the Young Child and the Family Environment project, an inter-agency co-operation project. The aim of the project is to safeguard and promote the development of children at an age that is crucial for their development. All disciplines within the mandate of UNESCO (education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication) are called on to contribute to its implementation in the next six years. It will focus primarily on children

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at risk in the most deprived areas.

Within the framework of this project, two contributions were prepared for the World Summit for Children: a study written by Dr. Robert Myers entitled 'Toward a Fair Start for Children: Programming for Early Childhood Care and Development in the Developing World' with a preface by Federico Mayor; and a 'Statistical Wall Chart on Early Child Development and Learning Achievement 1990', prepared jointly by the UN Statistical Office, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO.

After 30 years of massive investments in education, spending in this field is suffering from severe cut-backs as the developing world faces an economic crisis marked by recession, debt and austerity. In some countries, structural adjustment policies have had serious social consequences, including reduced educational services.

Achieving the goal of education for all is an investment in the future which necessitates additional resources. It is estimated that US$5.8 billion per year will be necessary over the decade to extend primary education to all children before the year 2000. This is in fact achievable: The annual cost is equivalent to two days' expenditure on arms by the industrial countries or one week of military spending in the developing world.

With the mounting debt burden, 'a yoke around the necks of developing countries', it is unrealistic to expect that these countries can shoulder the full responsibility of ensuring basic education for all by the end of the century.

"External aid must be considerably increased in terms of quantity and effectiveness, but it cannot —and should not be allowed to—further increase the burden of external debt nor to impose unilateral conditions", says Federico Mayor.

If education were for all, the close to 400,000 children born every day would become literate adults and in turn assure that their own children would be educated. But for the more than 100 million children without access to any education today, this remains an inaccessible dream of a better future. What is needed, in the words of Mayor, is a "revolution of the mind", a reordering of priorities both in the North and in the South. For this, we have no time to lose. The children cannot wait.

unicef

FOR CHILDREN IN THE 1990s, A DECADE OF DOING THE OBVIOUS

"It is to the Summit for Children that the world now looks for a new impetus to convert what* can *be done into what* will *be done."

James P. Grant, Executive Director, UNICEF

It is the greatest condemnation of our times that more than a quarter of a million children are still dying every week from easily preventable illness and malnutrition.

Every single one of those deaths is the death of a child who had a personality and a potential, a family and a future. And for every child who dies, several more live on with malnutrition and ill health and are thereby unable to fulfil the mental and physical potential with which they were born. Death and suffering on this scale simply no longer are necessary; they are therefore no longer acceptable. Morality must march with capacity.

This is the context of the unique meeting which will convene at the United Nations in New York on 29-30 September 1990. For the first time, Presidents and Prime Ministers from all regions of the world will meet to discuss children, the key concern of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It will be the largest gathering of heads of State in history. And on the agenda will be an unprecedented range of practicable and affordable opportunities for making drastic improvements in the lives of the new generation—improvements in their survival and well-being, in their nutrition and normal growth, in their health and education, in their rights and in their futures. The outcome, it is hoped, will be a new level of political commitment to doing what can now be done for the children of the 1990s.

At the heart of the World Summit for Children is the principle of 'first call'. In essence, that principle implies that the growing minds and bodies of children should have first call on society's capacities and that children should be able to depend upon that commitment *in good times and in bad*. Whether a child survives or not, whether a child is well nourished or not, whether a child is immunized or not, whether a child goes to school or not, should not, today, have to depend on whether interest rates rise or fall, on whether commodity prices go up or down, on whether a particular political party is in power, on whether the economy has been well managed or not, on whether a country is at war or not, or on any other trough or crest in the endless undulations of political and economic life in the modern nation state.

But important as the principle of first call may be, the real challenge of the first World Summit for Children is to translate that principle into specific aims which are achievable and affordable in the decade ahead.

Some of those specific aims are shamefully obvious.

Today, a handful of common illnesses, all relatively easy and inexpensive to prevent or treat, account for over half of all child deaths and over half of all child malnutrition. Diarrhoeal disease, still the single biggest cause of illness, malnutrition and death among the world's children, can be brought under control by empowering all parents with today's knowledge about low-cost methods of prevention and treatment. Vaccine-preventable diseases, and especially the tetanus and measles which together kill over 2 million children each year, can be brought under control at a cost of less than US$10 per immunized child. Poliomyelitis, which now cripples a quarter of a million young lives each year, can and should be eradicated before the decade is out. Pneumonia, which kills more than 6,000 children every day, can now be treated by antibiotics costing less than a dollar. Even child malnutrition, which now saps the growth of 150 million under-fives, can be reduced by at least 50 per cent through proven low-cost means. And the ill health of so many millions of women can be drastically improved by giving them the right and the knowledge and the means to choose how many children they will have and when.

Overall, present knowledge about such issues as immunization, dehydration, breast-feeding, weaning, growth monitoring, respiratory infections, birth spacing, safe motherhood, malaria and the prevention of illness make it possible, at an affordable cost, to build a wall of protection around the growing minds and bodies of all the world's children in the decade ahead.

Achieving these obvious priorities is not only a question of money and technology. It is also a question of the delivery systems and the infrastructure, the management skills and the training, and the use of all possible channels to inform and support parents in applying today's knowledge. But to put the problem into an overall perspective, the additional costs, including delivery, of a pro-

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gramme to prevent the great majority of child deaths and child malnutrition in the decade ahead might reach approximately US$2.5 billion per year by the late 1990s.

Two and a half billion dollars is a substantial sum. It is 1 per cent of the poor world's own arms spending. It is as much as the Soviet Union has been spending on vodka each month. It is as much as US companies have been spending each year to advertise cigarettes. It is 10 per cent of the European Economic Community's annual subsidy to its farmers. It is as much as the world as a whole spends on the military every day.

The deficit is therefore not primarily in the technology, nor in the finances, nor in the outreach capacity. It is in the awareness that the job can be done and in the determination to mobilize all possible resources to do it.

It is this deficit which the World Summit for Children, uniquely, can help to make good.

More broadly, the children of the 1990s also look to the Summit meeting for a renewed commitment to the great goals of adequate nutrition, clean water, safe sanitation, primary health care and basic education in the decade ahead. In each of these fields, recent years have brought practical, low-cost breakthroughs which could accelerate progress even in the difficult economic climate of the 1990s.

Renewing progress towards these great material goals of adequate food, health care and education for all will require action to reduce debts, increase investment, liberalize trade, stabilize commodity prices and increase aid. All of these are essential to reverse the disastrous trends of the 1980s and allow a return to healthy economic growth in the developing world.

But as the 1990s begin, it is important to begin the journey towards these great goals by taking the obvious and affordable first steps. It is within our power to end child deaths, child abuse, child illness and child malnutrition on the scale which defaces our civilization today. And it is within our power to ensure that every child has a school to go to, a health worker to refer to and a diet which allows normal mental and physical growth.

From the perspective of our common future, ensuring the healthy physical and mental development of children is the most important investment that can be made in the healthy social and economic development of our societies. Doing what can now be done to achieve that goal is therefore an issue worthy of its place on the agenda of the world's political leaders, the world's press and the world's public, as we enter the last decade of the 20th century.

Children benefit from clean drinking water from the village well, constructed with the assistance of the IFAD Farmers' Groups and Community Support Project in Kenya.

