

**FROM THE WORLD SUMMIT TO THE SPECIAL SESSION:  
MOBILIZING A "FIRST CALL FOR CHILDREN"**

***A UNICEF CHRONICLE***

***INTERNAL DRAFT DOCUMENT, REVISED FOR REVIEW AND EDITING  
(not for wider circulation)***

**Carol Watson, DPP, UNICEF NY  
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**List of panels and boxes.....iii**  
**Acronyms and abbreviations.....iv**  
**Preface and acknowledgements.....vii**

**INTRODUCTION .....1**  
    ◆ The World Summit for Children  
    ◆ The Convention on the Rights of the Child  
    ◆ A World Fit for Children  
    ◆ UNICEF over the decade  
    ◆ Structure of the narrative

***PART I: MOBILIZING PARTNERS & SETTING THE STAGE FOR ACTION***

**1. SECURING COMMITMENTS FOR CHILDREN.....4**  
    ◆ The context  
    ◆ An idea is born  
    ◆ The purpose of the Summit  
    ◆ A momentous event  
    ◆ Promises, goals and commitments  
    ◆ Provisions for follow-up

**2. STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR FOLLOW-UP.....14**  
    ◆ Introduction  
    ◆ Defining UNICEF’s role in follow-up to the World Summit for Children  
    ◆ Defining UNICEF’s role in support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child  
    ◆ The mid-decade goals: mobilizing for interim success

**3. FROM GLOBAL GOALS TO NATIONAL REALITIES: NATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF ACTION ....24**  
    ◆ Instrument of choice for follow-up at national level  
    ◆ Participation in NPA processes/preparation  
    ◆ Diverse forms, contents, characteristics  
    ◆ NPAs as instruments of decentralization  
    ◆ Linkages with the Convention on the Rights of the Child  
    ◆ Assessment of the NPA experience

***PART II: ACTION, ADVOCACY & ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILDREN IN THE 1990s***

**4. KEY UNICEF PROGRAMME THRUSTS AND PARTNERSHIPS .....30**  
    ◆ **Programme development and evolution: background, overview and context .....30**  
    ◆ **Health .....32**

◆ Nutrition.....	39
◆ Water, environment and sanitation .....	44
◆ Education.....	52
◆ Special Protection.....	58
<b>5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES FOR ADVOCACY AND ACTION.....</b>	<b>71</b>
◆ Women, gender and the girl child .....	71
◆ Poverty reduction begins with children .....	75
◆ The Convention on the Rights of the Child .....	83
<b>6. HOLDING OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE: MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING .....</b>	<b>95</b>
◆ Introduction.....	95
◆ Data over the decade .....	95
◆ Reviewing progress and reporting on results.....	104
<b>PART III: TOWARDS A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN IN THE 21ST CENTURY</b>	
<b>7. VISIONING THE FUTURE.....</b>	<b>114</b>
◆ Introduction	
◆ A vision for children, key transformations, and the strategic role of UNICEF: the work of the ‘Tarrytown’ group	
◆ Towards a “future global agenda for children”	
◆ Identifying “emerging issues for children” and continuing to work on a “new global agenda”	
<b>8. PREPARING A SPECIAL SESSION AND MOBILIZING PARTNERS.....</b>	<b>121</b>
◆ Background	
◆ Shaping the process	
◆ Regional reviews and agenda-setting	
◆ Preparatory committee processes	
◆ Partnerships for change: the Global Movement for Children	
◆ <i>Say Yes for Children</i>	
<b>9. CELEBRATING A SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN .....</b>	<b>140</b>
◆ Introduction	
◆ Participation in action: the Children’s Forum and message to the Special Session	
◆ Voices raised in concern: plenary debates at the Special Session	
◆ The power of partnerships: key constituency events and commitments	
◆ Addressing key challenges for the future: priority theme events	
◆ NGOs at the Special Session	
<b>10. TOWARDS A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN .....</b>	<b>161</b>
◆ Introduction	
◆ <i>A World Fit for Children</i> : key goals and strategies	
◆ UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan (2002-2005)	
◆ Changing the world with children	
◆ REFERENCES.....	171
◆ APPENDIX .....	189
◆ ‘ <i>First Call for Children</i> ’: Chronology of significant events and milestones	