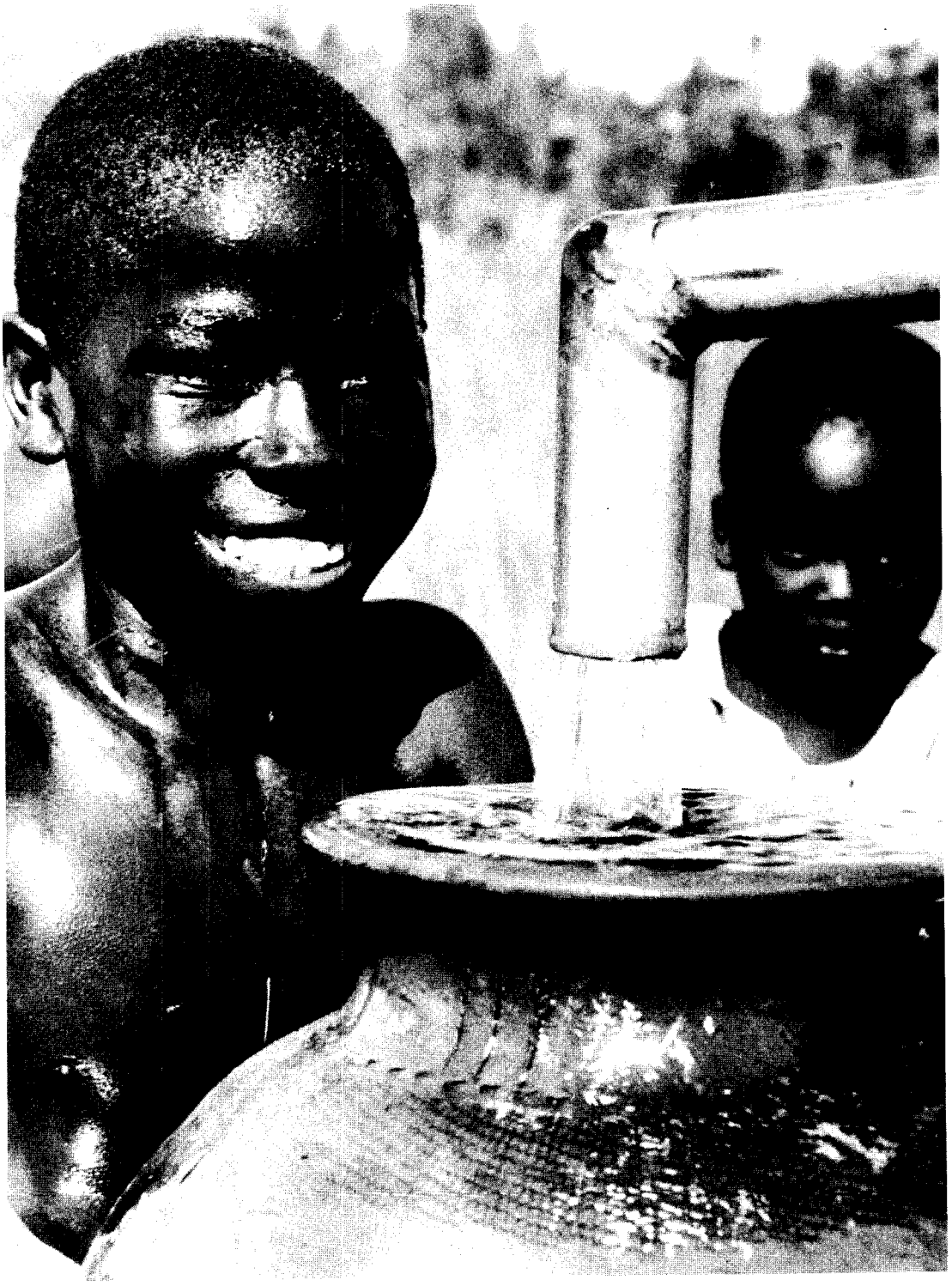

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Photo: IFAD/McDougall.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

Children working in a brick factory.

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Photo: ILO/Maillard.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

IMF supports the Bangladesh Government's immunization programme to protect young children against the six preventable childhood diseases.

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Photo: UNICEF/Sprague.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

A young Mozambican refugee collects his family's food ration in Mankhokwe, Nsanje District, Malawi.

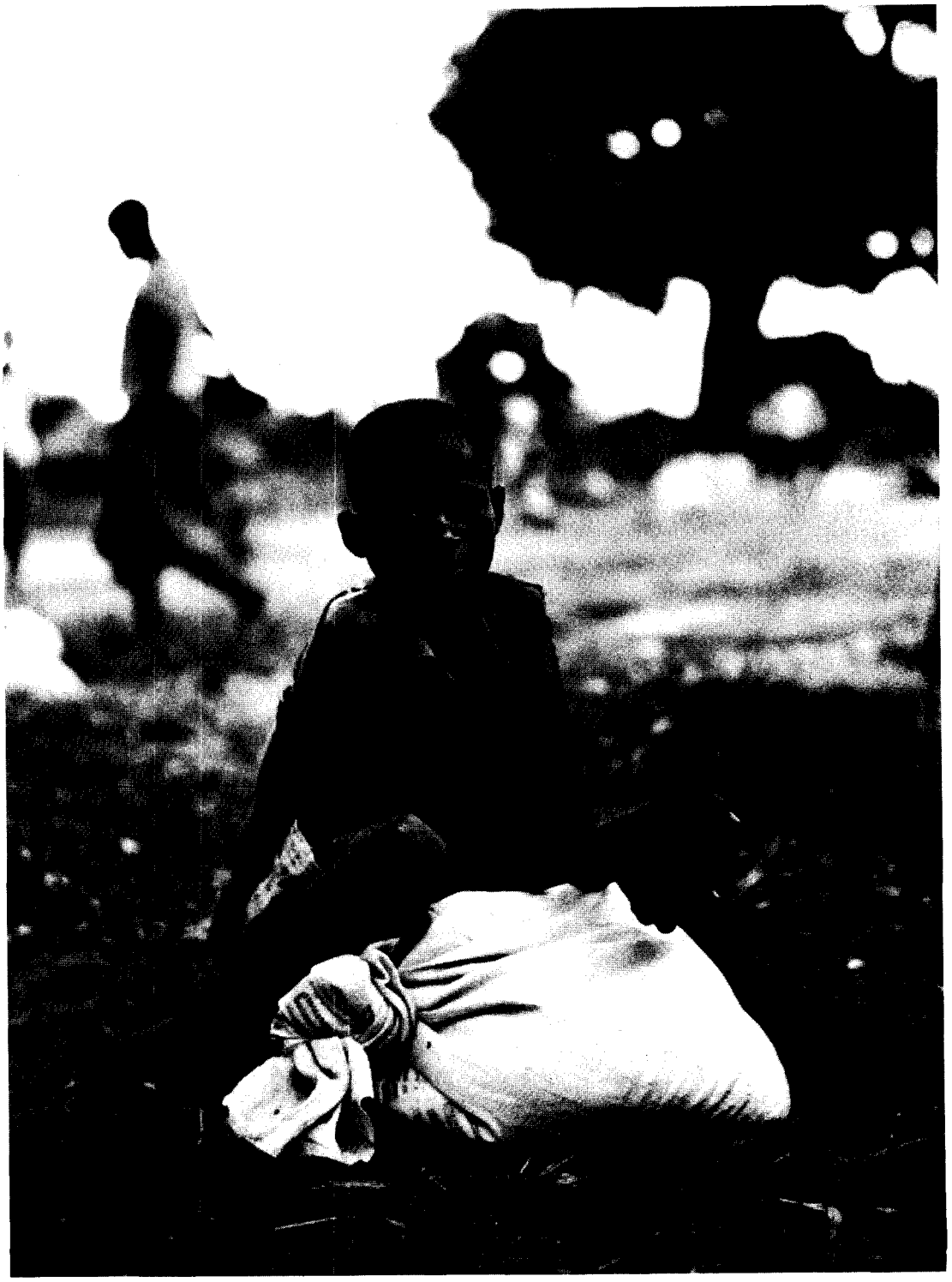

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Photo: UNHCR/Hollmann.

Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that no child under 15 should take a direct part in hostilities, many are still recruited into national armies.

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Photo: UNICEF/Gamblin.

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

unicef

UNICEF assists in caring for children in the most isolated corners of the world.

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Photo: UNICEF/Sprague.

Chinese children in the village of Nan-Changtou benefit from clean water from a new handpump installed through a UNDP/ World Bank rural water supply project.

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Photo: UNDP/Kane.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

A quarter of the world's children aged 6 to 11 do not have the good fortune to be able to go to school.

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Photo: UNESCO/Bulos & Nicolas.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Most cities of the world offer children a hostile environment, invaded by industrial pollution, traffic and insecurity.

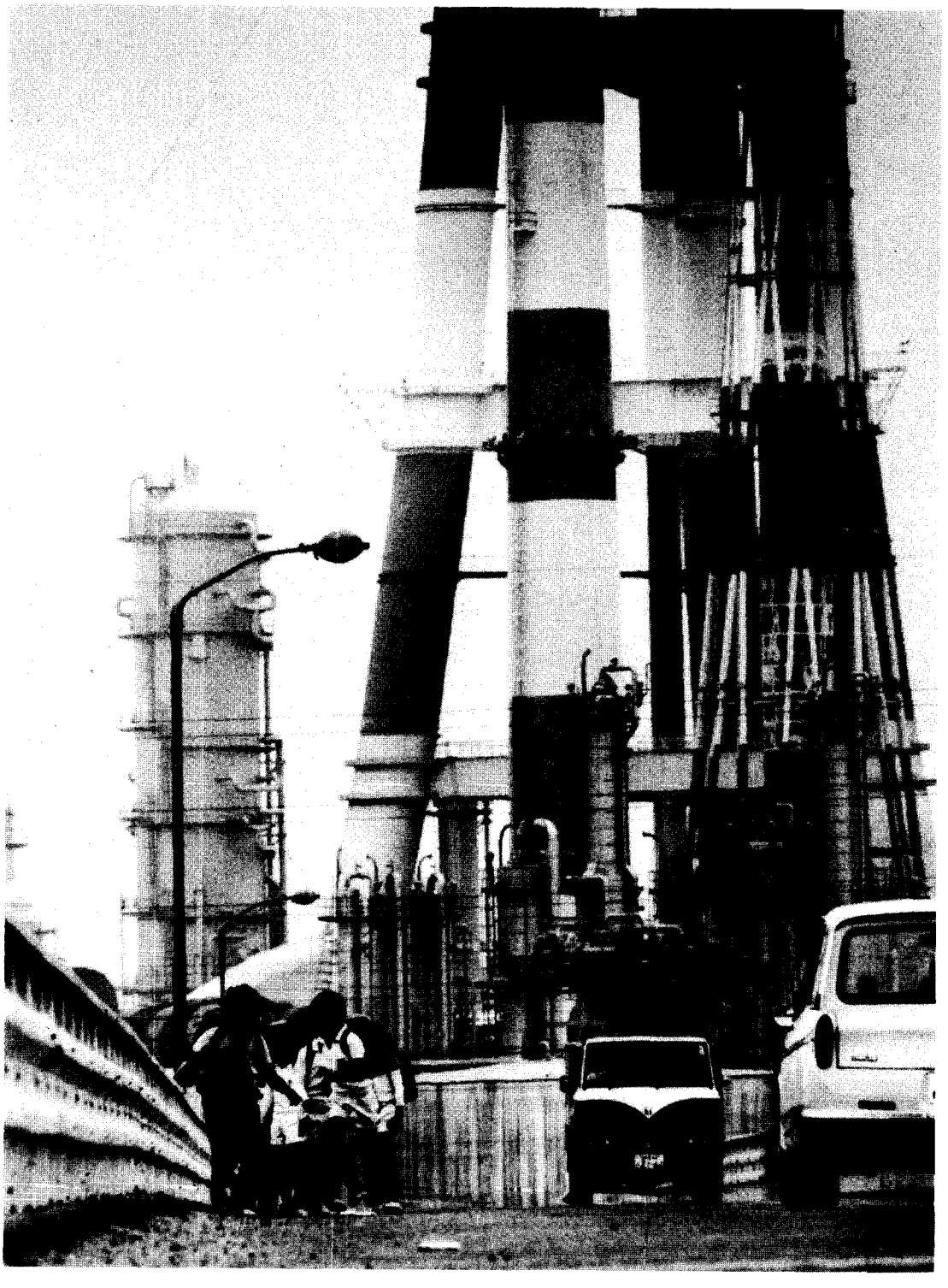

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Photo: UNEP/Takeuchi.

UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

In Africa women contribute two thirds of all the hours spent in traditional agriculture. FAO assists women to improve their production.

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Photo: UNICEF/Demmers.

UNFPA

Enhancing the role and status of women is essential to lowering fertility and improving child survival. Educated women, on average, have a higher status in society and have easier access to family planning services; their children are fewer, healthier and more likely to survive.

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Photo: UNICEF/Schytte.

THE WORLD BANK

A boy learns to write in Bare, Burkina Faso.

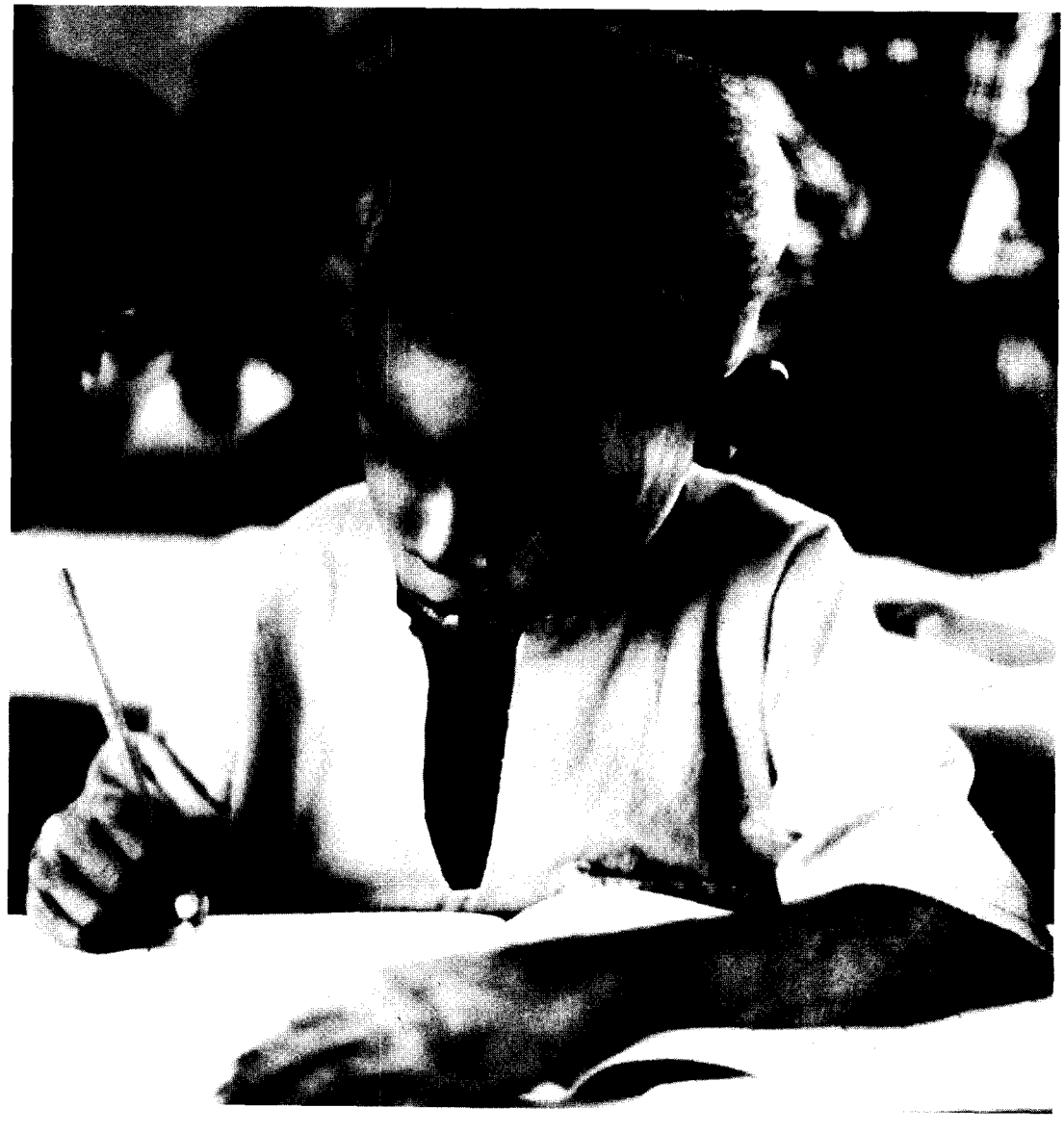

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Photo: World Bank/Wittlin.

Mass distribution of vitamin A capsules and increased consumption of green leafy vegetables helps prevent blindness caused by vitamin A deficiency in young children.

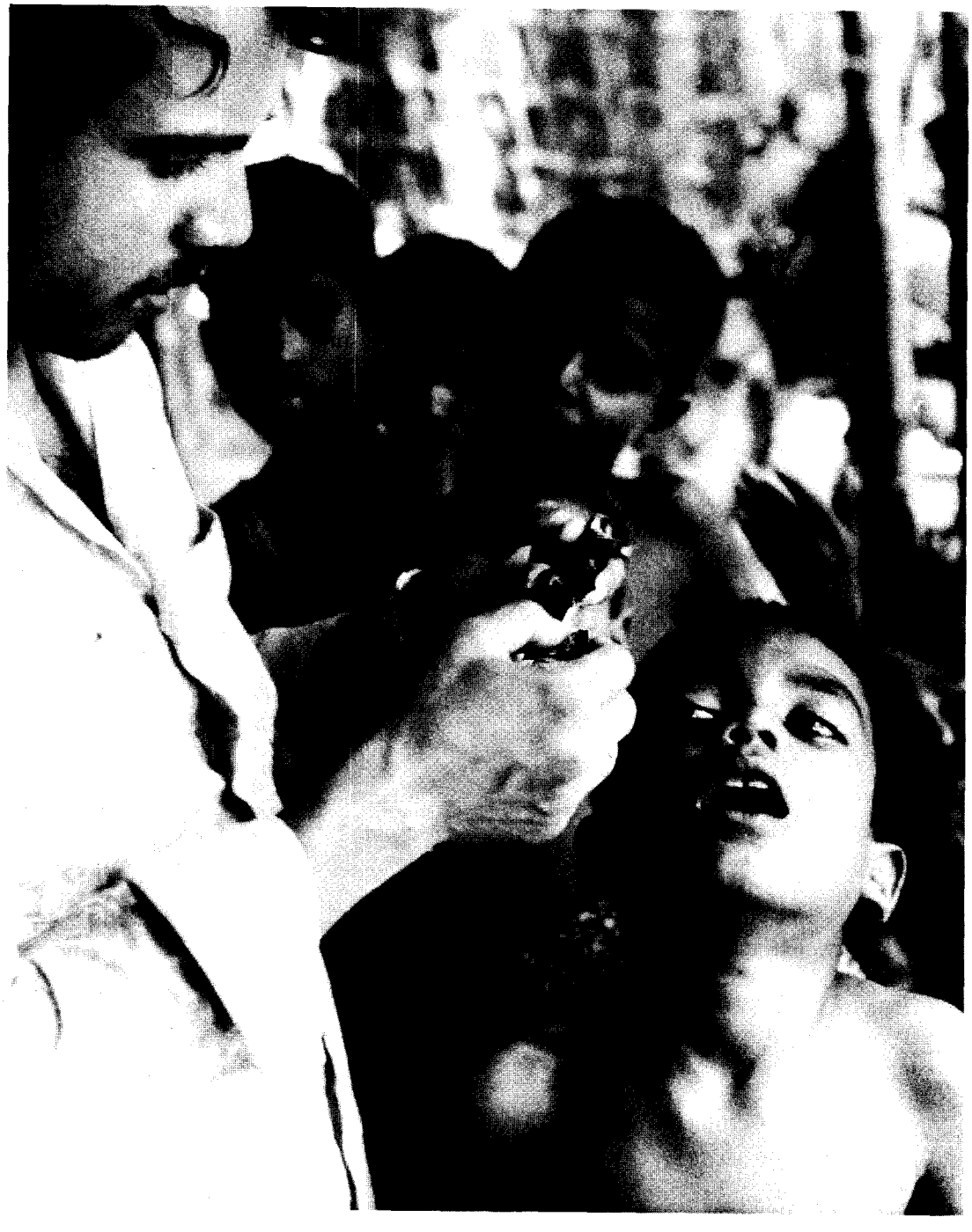

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Photo: UNICEF/Zaman.