## LIST OF PANELS AND BOXES

### ***PART I***

- ◆ United in common commitments
- ◆ Goals for children and development in the 1990s
- ◆ The merits of a goal-focused approach
- ◆ Regional perspectives on WSC follow-up
- ◆ Mid-decade goals
- ◆ NPA decentralization in Latin America

### ***PART II***

- ◆ *Facts for Life*: empowering with knowledge
- ◆ Care: a critical component of nutrition
- ◆ Partnerships are key in preventing hidden hunger
- ◆ Lessons learned in water and environmental sanitation
- ◆ Improved monitoring of water and sanitation
- ◆ Partnerships for child-friendly cities
- ◆ Education in emergencies
- ◆ Educating girls: successful initiatives in the 1990s
- ◆ Lessons learned and programming principles in education
- ◆ EFA partnerships
- ◆ UNICEF's anti-war agenda
- ◆ A peace and security agenda
- ◆ Partnerships to combat child labour
- ◆ Complementary strategies for orphans and other children affected by AIDS
- ◆ Action for women and girls
- ◆ Successful communications initiatives for girls
- ◆ Contributing to the debate on poverty, social policy and children's rights: Some UNICEF examples
- ◆ Lessons from high achievers
- ◆ WSC and CRC: correspondence between goals and rights
- ◆ The CRC at country level: UNICEF programming pioneers
- ◆ New partnerships and programme thrusts: Latin America
- ◆ UNICEF Innocenti Centre
- ◆ UNICEF Mission Statement
- ◆ Key issues in programming and partnerships from a rights perspective
- ◆ Child mortality: key global goal and indicator
- ◆ End-decade household survey activity, developing countries (1998-2000)
- ◆ Maternal mortality: the complexity of measurement
- ◆ World Summit follow-up: regional manifestations
- ◆ *The Progress of Nations*: social statistics for social change
- ◆ Mid-decade review: lessons learned and next steps
- ◆ End-decade reports: key issues, lessons learned and challenges for the future
- ◆ Mixed trends over the decade

### ***PART III***

- ◆ Thoughts from Tarrytown
- ◆ Key issues from the 'Atlanta' consultation
- ◆ The Special Session on Children: highlights in the design of the preparatory process
- ◆ Children and young people speak out through opinion polls
- ◆ NGO participation in the preparatory process
- ◆ Children and young people in the preparatory process
- ◆ The engagement of UN partners
- ◆ Negotiating outcomes: the difficult drive for consensus
- ◆ An expanded sense of leadership
- ◆ The 'Rallying Call' of the Global Movement for Children
- ◆ A communication strategy for the Global Movement
- ◆ *Say Yes* – selected highlights from the field
- ◆ Children's Forum organization
- ◆ A message from the children of the world
- ◆ Celebration of leadership for children
- ◆ Young delegates in plenary debates

- ◆ Interactive round tables at the Special Session
- ◆ On leadership and political will
- ◆ Voices for children from the UN system
- ◆ Participants in the public-private partnership dialogue
- ◆ Commitments of partners from all sectors
- ◆ Children in the new millennium: environmental impact on health
- ◆ The 'Russian doll'

### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGEI	African girls' education initiative
ARC	Action for the rights of children
ARI	acute respiratory infection
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AVSI	Association of volunteers in international service
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BFHI	baby-friendly hospital initiative
BRAC	Bangladesh rural advancement committee
CAC	children affected by conflict
CASA	Coordinating action on small arms
CCA	common country assessment
CCC	core corporate commitments
CDC	Centres for Disease Control
CDD	control of diarrhoeal diseases
CEE-CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEDC	children in especially difficult circumstances
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRIN	child rights information network
GRING	country report on indicators for the goals
CSD	child survival and development
CSEC	commercial sexual exploitation of children
CSOs	civil society organizations
DAC	development assistance committee
DEEDS	development of data entry enhancement and display system
DHS	demographic and health surveys
DOC	Division of communications
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EAPR	East Asia and the Pacific
ECCD	early childhood care and development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPAT	End child prostitution, child pornography, and trafficking of children for sexual purposes
EDR	end-decade review
EFA	education for all
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EPI	expanded programme of immunization
ESAR	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FGM	female genital mutilation
FRESH	focussing for effective school health
GA	General Assembly
GAIN	global alliance for improved nutrition
GAVI	global alliance for vaccines and immunization
GMC	global movement for children
GNP	gross national product
GOBI-FFF	growth monitoring; oral rehydration; breastfeeding; immunization; food supplements; family planning; female education
HIPC	heavily-indebted poor countries