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Food, the first step towards good health: supplementary feeding in Nepal.

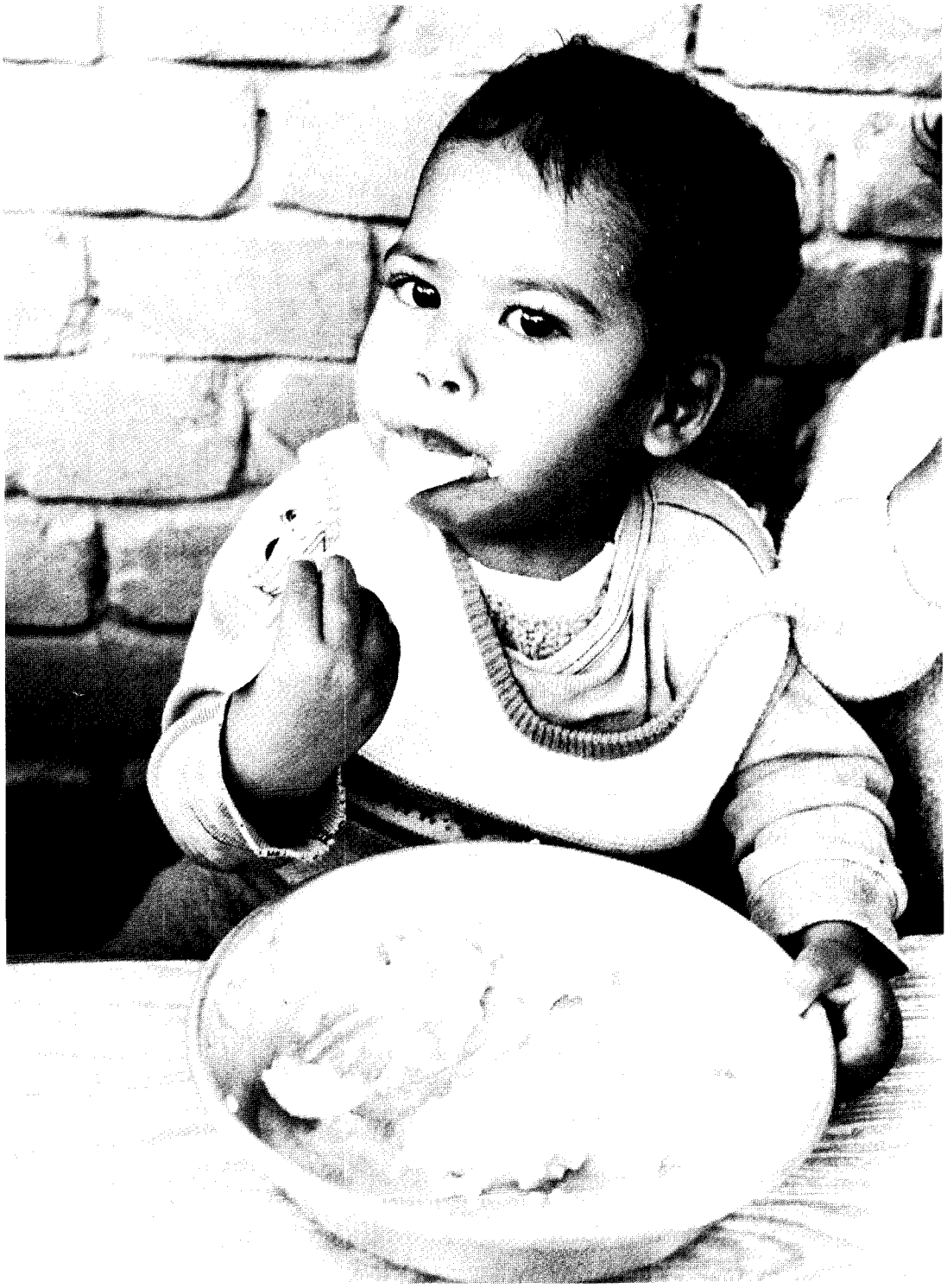

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Photo: WFP/Hartley.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Breast is best. Wise feeding of babies will, eventually, be reflected in lower infant mortality rates.

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Photo: WHO/Zafar.

HELPING CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM ECONOMIC GROWTH

"Policies that promote sustainable, equitable and environmentally sound economic growth are the surest foundations for health, wealth and opportunity."

Michel Camdessus, Managing Director, IMF

"Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give", said the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child. The urgency of this mission, first expressed in 1924 by the League of Nations, is now heightened; with birth rates projected to peak in the year 2000, the 1.5 billion-strong generation of the 1990s will be the largest ever.

As countries enter the last decade of this century, we find that 40 per cent of children under five in the developing world still go to bed hungry; one half of all the developing world's children do not have access to clean drinking water; some 100 million 6 to 11-year-olds do not go to school; and almost two thirds of all child deaths each year result from just four causes—diarrhoea, respiratory infections, measles and tetanus. These and other tragedies are unacceptable, given that many of them are preventable.

Why then have they not been prevented? Why have the solutions, some of which are so technologically straightforward, so obvious, proved so elusive in practice? There are complex reasons. Some of them lie in the general economic crisis that has gripped many developing countries. During the 1980s, growth per capita in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa was negative, and it stagnated in Eastern Europe. The decline in income has been calamitous in some countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where consumption per head is now about where it was 25 years ago. Tragically, in virtually all cases, children, especially children of the poor—who have no political clout, no assets and few choices—have been the hardest hit.

Clearly, given the magnitude of the task and the diversity of the obstacles to overcome, building a better world for children calls for urgent, even radical, action in several areas, simultaneously—in sanitation, health, nutrition, education, housing, the environment and, not least, in politics. But one imperative is to attack the fundamental *economic* frailties that prevent societies and governments from providing children with "the best they have to give".

Much of what needs to be done comes down to restoring economies to a sustainable and efficient growth path, which includes launching an assault on poverty. The words "sustainable and efficient" are key, for growth that quickly fizzles out, that benefits only the privileged or that ravages the environment will not do the job.

Policies that lay the ground for sustainable growth involve, first, the restoration of monetary and fiscal discipline. They also involve structural reforms—those that eliminate distortions in prices, including exchange rates; that strengthen competition and private initiative; that make public enterprises more efficient; that open up foreign trade; and that enhance both the quality and quantity of investment.

Many of these reforms benefit children and other vulnerable groups, sometimes directly—for example, broader-based, more efficient and better-administered tax systems reduce distortions and raise revenues, which can be used to build more facilities for children. Cut-backs in wasteful expenditure—particularly much military expenditure—free additional resources to meet social goals. And a greater emphasis on investment in human capital ensures that adequate funds are allocated for health, nutrition and education.

The transition from a stagnant economy ridden with imbalances to a sustained growth path is, however, neither easy nor painless, especially for the most vulnerable groups. It is vital to protect these groups—and children in particular—through well-targetted devices, income transfers and other safety nets.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) puts its full weight behind programmes that seek to promote sustainable and efficient growth. At present, it is supporting more than 50 such programmes in its member countries, 27 of which are in low-income countries, where the deprivations suffered by children are particularly acute. A number of these programmes contain measures explicitly targetted at children. For example:

- In Bangladesh, the Government has expanded primary education, especially for female children. It has also launched a phased and detailed plan of universal immunization against childhood diseases and adopted other preventive health measures, including control of diarrhoeal diseases, safe birth practices and oral rehydration therapy.

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- The Government of Bolivia has increased funding for primary education and introduced a basic health care package that includes measures to improve pre- and post-natal care.
- In the Gambia, the Government has expanded maternal and child health services; mounted an immunization campaign, which has helped raise the national immunization average from 55 per cent to 70 per cent over the last three years; and expanded nutrition programmes targetting the poorest groups.
- In Madagascar, the Government's programme for 1990-92 strongly emphasizes primary health care, family planning and basic education. The Government is aiming at a vaccination rate of 80 per cent for babies under the age of one, stepping up its battle against malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and AIDS, and improving, in particular, primary and secondary education.

To be sure, sound policies might not be sufficient by themselves; they will need to be supported generously by bilateral and multilateral donors and be accompanied by wide-ranging social and other initiatives. But without policies, little else stands a chance; they are a critical minimum.

As IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus has said: "Policies that promote sustainable, equitable and environmentally sound economic growth are the surest foundations for health, wealth and opportunity; as such they could be seen as gifts that we can bestow on our children. They are more than that; they are the major and inescapable obligation of our generation."

Such policies are gradually beginning to take root in many countries of the developing world. Their chances of success would, however, be minimal if the international environment created in particular by the industrial countries is not made more supportive; if protectionism were to be allowed to gain ground; and if official development assistance were to stagnate.

These conditions make for a challenging but essential agenda for the industrial and developing countries alike. May the World Summit for Children provide both with the inspiration and the renewed determination to make the world a better place to live for the generation of the 1990s.

THE ULTIMATE TARGET: REDUCING POVERTY

"I applaud the Summit for focusing attention on the special needs of children, the most vulnerable persons in any society."

Barber Conable, President, World Bank

Development is about improving the lives of the poor—of women, men, and their children. Of the many major issues the World Bank helps the developing countries tackle, the alleviation of poverty is the one that captures most of the World Bank's prime purpose; it is also the ultimate objective of all the other activities.

Since he became President of the World Bank, Barber Conable has pushed poverty issues to the top of the institutional agenda. Today, despite progress in some regions, more than 1 billion people—roughly one third of the total population in developing countries—still live in absolute poverty, which means they are surviving on less than US$370 a year.

According to Mr. Conable, "Development means little without reduced poverty, both in its relative and absolute definition. The *raison d'être* of the World Bank, the substance of our mission, is to attack poverty with every aspect of our institutional strength. Striving to reduce poverty should be one of the international community's fundamental objectives in the 1990s.

"The World Summit for Children, therefore, provides an excellent opportunity to re-emphasize the World Bank's firm commitment to alleviating poverty in a manner which also promotes growth. I applaud the Summit for focusing attention on the special needs of children, the most vulnerable persons in any society. In addition to adequate nourishment, children must have access to primary education and basic health care if they are to escape the clutches of irreversible poverty."

The World Bank's latest thinking on this subject is reflected in its recent *World Development Report 1990,* which is a major study on poverty. In the search to generate maximum poverty reduction, the Report recommends a two-part strategy for developing countries to adopt within a context of economic growth.

Part one of the strategy focuses on the need for countries to put in place a range of policies aimed at opening up income-earning opportunities. These policies should aim at intensifying the efficient use of poor people's most abundant resource, which is their labour. National policies that incite productive employment will enable the poor both to contribute to economic growth and to benefit from it.

Part two deals with the need for countries to extend basic social services— mainly basic health care, primary education and access to family planning. These services will enable the poor to become stronger, healthier and better equipped to grasp these income-earning opportunities. By bringing basic assistance to children, who are such vulnerable victims of poverty, children will have a better chance to grow out of poverty and into productive adulthood.

Economic growth will always be a key to poverty reduction; no country has managed to reduce poverty in its absence. The reverse, however, is not necessarily true, as economic growth alone is not sufficient to reduce poverty. That is why the Report stresses that both parts of the strategy, which reinforce each other, are equally important to yield the desired results.

Why doesn't a lopsided approach work? The evidence shows that in countries like Brazil and Pakistan, economic growth has raised the incomes of the poor, but social services have been neglected. As a result, child mortality has remained high and primary school enrolment low. Also, inadequate social services have prevented the poor from being in a condition to take full advantage of economic opportunities.

In other countries where only social services have been stressed, growth has been too slow to reduce poverty. In Sri Lanka, for instance, primary school enrolment rates are exceptionally high and mortality rates for children low. But the potential for raising the incomes of the poor has been dissipated by the lack of economic opportunities.

Real progress requires the dual approach. This has been done in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, where poverty has been considerably reduced, along with rapid improvements in nutrition, under-five mortality and primary school enrolment. But not everyone will benefit from this strategy. Many poor people, such as the sick, the old, those who live in regions lacking resources and their children, will continue to be deprived. And others may suffer from temporary set-backs due to seasonal variations in income, loss of the family bread-winner, famine or macro-economic shocks.

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A comprehensive approach for reducing poverty therefore also requires a programme of well-targetted transfers and safety nets as an essential complement to the basic strategy.

In the long run, economic restructuring under adjustment programmes is consistent with the two-part strategy. But in the short term, many of the poor are vulnerable and must be protected through a judicious mix of macro-economic policies and measures to cushion sharp declines in private consumption. Shielding mothers and children from reductions in social expenditures is central to these efforts.

Experience has also shown that public spending can be shifted towards the poor, even within a framework of fiscal discipline, and income transfers targetted more accurately. Increased capital inflows can help cushion the impact of adjustment on the poor.

The international community also has a major role to play in reducing poverty. Trade liberalization should eventually benefit even low-income countries, if they move away from over-reliance on a few commodities. And additional debt relief would help increase investment and the consumption of the poor, but it should be conditioned on policy reform.

A massive effort on poverty reduction will require an increased volume of aid flows. But the Report makes clear that increasing the volume of aid is not an end in itself and that aid should be linked directly to the impact of a country's anti-poverty policies.

As part of its renewed commitment to step up activities on poverty issues, the World Bank is also playing a lead role in several global initiatives with important implications for children.

For instance, the World Bank was a founding member of the Safe Motherhood Initiative in 1987, and Safe Motherhood components have been developed in 45 Bank-assisted projects now being implemented in 35 countries.

Many of these projects also help finance health care, family planning and immunization programmes in line with the goals set by the Task Force for Child Survival, to which the Bank subscribes as an active member.

World Bank loans for population, health and nutrition, which amounted to US$54.1 million for six projects in fiscal 1987, have risen rapidly. Figures for fiscal 1990, which ended June 30, show they had reached US$811 million for 12 projects. In addition, the project pipeline includes more than 50 possible projects, totalling over US$2 billion for fiscal 1991-93.

The World Bank was also a founding co-sponsor of the recent World Conference on Education for All. As the largest single source of financial support for educational development, the Bank has lent more than US$10 billion for education and accounts for 15 per cent of international support. At the Conference, Mr. Conable announced that the Bank will double its educational lending over the next three years to an annual level of US$1.5 billion. Primary education lending will at least triple during fiscal 1991-93, accounting for 30 to 40 per cent of education loans.

As Mr. Conable stated when he presented the *World Development Report,* "Modest investments in reducing poverty can yield handsome returns, whether measured by the extent of poverty alleviation, the productivity of individuals or the increase in human happiness."

In large part, the increase in human happiness will come from children who can look forward to a more promising future.

FOR THE HUNGRY POOR, A NEED FOR ACTION

"The world's children are our future. Surely we must give them enough food so that they can all live full and active lives."

Gerald Trant, Executive Director, WFC

The world should not be complacent or consoled by the fact that 1.2 billion more people are being fed at the beginning of the 1990s than during the mid-1970s. The World Food Council (WFC) points out that the number of hungry people in the developing countries has grown alarmingly in that period, reaching at least 550 million at the start of the new decade.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that the number of malnourished children also increased in the last decade, which in many countries saw a slow-down or a reversal of earlier progress in reducing child malnutrition and mortality. Malnutrition and diseases are responsible for an estimated 14 million deaths a year among children five years old and under. Clearly, this statistic is not going to improve unless nations, either individually or collectively, take more determined action in favour of the growing number of our world's hungry poor, and in particular adopt special measures to protect the most vulnerable groups—young children, pregnant and lactating women and the elderly.

"The world's children are our future", said Gerald Trant, WFC Executive Director. "Surely we must give them enough food so that they can all live full and active lives. To do less is to fail in our responsibilities to the human race."

WFC, the highest-level political body on food and hunger matters of the United Nations, monitors progress, suggests remedial action, mobilizes essential support and strives to ensure the coherence of overall efforts by governments and assistance agencies for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

The face of hunger is the face of human tragedy. The roots of hunger are spread wide and go deep. There is the starvation that stalks the victims of armed conflict or natural disaster; the silent suffering of the growing numbers of the undernourished in both the developing and industrial world, whose situation reflects the imbalances of their countries' economies. There are the millions of malnourished children, women and old people who have specific dietary needs which cannot be met and so, through no fault of their own, forfeit their chance of life. And then there is the lengthening shadow cast by those of the world's children who stand no chance of ever receiving the essential vitamins and minerals necessary for growth and whose doubtful future stands as mute witness to a world that does not care enough.

Hunger is concentrated in, but not confined to, the rural areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, it can be found everywhere, including in the more advanced countries. Hunger takes many different forms. Each requires a different remedy, but it is rooted in poverty, in the failure of the countries to move towards sharing food and income within and among themselves.

Nutritional deficiency diseases, which often attack young children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly, are caused by deficiencies of specific nutrients such as vitamin A, iodine and iron. Vitamin A deficiency affects the eyes, particularly those of young children, and in its severe forms results in blindness and death. There is a close link between vitamin A deficiency and other causes of child mortality due to respiratory and gastro-intestinal infections as well as to anaemia and other nutritional deficiency diseases.

Vitamin A deficiency is endemic in large parts of South and South-East Asia and Africa. Half of the total global population of the 20-40 million people suffering from some degree of vitamin A deficiency is estimated to be living in India. Scattered pockets of affected populations also exist in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

Iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) are also acknowledged to be a major impediment to human development. The best-known symptoms are goitre and cretinism. Iodine deficiency in the expectant mother, in addition to causing cretinism, also has adverse effects on the brain development of the child and increases infant mortality levels.

Although less dramatic and severe, iron deficiency anaemia is the most common nutritional problem in the world. It is often manifested in increased fatigue and reduced mental and physical capacity. Among the most severely affected are women of reproductive age, whose dietary iron requirement is higher than that of men, and young children. It is estimated that up to half of the women in developing countries may suffer

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from anaemia; the disease is also common in developed countries. World-wide, 1.5 billion people may be suffering from iron-deficiency anaemia, with the highest numbers living in Africa and South Asia, and the number appears to be increasing.

The prevention and control of vitamin A deficiency can be achieved by utilizing current scientific knowledge and technical skills, and at a modest cost. The ten-year programme launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1985 adopted three complementary interventions based on short-, medium- and long-term needs: distribution of high-dose vitamin A capsules, fortification of foods and improvement of vitamin A intake in the diet.