PANELS, BOXES, AND ABBREVIATIONS

HIV/AIDS	human immuno-deficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IASC	Inter-agency standing committee
ICAAC	International Conference on Assistance to African Children
ICDB	international children's day of broadcasting
ICDC	International Child Development Centre
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDD	iodine deficiency disorders
IDP	internally displaced population
IDWSSD	International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade
IEC	information, education, communication
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Office
IMCI	integrated management of childhood illness
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	infant mortality rate
IOM	International Office for Migration
IPA	International Paediatrics Association
IPEC	International programme for the elimination of child labour
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
JCGP	joint consultative group on policy
JCHP	joint committee on health policy
JMP	joint monitoring programme
KAP	knowledge/attitude/practices
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MEDIN	Mediterranean initiative for child rights
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MICS	multiple indicator cluster survey
MLA	monitoring learning achievements
MMR	maternal mortality rate
MTP	medium term plan
MTSP	medium term strategic plan
NatComs	national committees for UNICEF
NGOS	non-governmental organizations
NIDs	national immunization days
NPA	national programme of action
OAU	Organization for African Unity
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	official development assistance
ODCCP	office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
ORS	oral rehydration salts
ORT	oral rehydration therapy
PAGE	programme for the advancement of girls' education
PEC	primary environmental care
PHC	primary health care
PON	<i>The Progress of Nations</i>
PrepCom	preparatory committee for the Special Session
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
RAR	regional analytical report
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
ROCIS-FOCIS	regional and field office child information systems
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDC	some developing countries
SG	Secretary-General
SIPS	sector investment programmes
SOWC	<i>The State of the World's Children</i>
SRSG/CAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
SSC	Special Session on Children
SWAPS	sector-wide approaches
TACRO	The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office
UBS	urban basic services

U5MR	under-five mortality rate
UCI	universal child immunization
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UPE	universal primary education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USI	universal salt iodization
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UPE	universal primary education
USAID	United States agency for international development
USI	universal salt iodization
VAD	vitamin A deficiency
WABA	World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action
WASAMS	Water Supply and Sanitation Monitoring System
WCAR	Western and Central Africa Region
WEEF	women's equality and empowerment framework
WES	water and environmental sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WSC	World Summit for Children
WSSC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
WSSD	World Summit for Social Development

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following is a narrative chronicle of UNICEF's actions, advocacy and partnerships over the decade in follow-up to the promises and commitments of the World Summit for Children and Convention on the Rights of the Child and in preparation for the new decade that is upon us. It is not intended to be a definitive account of UNICEF's history, nor does it attempt to provide an evaluation of organizational performance or a sustained critical assessment of its evolution over the decade. Rather, it seeks to follow some of the multiple threads that, woven together, represent aspects of UNICEF's commitment to children as these manifest themselves in concrete programmes, processes and partnerships. It traces some of the general features and highlights some of the important milestones along UNICEF's path from the World Summit for Children in 1990 to the Special Session on Children in 2002, accompanying, in this way, the chronological compilation of documents from the period that have been archived as a resource from which key sources are to be made available on CD-ROM. The narrative draws as well on a series of interviews and focus group discussions conducted with key players over the decade both within UNICEF and outside in its wider partnerships for children. The overall effort is part of a larger stock-taking exercise, which includes the extensive end-decade review on global follow-up to the World Summit for Children (*We the Children, Report of the Secretary General*). It seeks to contribute as well to the ongoing efforts of 'the UNICEF history project' to record and preserve institutional memory.

The current report serves as a 'source document' from which a shorter and somewhat lighter text will be developed for publication. As such, it is intended for internal UNICEF use and consultation. Sources drawn upon are clearly referenced and an extensive bibliography is provided. Key milestones and significant events underpinning efforts to establish 'a first call for children' are provided as an annex.