A proposed United Nations Ten-Year Programme for Prevention and Control of Iodine-Deficiency Disorders envisages the elimination of the disease through the fortification of salt with iodine and the provision of iodine capsules or iodine injections. Most countries in Latin America and South-East Asia have launched national programmes against IDD, and some have made significant progress, such as Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia and Thailand. However, in the African region, where 34 countries are plagued by IDD, only a few have initiated control programmes.

The virtual elimination of vitamin A and iodine deficiency diseases in this century is not only technologically feasible, but also economically affordable. An all-out effort against iodine deficiency is estimated to cost in the area of US$50 million per year. The prevention of vitamin A deficiency in the 35 most affected countries may require as little as US$15 million a year.

WFC supports the development of national food strategies to allow countries to achieve greater food self-sufficiency through integrated efforts to increase food production, improve food consumption, particularly of the vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly, and thus eliminate hunger.

It is within this context that WFC welcomes and fully supports the idea of holding the World Summit for Children, which seeks to put the well-being of children high on the agenda of the 1990s to enhance in a major way the political commitment and resolve of all concerned in the struggle against hunger and poverty.

Among the most encouraging steps taken recently in the fight against hunger and malnutrition for the 1990s was the WFC Cairo meeting in May 1989 and its reaffirmation this year in Bangkok. The Council's 36 member countries, representing 75 per cent of the world's wealth and income, and two thirds of its people, agreed to take co-operative action against hunger and malnutrition by working towards four broad hunger-alleviation goals for the 1990s: the elimination of starvation and death caused by famine; a substantive reduction of malnutrition and mortality among young children; a tangible reduction in chronic hunger; and the elimination of major nutritional deficiency diseases.

With a greater sense of common purpose, these challenges can be met. The key to meeting the challenge is co-operation among nations to ensure the survival, protection and development of all the children of this planet.

BRINGING FOOD TO THE VICTIMS — IT'S UP TO US

"The cruellest enemy of children's well-being is widespread poverty and society's neglect of the poor."

James Ingram, Executive Director, WFP

As final preparations for the World Summit for Children were under way, the world rediscovered the shadow of an all-out war looming over dreams of global peace, détente and integrated markets.

Of course, wars had been present during the time those dreams were being shaped by the reshuffling of international alliances—as the World Food Programme (WFP) knows only too well. As the food aid arm of the United Nations, WFP often leads the relief operations that bring food to civilians trapped between warring factions, to the internally displaced who have lost homes and jobs and to the refugees fleeing into neighbouring countries to escape war. Many of these are children.

Because of its leading role in bringing relief to war-ravaged areas, WFP seeks to establish corridors of tranquillity through which humanitarian relief will be allowed to pass unharmed. Of course, the best thing would be to eliminate war and military spending altogether, but while waiting for that day, the compassionate course of action is to protect the vulnerable and the innocent. War is, after all, an invention of adults.

Another consequence of armed conflict is that refugee camps swarm with children—from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Guatemala or Mozambique. Often they are underweight, diseased and traumatized by the upheaval. Many will live their entire childhood in the camps, where meals are supplied by WFP. Every day, the Programme provides food for 8.5 million refugees. Of the world's estimated 15 million refugees, half are children, growing up in a kind of social and political limbo. They must not be forgotten.

In 1989, WFP played a key role in the huge United Nations effort to move relief food into southern Sudan, as the Programme had done in the African famines of the 1970s and '80s. Then, hundreds of thousands of children were saved thanks to food that arrived in time. When disasters hit a community, whether floods in Bangladesh, famine in Ethiopia, drought in Chad or a hurricane in the Caribbean, children are the most helpless victims.

However efficient the relief effort, WFP believes that development—supporting agriculture, halting environmental degradation, providing employment, setting up warning systems to detect famines in the making—is a much better way of preventing child deaths. The Programme supports projects in each of these areas.

The protection of children must be a world priority and food must be considered a basic right, the first steps towards good health and education. But the well-being of children cannot be isolated from the well-being of the family. Most children are members of households and their situation must be seen in the context of the household and its position in society. "The cruellest enemy of children's well-being is widespread poverty and society's neglect of the poor", says James Ingram, WFP Executive Director. "Protecting children means lifting families out of poverty."

As the food aid arm of the United Nations, WFP commands a much-needed resource: more than US$1 billion every year in food for the developing world. Food aid from WFP does a lot more than simply feed the hungry, the malnourished and the very poor. Food aid is used to help them out of the poverty cycle that can stretch over several generations.

Thus, children benefit from WFP aid in a variety of ways, either directly or through their families.

- Distribution of food rations in health centres encourages women to take their children for growth monitoring and immunization. Evaluations in many countries confirm that food is an incentive for pregnant women to come for the pre-natal care that leads to healthier babies and fewer maternal and infant deaths. Supplementary food for pregnant women is the best way to prevent low-weight babies.

- In health care centres from Burkina Faso to Nepal and El Salvador, malnourished children are identified so they can receive supplementary food provided by WFP, while the mothers learn, through nutrition education, to make good use of the commodities. Breast-feeding and proper weaning practices are promoted.

- School meals and snacks replenish the energy of students who walk long distances to school, who go without breakfast or who do not get enough food at home. Poorly fed students suffer

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from short-term hunger, a form of temporary malnutrition that impairs school performance.

- School meals are an additional reason for parents to enrol children in school and ensure they attend regularly. Currently, WFP provides school meals and snacks in more than 17 countries.
- WFP also provides substantial aid to kindergartens and day-care centres, including early stimulation programmes for small children who are not babies anymore but are not yet at school. In the cold Bolivian altiplano and in the hot plains of Rajasthan in India, WFP supports centres where pre-school children learn to play and interact with each other.
- Poor families lack the means to buy or grow enough food for their needs. One way of helping them is providing additional income in the form of food. The labour-intensive food-for-work schemes supported by WFP build needed infrastructure—feeder roads, irrigation canals and sanitation—while providing paid employment to millions of workers, including women heads of household.
- In Bangladesh, India and Lesotho, for example, more than half the workers in WFP-assisted projects are women, and most are mothers who rely on this as their only income to support their children. Many studies have shown that women are more likely than men to spend their income on the family, especially on children's health and education.
- When countries have embarked on harsh structural adjustment programmes, WFP helps to mitigate the social costs of adjustment by cushioning the poor from the shock of cuts in government health and education budgets: food stamps for low-income families in Jamaica, meals at secondary boarding schools in Ghana, food aid for soup kitchens in the slums of Peru's capital, Lima.

These are only some ways in which food aid works for the benefit of children. But isolated interventions will bring isolated results, however beneficial. More is required.

That there is a need for this Summit points out that we adults have not been capable of ensuring the well-being of the least powerful members of society. Something has gone terribly wrong in a world where 40,000 children die every day.

"Are children a priority or are they expendable? What are the priorities in the model of development we are applying if this wastage goes unheeded?" Mr. Ingram asks. "Achieving the objectives set by this Summit requires a strong, soul-searching commitment."

As the 20th century draws to a close, this World Summit presents a timely forum to reflect on our individual and collective responsibility in restructuring the web of relationships between industrialized and developing countries, between rich and poor people and between ethnic groups inside countries, between men and women, between adults and children—a time to rethink what kind of world our children will inherit.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

THE 1990s—A DECISIVE DECADE FOR SAVING CHILDREN

"This World Summit for Children provides an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary responsibility."

Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, Director-General, WHO

Each day in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, 40,000 children under the age of five die from disease, malnutrition and neglect. Many of these deaths—which total about 15 million annually—could be prevented, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

WHO believes that millions of women and children in the developing world could be saved each year simply by applying already existing knowledge about the essential link between the health of a child and its mother. A healthy, well-nourished and well-informed mother is more likely to bear, rear and nurture a healthy infant, WHO says.

"This World Summit for Children provides an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary responsibility", said Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, Director-General of WHO. "Never before have we had such an opportunity to acquaint world leaders with what can be done for mothers and children if we apply what we know now, and invest in new knowledge through research. Yet it is also our responsibility as technical experts to make clear that the actions and investments considered by the Summit are essential to the future of our planet."

In order to appreciate the challenge facing the Summit, it is necessary to take stock of the health situation of children around the world:

- Each year some 50 million people die from disease and other causes. Of the total deaths, about 30 per cent are children under the age of five. Two thirds of these are children who die before their first birthday. Ninety-seven per cent of all infant deaths are in the developing world, where infant mortality rates are on average about five times as high as in the developed regions. Overall in the developing world, one child in 12 dies before reaching the age of one, and one in eight dies before reaching the age of five.
- Of the 40,000 infants and children who die each day, about one fourth are deaths during the first week after birth and relate directly to the health and nutrition of women, and the quality of care that women receive during pregnancy and delivery. A significant proportion of the remaining infants who die have low birth weight (or were pre-term births), an important contributory factor, which again relates to the health and nutritional status of the mother during and before her pregnancy.
- More than 8,000 children die each day because they are not immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases—a total of about 3.1 million child deaths each year—and another 3 million are disabled. These diseases include poliomyelitis, tetanus, measles, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tuberculosis. Another 2.8 million children—nearly 8,000 each day—die of acute respiratory infections, mainly pneumonia. Annually, at least 1.3 billion episodes of diarrhoea occur in children under the age of five, and an estimated 4 million—or about 11,000 each day—die as a result.
- Each year, over 500,000 women die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth, nearly all in the developing world. For the developing world as a whole nearly one in every 200 pregnancies results in the death of the mother. In the absence of family planning and skills and knowledge in managing pregnancy and conducting a delivery, that figure rises to as high as one in 75. An African woman may have a life-time risk as high as one chance in 15 of dying as a result of pregnancy or childbirth; a South Asian woman may have as high as one chance in 18 of dying.
- WHO estimates that during its first decade, the epidemic of HIV/AIDS has caused an estimated 500,000 cases of AIDS in women and children, most of which have, thus far, been unrecognized. During the 1990s, WHO estimates that the pandemic will kill an additional 3 million or more women and children throughout the world. In addition, more than 10 million uninfected children will be orphaned, because their HIV-infected mothers and fathers will have died from AIDS.