My deepest thanks and appreciation go to Kul Gautam who initiated the project and provided the vision, inspiration, and leadership for this attempt to chronicle UNICEF's experiences over the decade. He provided invaluable insights into particular trends and issues, offered useful comments on draft portions of the text, and supplied warm encouragement to keep the project going in the midst of numerous other activities. His own dedication to UNICEF, his wisdom in helping to guide its efforts for children, and his optimism in the face of the most daunting challenges serve as a source of inspiration to all. June Kunugi was pivotal in helping structure and maintain connections between the archival and documentation aspects of the project and document production, juggling numerous demands on her time to do so. Sheila Tacon applied her excellent interviewing skills and long experience with the UNICEF history project to the oral history component, conducting an incredible number of interviews with key figures, both inside and outside of UNICEF. Jean Ando worked assiduously to ensure that every last document from the World Summit to the Special Session was resurrected and recorded. Rijuta Tooker patiently input the documents into the archival system, working under the direction of Adhiratha Keefe, Achara Stone, and Howard Dale. From within the Division of Policy and Planning, Peter Crowley and Gareth Jones generously accorded the time necessary for the research and writing to be completed.

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I would like to acknowledge a particular debt to the entire UNICEF team who worked on the UNICEF report of the Special session, material from which largely informs chapters 8, 9 and parts of 10 of the current report. Working under the excellent coordinating skill and team-building spirit of Robert Cohen, the team included Allyson Alert, Sara Friedman, Petra Morrison, Angie Hawke, Katrine Friesleben, and the team of dedicated rapporteurs who so poignantly captured the richness of details and particular magic of the Special Session. Corinne Woods and Jeannette Wijnants also provided invaluable information on – respectively - the *Say Yes* campaign and children’s participation in the Special Session and its preparations.

I would finally like to express my appreciation to Pat Lone, Pat Moccia, and Evamarie Brown of the Division of Communications, for their help in shepherding this ‘source document’ into the final stages of editing and readying for production, and to John Williams for the excellent and insightful editing of the whole which he is currently undertaking.

On a last note: one cannot help but be touched and changed after immersion in such an exercise as this. My respect for UNICEF as a whole and the individuals who make it up has grown immeasurably through this effort to comprehend and capture – in however partial or incomplete a way – some of the key currents and processes which it has both shaped and been shaped by over the decade. An overwhelming sense of dedication and determination animates both the pages of long-buried documents recording past achievements and challenges and the current voices raised in common concern for the cause of children. It is the single-minded pursuit of that cause – more than anything else – that comes through as the unifying thread of a narrative that continues to be written by many.

INTRODUCTION

*“The year 1990 was a watershed year for children, and within that year, September was the banner month. The World Summit for Children and the passage into international law of the Convention on the Rights of the Child were crowning moments of twin campaigns: for children at the leading edge of human development, and for children at the cutting edge of human rights. Crystallizing during the 1980s, these campaigns have converged in the 1990s and begun to take on each other’s colouring and perspectives.”<sup>1</sup>*

**The World Summit for Children**

The World Summit for Children (WSC), which was held at United Nations headquarters in New York on 29-30 September 1990, represented a historic landmark in the rise of international attention to the cause of children. The largest gathering of world leaders up to that time, the Summit brought together a remarkable 71 heads of State or Government as well as delegations from an additional 88 countries to consider the situation of children around the world and commit to action on their behalf. The Summit adopted a World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and detailed Plan of Action for its implementation that set forth a vision of a ‘first call for children.’<sup>2</sup> The Declaration embodies both a joint commitment and urgent universal appeal – “to give every child a better future”, with political action called for at the highest level “to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection and development.” The Plan of Action establishes commitment to a broad and visionary ‘10-point programme to protect the rights of children and to improve their lives,’ with specific actions aimed at ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; improved child health and well-being through strengthened health systems; eradication of hunger and malnutrition; an enhanced role for women coupled with improved services for maternal health and family planning; support for the family; expanded basic education and literacy; protection of children in especially difficult circumstances; protection of children during armed conflicts and measures to maintain peace; preservation of the environment for children; and the alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth. The Plan of Action further identified seven major goals relating to survival, health, nutrition, education and the protection of children for fulfillment by the year 2000, along with an additional 20 supporting goals. The General Assembly in its resolution 45/217 of 21 December 1990 urged all States and other members of the international community to work towards the achievement of these goals and commitments. The Declaration and Plan of Action were endorsed by 181 countries, and 155 countries subsequently prepared national programmes or plans of action for children as a means of translating commitments into reality.

**The Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The Summit took place within a month of the entry into international law of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, coming into force on 2 September 1990. It has since been almost universally ratified, with all but two states currently parties, making it the both the fastest and most widely ratified international human rights treaty in the world. The Convention has been described as the ‘Magna Carta’ for children, providing a clear statement of the full range of children’s economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights. These include rights to adequate living standards, to health care, to protection from abuse, to education and to freedom from discrimination. The Convention defines a child as anyone under 18 years of age and applies to all children – the poor and the well-off, girls as well as boys, minorities and the disabled. It calls on societies to listen to children, to enable them to express their own views and to participate in decisions that affect them, taking into consideration at all times the ‘best interests’ of the child. It emphasizes the central role of the family in caring for children and calls upon states to support families to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. It also encourages international cooperation for effective implementation of measures adopted by states. The Convention provides an essential touchstone against which to assess the situation of children and a normative frame of reference for strategies and action, translating commitments to children into legal obligations. The Convention has served as a rallying point and framework of action for a multitude of child rights organizations over the decade and, as the human rights and development agendas have increasingly meshed, it has helped to both transform and expand approaches to children. Together with its two Optional protocols, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (entering into force in January 2002) and on the involvement of children in armed conflict (entering into force in February 2002), the Convention has helped position children squarely at the forefront of the worldwide movement for human rights and social justice, elevating the best interests of the child to a matter of international obligation.

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<sup>1</sup> *The State of the World’s Children 1996*, UNICEF NY. Published for UNICEF by Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> *First Call for Children. World Declaration and Plan of Action from the World Summit for Children and Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Commemorative reprint). UNICEF, May 2000.

### **A world fit for children**

Much of the story of actions for and with children over the decade is the story of how these two historic documents, the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child guided, inspired, and solidified partnerships and processes aimed at establishing the principle of ‘first call for children’ as both a right and a reality, such that the essential needs and rights of children be given high priority in the allocation of resources, in bad times as well as good, and at the national and international levels, as well as within the family. And much of the story of UNICEF over the decade is the story about how it, as the lead agency for children, worked through its country programmes, global advocacy, powers of mobilization and multiple partnerships to strengthen, support, and sustain such processes, with the organization itself both shaped by and helping to shape the evolution of efforts to ensure not only the survival, development and protection of children, but their full participation as well as stakeholders in progress. In its own evolution and development over the decade, UNICEF has worked for the promotion and fulfillment of both rights and goals to enhance the well-being of children, with the two both inextricably linked and mutually supported through the commitments of the World Summit for Children and the CRC, whose follow-up must be seen as complementary – the one giving powerful leverage to the other.<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning of a decade that began in such hope and optimism that, despite enormous challenges, a new world for children was just within reach based on the real possibilities of global peace, prosperity and international solidarity, to the opening of a new millennium darkened by turmoil, conflict and persistent poverty that serve only to reinforce realization of how much is at stake, UNICEF has sought to marshal global alliances and participate with others in a global movement for and with children based on the commitments emanating from the World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a result of such wide mobilization and concerted efforts, much progress for children has been recorded. But, as the review of achievements at end-decade revealed, there have also been many setbacks and, in some instances real retrogression. And so, UNICEF with its partners seek renewed commitment to build ‘a world fit for children’, as the Special Session on Children sets out the parameters of the challenges ahead for the global movement for children.

### **UNICEF over the decade**

A number of key themes and continuities emerge from this historical perspective on UNICEF’s work with partners over the decade to achieve goals for children and secure their rights. One is the very importance of partnership itself and the value UNICEF has placed on ever-expanding partnerships for and with children. From the ‘grand alliance’ mobilized in support of the ‘child survival and development revolution’ of the 1980s to the ‘global movement for children’ coalescing around the Summit commitments, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the *World Fit for Children*, UNICEF has recognized that partnerships are essential in realizing progress for children, and has focused much of its advocacy and energy in efforts to mobilize, guide, and support such partnerships, seeking positive synergies in collaborative processes. Another constant is the unique blend of visionary idealism with pragmatic interventions which UNICEF brings to its mission - combining a willingness to ‘envision the impossible’ with a commitment to ‘doing the doable’. Throughout the decade, clear and focused programme interventions which derive particular strength from UNICEF’s strong presence in the field have been combined with extensive advocacy and broad-based agenda-setting to inspire both its own efforts and the efforts of others to reach still farther for children. That same strong field presence and the decentralized structure of UNICEF as an organization has also helped in processes of adaptation of global goals and commitments to the particular realities of a given country or location. A third very strong constant is the focus on evidence-based action and analysis through the development and use of data as a basis for planning as well as a means of monitoring commitments to children and measuring progress and constraints. That same data, in turn, has contributed to the power of UNICEF’s advocacy on behalf of children and women and helped in keeping issues of social development high on the national and international agendas.