Yet, there is cause for hope. Immunization coverage for children in the developing countries reaching their first birthday has climbed from less than 5 per cent in 1974 to over 70 per cent today, thus contributing significantly to the decline in infant mortality; oral rehydration therapy exists for

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preventing dehydration and malnutrition resulting from diarrhoeal diseases, thus saving many of the 40 million children who might otherwise die in the next decade; acute respiratory infections, especially pneumonia, can be cured by standard, inexpensive antibiotic treatment, aided by an attack on the root causes of poverty, ignorance and ill health; urban water supply and sanitation are improving, with water supply coverage rising in rural areas from 30 per cent to almost 50 per cent in the past 10 years; coverage of deliveries by trained attendants has increased from 34 per cent in 1983-1985 to over 42 per cent in the least developed countries in 1986-1988 (and for all developing countries it increased from 48 per cent to 52 per cent during the same period).

WHO believes that the starting point for improving child health is ensuring safe motherhood and the health and well-being of women. The social status, education and poor health of women, the complications of pregnancy and childbirth, low birth weight, as well as general malnutrition and infection—all these contribute to globally high levels of new-born, infant, early childhood and maternal mortality and morbidity. Many of these conditions are aggravated by births that occur at too young or too old an age, too close together and too often, and do not occur in isolation but in the context of poor socio-economic situations where education, health and other social services are lacking.

These challenges can be largely met through better use of existing resources specifically targetted at breaking the cycle of excess fertility, maternal ill-health and infant illness and mortality.

- Breast-feeding: Children who are exclusively breast-fed for the first four to six months of their lives have a lower risk of dying from diarrhoea and respiratory disease than infants fed on breast-milk substitutes or with mixed feedings of breast milk and other liquids or semi-solids. Infants who receive no breast milk are 14 times more likely to die of diarrhoea than exclusively breast-fed infants.
- Education: Families and parents need to be empowered to deal with common illnesses and nutritional and developmental needs of children.
- Primary health care: This provides a supportive structure for these actions, and a channel for additional appropriate technologies such as immunization, appropriate drug therapy for acute respiratory illnesses and referral of women and children at risk requiring higher levels of care.

In order to assist such developments, the World Summit for Children can underline the importance of comprehensive support for the health and well-being of women and children. In this context, the Summit can:

- Adopt the theme that safe motherhood and child survival and development are two sides of the same coin. This means reaffirming the health and development needs of women while recognizing the inherent link between the health of women and the health of children.
- Endorse, as the first step, the global movement for maternal health and safe motherhood, including the fourfold strategy that is focused on equity, family planning, primary health care and essential obstetric care for those at risk.
- Commit governments and organizations to the mobilization of technical and material resources for integrated and co-ordinated programmes that are targetted to the common goals referred to in the Summit Plan of Action.

UNFPA

FAMILY PLANNING— A KEY TO SAVING LIVES

"Children from planned families are more likely to survive, have healthy childhoods and to grow into healthy, educated adults."

Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director, UNFPA

Expanding effective family planning could save the lives of many of the more than 100 million infants and children expected to die during this decade, and it could improve the quality of life for the millions of children who survive.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) says that a planned family is the best environment for a child's development because correct spacing of births through family planning encourages child survival, protects the mother as well as the child, enhances family life, moderates population growth and is a key part of sustainable development.

The United Nations estimates that approximately 1.5 billion children will be born before the end of this decade, of whom more than 100 million will die in infancy or childhood. Many of those who survive will live lives of desperate poverty and hopelessness.

The knowledge, technology and methods are available to prevent most of these deaths and alleviate much of the suffering. These include the health measures—including family planning—promoted by UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, other United Nations and international agencies and national governments.

"The challenge before the World Summit for Children is not just to see that more and more of these children survive, but to ensure that they all will have a future in which to develop their full human potential", said Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of UNFPA.

"Children from planned families are not only more likely to survive, they are also more likely to have happy, healthy childhoods, to go to school and to grow into healthy, educated adults with good prospects", Dr. Sadik said.

Total world population will increase by 90 to 100 million each year during this decade, making it especially difficult for most developing countries, where more than 90 per cent of those births will occur, to adequately provide health care, nourishment, education and employment to their populations.

Without considerable economic growth, and unless population growth rates decline, limited resources will continue to be stretched, more children will go without education and more families will live in misery.

High rates of population growth in many developing countries are fuelled by high fertility rates, high infant and child mortality rates and a lack of family planning services.

Women want fewer children than they are currently having: Surveys indicate that if women could have the number of children they really wanted, the number of births would fall by 35 per cent in Latin America, 33 per cent in Asia and 27 per cent in Africa.

Half a million women die each year as the result of pregnancy, and between 100,000 and 200,000 women die as a result of poorly performed, often illegal, abortions.

UNFPA says that a more widespread use of family planning could reduce the number of maternal deaths by as much as 25 to 33 per cent. This in turn would have important implications for child survival. In the developing world, a mother's death often presages a child's death. Even if her children survive, their welfare prospects are considerably lessened.

Family planning allows couples to decide freely on the number of children they want to have and when they want them. By protecting the health of mothers and preventing unwanted pregnancies and pregnancies that occur too early, too late or too close together, UNFPA estimates that family planning could save 5 million children's lives each year. It could also help to create a family, community and national environment in which these children could thrive.

"The greatest tragedy, however, is that most of these deaths could be prevented by a more widespread use of the simple, effective and inexpensive health measures already being provided by the United Nations and national governments", Dr. Sadik said.

Infant and child mortality can be reduced dramatically through adequate nutrition, breastfeeding, safe water, health and population education, immunization programmes, oral rehydration therapy and birth spacing, Dr. Sadik explained. Similarly, maternal mortality can be reduced substantially through maternal health care, family planning, birth spacing and general education.

Enhancing the role and status of women is

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essential to lowering fertility and improving child survival. Experience shows that when women are given access to education and to employment, as well as to family planning, the welfare and health of their families have improved.

"Educated women, on average, have a higher status in society and have easier access to family planning services; their children are fewer, healthier and are more likely to survive", Dr. Sadik added.

Because of cultural differences and individual preferences, family planning programmes, to be successful, must provide people with a wide range of methods to choose from as well as with counselling and follow-up.

Modern contraceptives include barrier methods, such as the condom; hormonal methods, such as the pill; intra-uterine devices (IUDs); and surgical sterilization. Their levels of effectiveness in preventing pregnancy range from 70 to 100 per cent.

Breast-feeding can delay the return of fertility but only under certain conditions. If a baby is less than six months old, exclusively breast-fed (six half-hour feedings in each 24-hour period, night and day) and the mother is not yet menstruating, there is only a 2 per cent chance of her getting pregnant. However, if any one of these conditions is not present, the chance of pregnancy increases considerably.

Breast-feeding should continue because of its great benefits to a child's health, but, at the same time, the mother should use another method of contraception to promote healthy birth spacing, which requires at least two years between births. Studies show that children born less than two years apart have a 66 per cent greater chance of dying during the first year of life.

The health benefits of breast-feeding should be promoted with appropriate consideration for women's nutritional status, work-load and environment. Women who choose the breast-feeding option need to be given support—time to breast-feed as well as adequate rest and nutrition—by families and employers. Ideally, a woman who plans to breast-feed should receive family planning counselling before giving birth, and begin using her contraceptive method of choice by the fourth month after her child's birth. Women who cannot or who choose not to breast-feed must be provided with the information and support they need to bottle-feed their infants safely and must have access to family planning.

Since family planning is a health measure and essential to maternal and child health (MCH), it should be provided as a component of MCH, UNFPA says. Child survival and family planning are interactive. Family planning improves child survival; child survival, in turn, increases the demand for family planning. By combining both under the MCH infrastructure, cash-squeezed developing countries have a cost-effective way to advance their development efforts.

"To create a better world for children we have to have the proper mix of economic, health—including family planning—and education interventions. By continuing to work together towards this goal, the United Nations and national governments can ensure children's survival, give children a true childhood and help them achieve their potential as leaders of tomorrow", said Dr. Sadik.

UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF RURAL CHILDREN

"Young people are the dynamism and the hope of today, the enthusiasm and the creativity of today, the flexibility and the renewal of today."

Edouard Saouma, Director-General, FAO

More than 450 million people in the developing world are seriously undernourished. Malnutrition is both a cause and an effect of poverty. Malnutrition threatens the mental and physical growth of children and can lead to a legacy of ill health that persists into adulthood. Failure to achieve their full potential in later life can mean low incomes and poor living conditions and a continued pattern of malnutrition and poverty into the next generation.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) works to break this vicious circle by raising levels of nutrition and improving living standards among the rural poor. It aims to ensure that all people at all times have access to the food they need, at prices they can afford. FAO is particularly anxious to ensure that vulnerable groups such as mothers and children enjoy secure access to the safe and wholesome food that they need for healthy growth and development.