There are, as well, a number of trends marking not so much changes, perhaps, as intensifications in UNICEF’s focus or accent which become discernible over the course of the decade. One is the ever-expanding emphasis on child rights as the basis for action and advocacy which, though always a theme, began to find clearest expression after mid-decade through the articulation of UNICEF’s mission statement and the development of a rights-based approach to programming based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This, in turn, has opened UNICEF to new partnerships and to new or intensified areas of intervention, particularly in child protection issues, and has expanded the

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<sup>3</sup>*Development goals and strategies for children in the 1990s. A UNICEF policy review* (also E/ICEF/1990/L.5, 13 February 1990) : “As the Convention embodies the most comprehensive list of goals for the well-being of children, its full implementation is the best guarantee of achieving the goals for children and development in the 1990s”.

breadth of the vision UNICEF has helped to shape for children. It has also contributed to an evolutionary trajectory that can be traced over the decade from a focus on child survival and development; through a concern for child survival, development and protection; to a commitment to child survival, development, protection and participation. This last element is of particular significance in the expanded partnerships UNICEF is helping to mobilize and support through its efforts to secure commitments to building a world fit for children, with children themselves increasingly drawn in as partners in a global movement which aims to change the world for and with children.

### **Structure of the narrative**

The narrative is structured in three parts.

**Part I: Mobilizing partners and setting the stage for action** focuses on the World Summit for Children, including the development of goals and commitments; provisions for follow-up; UNICEF's strategic planning in support of Summit goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and national plans of action as the instrument of choice for follow-up at national level. *Chapter 1* describes the context from which the initial idea for a Summit emerged; sets out the purposes to which it aspired; records key aspects of the event itself; and outlines its provisions for follow up. *Chapter 2* outlines UNICEF's strategic planning for follow-up to the goals and commitments of the Summit and in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including a discussion of the development of mid-decade goals as a means of maintaining momentum among partners. *Chapter 3* highlights the role of national plans of action in translating global goals into national realities, describing processes and partnerships in NPA preparation, outlining key features and characteristics, identifying linkages with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and detailing the relationship with UNICEF country programmes, drawing as well on the findings of a recent assessment of the NPA experience.

**Part II: Action, advocacy & accountability for children in the 1990s** outlines UNICEF's key programme thrusts and partnerships over the decade; identifies cross-cutting issues pursued through advocacy and action; and describes the extensive efforts undertaken by UNICEF in partnership with others to ensure accurate monitoring and reporting on progress towards the achievement of goals and commitments. *Chapter 4* outlines general features of UNICEF's programme development and evolution before focusing on key programme thrusts and partnerships in health; nutrition; water, environment and sanitation; education; and special protection. *Chapter 5* highlights the cross-cutting issues of gender; poverty reduction; and rights which are seen to provide a focus for UNICEF advocacy and programme activity over the decade, with the latter, in particular, leading into the development of a rights-based approach to programming for and with children. *Chapter 6* chronicles the extensive efforts undertaken by UNICEF to strengthen the data base on children and women and to hone monitoring and reporting on achievements and setbacks over the decade as a means of improving accountability to children, highlighting in particular the importance of reviews of progress at mid and end-decade.

**Part III: Towards a World Fit for Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** moves into an analysis of 'history-in-the-making' as UNICEF continues to engage with partners to develop a vision and framework of commitments for children in the new millennium. *Chapter 7* begins with an examination of the early 'visioning' exercises and consultative processes initiated by UNICEF from 1998 onwards aimed at the development of a new global agenda for children and a focus for UNICEF beyond the year 2000. *Chapter 8* provides a description of the multi-level processes involved in the preparation of a Special Session on Children and the rallying of partners behind a Global Movement for Children. *Chapter 9* records key events at the Special Session itself, including highlights from the historic Children's Forum; GA plenary debates; key constituency events and commitments; and priority theme events. *Chapter 10* outlines the key goals and strategic approaches of 'A World Fit for Children', which stands as the forward-looking outcome of the Special Session; describes the major thrusts of UNICEF's medium-term strategic plan for the period 2002-2005; and closes with just a hint of the challenges ahead for common efforts to change the world for and with children.

A **bibliography** of key reference material is attached, with the thematic arrangement of sources corresponding roughly to the organization of chapters, and additional references provided as well. **Appendix I** presents a chronology of significant events and milestones underlying efforts to mobilize 'a first call for children' over the decade.

**PART I: MOBILIZING PARTNERS & SETTING THE STAGE FOR ACTION**

**CHAPTER 1. SECURING COMMITMENTS FOR CHILDREN**

**The context**

After the 'lost decade' of the 1980s, the World Summit for Children took place in 1990 at a time of renewed optimism for the future. Though storm clouds in the Gulf were already threatening, the end of the Cold War appeared to usher in a new era of peace and international cooperation, when an expected 'peace dividend' could be invested for enhanced social progress. Democratization was taking place around the world and apartheid was being dismantled. The United Nations and its mission were ripe for renewal. Strategies articulated for the fourth United Nations Development Decade focussed on concerns for human development as espoused by thinkers such as Mahbub al Haq: the first in the series of UNDP *Human Development Reports* that articulated these concerns was launched in 1990 and that same year the World Bank took on the issue of poverty in both its economic and social dimensions in its *World Development Report*. The time seemed especially propitious for children. After 10 years on the drafting table, the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been adopted the year before and - more rapidly than any other international human rights instrument - had just passed into international law, establishing the legal framework and underpinnings of a new ethic for children. The achievement of the goal of Universal Child Immunization by 1990 appeared imminent – fruit of what has been described as one of the world's "biggest collaborative peace-time efforts" supported by UNICEF and its partners in the Child Survival and Development (CSD) Revolution of the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Participants at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in March had pledged to renew commitment to quality basic education as a right of all children, and in September, on the eve of the Summit, experts and officials gathered in New Delhi to design new strategies and set realistic goals for the provision of safe water and sanitation to the more than 1 billion people who lacked those services.

Enormous challenges were, of course, recognized. Poverty, economic crisis and indebtedness still stunted millions; many parts of the world were still marked by war, violence, and racial discrimination; untold numbers of children suffered from exploitation and abuse; the threat of HIV/AIDS loomed; and children continued to die from both preventable diseases and more difficult scourges such as malaria. But UNICEF argued that with the application of new knowledge and technology, the allocation of the necessary resources, and the social mobilization of partnerships in a 'grand alliance' for children, international efforts could confront these problems and achieve tremendous progress. The trick was to seize the opportunities at hand and galvanize political will and commitment.

**An idea is born**

The seeds of the World Summit for Children were rooted in a series of experiences in the late 1980s in which consideration of the needs/opportunities of children at the highest level of regional international relations had been an important part of processes of increasing and accelerating actions for children within countries. Among these were successive summit meetings in South Asia (SAARC) and Africa (OAU) and summit-level action in Central America and the Arab States. The USA/USSR Summit in Moscow in May/June 1988 provided further leverage for strengthened attention to the needs of children, while the G-7 Summit in Paris in July 1989 put the issue of child rights on the agenda. Under the visionary leadership of UNICEF Executive Director James Grant, it was felt that convening a World Summit for Children would be an opportunity to "take a giant step further at the highest level of leadership commitment to and identification with the needs of children" – with the very nature of such a dramatic and unusual step lending the event enormous consciousness-raising value.<sup>5</sup>

The Summit idea was first set out publicly in December 1988 in the pages of UNICEF's 1989 *State of the World's Children Report*.<sup>6</sup> With stirring words conveying carefully reasoned arguments, UNICEF maintained that "In how we bring up our children are sown the seeds of peace and prosperity or of violence and degradation". It suggested that an international conference or summit organized along the theme of "Today's children – tomorrow's world" had great potential to bring political leaders around the table in cooperation rather than in confrontation. It might further "provide

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, UNICEF 1992, *Report of the Executive Director* (E/ICEF/1992/2) Part I, 8 April 1992

<sup>5</sup> "Why a World Summit for Children? A UNICEF perspective" (CF/WSC/1990/GEN-002), 26 January; See also tributes to Grant's leadership in *Jim Grant, UNICEF Visionary*, ed. Richard Jolly, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence Italy, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> *The State of the World's Children 1989*. UNICEF. Published for UNICEF by Oxford University Press, 1989.