From earliest childhood to young adulthood, FAO seeks to include children in the development equation. Its concern for their well-being is in complete harmony with the goals and aspirations of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children being presented at the World Summit for Children. The Summit, by focusing attention on the issues of nutrition and agriculture, should help mobilize public and political support and funding for programmes in these fields which will benefit children.

The work of FAO is geared towards increasing the production and availability of food in rural areas of the developing world. Field projects increase the availability and quality of food for children by preventing post-harvest food losses, improving ways of processing food and increasing the farm family's income.

Unfortunately, the trends are far from favourable. Poverty disrupts rural families as men, women and even young children migrate to the cities. The men often migrate to other countries in search of employment. In one country in southern Africa, FAO found that, because of male migration, 63 per cent of the households were headed by women. Children invariably suffer as more claims are made on their mothers' time and energy.

Improving rural infrastructures and services, key activities of the FAO field programme, can bring vulnerable rural population groups out of their isolation. Digging wells, providing alternative fuels for cooking, and planting trees for fuelwood and fodder can dramatically cut the time women spend daily fetching firewood and water. This leaves women farmers more time for their children and for income-producing activities.

The needs of young children are met primarily by their mothers, but in the rural communities of the developing world the energies of the womenfolk are often exhausted by work in the fields. In Africa, women contribute two thirds of all the hours spent in traditional agriculture. Various FAO studies put the ordinary daily work-load of rural women in developing countries at 15-16 hours.

Easing the burden of such underprivileged women helps to protect their children. FAO has recently embarked on a far-reaching Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development. The underlying aim is to achieve recognition of the crucial role of women in development and to bring to the fore these 'silent partners' in the agricultural economy.

The FAO field programme assists women to become better and more efficient agricultural producers. The productive capabilities of women are enhanced by giving them access to credit and farm inputs as well as introducing income-generating activities.

FAO development activities are focused on the poorest of the rural poor, especially school drop-outs, the unemployed, and young men and women farmers. The Organization encourages governments to implement development programmes that give opportunities to young farmers, foresters and fisherfolk.

Rural youths need extension services and non-formal training in production techniques, management and marketing. Extension services include courses that build leadership skills. Young rural families need advice on nutrition, the preparation and preservation of foods and on responsible parenthood as related to their community's limited resources. Like their leaders, the younger food producers need access to vital inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and rural credit to succeed.

"Young people are the dynamism and the hope of today, the enthusiasm and the creativity of

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today, the flexibility and the renewal of today", said FAO Director-General Edouard Saouma during World Food Day 1988, which was dedicated to rural youth. "It is not enough to prepare a future for them; everything must be done to ensure their development at the present time, as young people. The most valuable contribution they can make to their community, their country and the world is what they are today, namely the springtime of humanity."

FAO stresses the direct connection between food and health, particularly where children are concerned. Poor parents are unlikely to have adequate education about balanced diets so that health problems can persist even where food is abundant. FAO is midway into a ten-year plan to eradicate vitamin A (carotene) deficiency, which affects the health of at least half a million infants and young children in the developing world each year. This deficiency leads to blindness and, if left untreated, death. Families are encouraged to grow carotene-rich fruits and vegetables such as mangoes, papayas, carrots and leafy vegetables to supplement the diets of their children.

FAO, through a wide variety of nutrition education and training programmes, is helping to improve both diets and hygiene at the village and household levels. At the national level, technicians are being trained in food inspection and analysis and administrators assisted in the drafting and enforcement of effective food control legislation.

Sustainable development means nurturing and protecting the environment for future generations. FAO provides technical assistance and advises governments on policies for proper natural resource management. The Organization analyses the impact of development programmes on the lives of rural children. It offers agricultural techniques which are appropriate, productive and environment-friendly.

The fuelwood crisis has drastic repercussions for rural families. Deforestation has forced women and young girls to travel far in search of wood for heating and cooking. FAO is introducing more fuel-efficient cooking stoves as well as encouraging tree-planting and forest management throughout the developing world.

With FAO assistance, regional and national plans are being launched for the rehabilitation of land and water resources in the developing world, especially in Africa, where land degradation is the most alarming. Youth and children are involved in tree-planting and conservation activities.

FAO works through a global strategy that aims to increase food production and the availability of food to all members of the farm family, especially children and youth. Shortages of food and inadequate diets at the family level are fundamental causes of the malnutrition and poor living conditions of rural children. Of special concern are the hundreds of millions of small-scale, subsistence and resource-poor farmers.

By increasing food production and by improving the quality and availability of food to rural children, FAO is committed to securing their nutritional requirements. It is equally committed to their full development as human beings. "For, in the last analysis", says FAO's Director-General, "this neglected youth, abandoned to all the demons of ignorance, poverty, deracination and despair—this youth is the treasure, the hope, the very life-blood of a nation."

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT: WEAVING A WEB FOR SURVIVAL

"The unborn cannot make their wishes known. But we can."

Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive Director, UNEP

We depend on children and the environment for the survival of the species. Yet evidence that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has gathered shows we are on a rough road, one that could be signposted 'No Return'. But it also shows that adults can unite to reverse this situation.

"The road to save our children and our Earth is a straight road", said UNEP Executive Director Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba, when he launched the 1990 State of the Environment report in Mexico City this year on World Environment Day, June 5. "There can be no detours by those who say we lack the means or the money. There can be no detours by those who advocate the *status quo*. The same it always was, the same it will be."

The report, *Children and the Environment*, was launched as a joint effort between UNEP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), represented by its Executive Director, James P. Grant.

The stark fact that emerged from the report is that the degradation of the environment is jeopardizing the planet's future, including that of our children.

"Each year, millions of children die from pollution, chemical poisons, poor sanitation, malnutrition and common diseases. Even the unborn are not safe", said Dr. Tolba. Radiation, viruses, drugs and chemicals increase the chances of miscarriages, stillbirths and birth defects.

The prospect is not much better when a baby is born.

If the child is from a developing country, he or she may be one of 14 million each year who do not reach their fifth birthday as a result of a number of environmental hazards. These include pollution or environmentally related problems like malnutrition and diseases like diarrhoea and measles. Or the child could be one of the 3 million who are severely disabled by these causes.

Deforestation and desertification, for example, cut food production and increase childhood malnutrition. Pollution of water and air affects children more severely than adults. Respiratory infections kill 4.2 million children under the age of five in the developing world each year.

In industrialized countries, the main environmental causes of death and disability among children are exposure to various forms of pollution and to hazardous chemicals in the environment.

Ozone depletion and atmospheric pollution leading to climate change may be the harbingers of diseases with which future generations will have to live. Homelessness, the burgeoning population and hunger are other side-effects of environmental degradation that the international community must address.

The World Summit for Children, however, may resolve to reverse these gloomy prospects by supporting the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s.

Summit participants might note the fact that if we work together we can reduce poverty and protect the environment. But to cope with the world's many environmental ills will require fresh levels of international co-operation.

There already exist examples of global co-operation, which shows that the world is united on the issues.

In general, the overall quality of the water in rivers and streams of the industrialized world has improved since the 1970s. Action plans to reverse the deterioration of the regional seas have been adopted by nine regions, and the dumping of low-level radioactive waste in the Atlantic Ocean has been halted since 1983.

The Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution was signed in 1979. In addition, efforts to address the possible threat of ozone depletion led to the adoption of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer in 1985, followed in September 1987 by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer—a landmark in international co-operation to protect the environment.

An international legal instrument to preserve biodiversity and a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification are on the agenda.

These steps which have already been taken, and the ones that the international community is resolved to pursue, will help protect our most precious resource—our children.

"It is a moral imperative for each generation to safeguard and improve the prospects of future generations. Intergenerational equity and intergenerational responsibility are age-old, sacred

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trusts. The unborn cannot make their wishes known. But we can", reminds Dr. Tolba.

The Summit will indicate that something can and must be done. People are willing to change if governments give top priority and action to lofty principles such as the right of every living creature to pursue health and happiness.

If governments are not ready, people are.

Surveys demonstrate that people are ready to accept more governmental regulation to protect the environment.

Simple, low-cost measures can be introduced to alleviate health and homelessness, education and hopelessness, poverty and malnutrition.

Advances can be made, if there is a will.

In light of recent progress, several UN agencies believe that the 1990s will see the worst malnutrition virtually eliminated.

Some 535 million people first gained access to clean water during the 1980s, and safe sanitation was provided for a further 325 million. The goal of safe water and adequate sanitation for all can be reached using present knowledge by the end of the decade.

A growing realization by parents that they can keep their children healthy is one of the major incentives for smaller families. There are 1.7 billion children under the age of 15 in the world; hence more than 32 per cent of the planet's population belongs to the next generation.

Measures that include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in 1989, and UNEP's vital environment convention and plans for action will help ensure a world for tomorrow's children.

The work will, no doubt, continue unabated.

Children are sturdy and fragile like the environment. Both depend on humanity for sustenance and survival. We must ensure that the bond between the Earth and its children is not in danger of being polluted to the detriment of the planet and ourselves.

"The state of our children, and the state of our environment, say more than anything else about the state of our civilization and the prospects of our future as a species. If we have the courage and vision to succeed, we may be remembered as the generation which pioneered a new way forward", said Mr. Grant and Dr. Tolba in their joint World Environment Day statements.

The message rings true as the World Summit takes place.