a lens to focus attention on the convergence of sectoral problems in their human impact” since “In the needs of children are combined all the core issues of development.” “The true test of a civilization,” stated UNICEF, “is how well it protects its vulnerable and how well it safeguards its future: children are both its vulnerable and its future”. It suggested that “the needs and rights of children not as a mere by-product of progress but as an end and a means of progress itself.” and appealed to the leaders of the world to consider the enormous potential they had to contribute to a legacy of progress, concluding thus:

*“UNICEF’s experience commits it irrevocably to the belief that international co-operation to meet the essential needs of all children – and their families – is the greatest investment which it is possible for the human race to make in its future economic prosperity, political stability, and environmental integrity. No one could over estimate the complexity of such a task or the political creativity and commitment which will be required to address it. But if the vision and leadership were now to emerge, and if relatively modest resources were to be made available, then this report has attempted to show that past experience and past technique now stand ready to convert that vision and those resources into the greatest human achievements of this or any other century.”*

With the ground carefully prepared by UNICEF, successive endorsements of the idea by governments and regional groups were obtained over the course of 1989, and debate on the subject was conducted at the meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board in April 1989, the formal proposal for a World Summit for Children was put forward in November 1989 by the heads of state/government of Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden – the ‘initiators group’ - which included representation from both North and South and from all geographic regions.<sup>7</sup> Secretary-General of the United Nations Javier Perez de Cuellar gave permission for the Summit to be held at UN headquarters in New York and the Call for a World Summit for Children, including the ‘statement of agreement’ of the six initiating governments, was presented for approval at a special session of the UNICEF Executive Board in December 1989. After some debate on the rather unorthodox way in which the concept had been advanced, the Board welcomed the initiative and agreed that UNICEF should serve as secretariat for the preparation of the Summit, calling for continued consultation to further review and discuss the agenda, themes and modalities of the Summit.<sup>8</sup> The Summit was publicly announced by the UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar at a press conference on February 8, 1990, and by the next UNICEF Board meeting in April 1990, virtually all delegates expressed strong support, with the overwhelming view that the Summit would help focus global attention on the attainment of child survival and development goals; give higher priority to children’s needs in national development, and heighten awareness of the rights of the child.<sup>9</sup>

### **The purpose of the Summit**

As set out in the Statement of Agreement by the six initiating governments, the purpose of the World Summit was to:

*“bring attention and promote commitment, at the highest political level, to goals and strategies for ensuring the survival, protection and development of children, as key elements in the socio-economic development of all countries and human society. The meeting will also emphasize the particular impact on children of critical global problems. The aim is to stimulate new initiatives in all countries and, among the international community, to address those issues that most critically affect children for the decades ahead. The meeting will result in a declaration of commitment to achieving these goals in the 1990s. The initiators believe that the Summit can also accelerate ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.”<sup>10</sup>*

UNICEF presented its own perspectives on the World Summit for Children in an Executive Board paper in December 1989<sup>11</sup> as well as in a series of papers circulated in early 1990.<sup>12</sup> The former notes that experiences in the 1980s had demonstrated that the personal engagement and sustained involvement of national leadership was crucial for successful

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<sup>7</sup> “Statement of Agreement on the World Summit for Children” (CF/WSC/1990/PC-001). The initiators included: Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada; President Mubarak of Egypt; President Traore of Mali; President Salinas of Mexico; Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan; and Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF Executive Board Special Session. Resolution submitted by the Chairman (E/ICEF/1989/CRP.34, December 1989).

<sup>9</sup> (E/ICEF/1990/13), 16-27 April 1990.

<sup>10</sup> in *Report and recommendations of the Executive Director on the initiative of the governments of Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden to call for a World Summit for Children* (E/ICEF/1989/15, 1 December 1989). This report presents the statement of agreement by the six initiating governments, describes the processes by which support for the Summit was garnered, and highlights the opportunities presented for UNICEF programme acceleration through the enhanced personal engagement and sustained involvement of national leadership that such a Summit would bring about.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. As stated further by the initiators: “Making the survival, development and well-being of children a focus and a test of successful development efforts would affirm that the ultimate purpose of development is to enhance human capabilities and the human condition”. (ibid)

<sup>12</sup> “Why a World Summit for Children? A UNICEF perspective” (CF/WSC/1990/GEN-002), 26 February.

child survival and development results; thus “*the idea of a summit for children was conceived as a means to accord the needs and interests of children a stronger and higher place on national political agendas.*” The latter noted that only the unprecedented nature of a Summit for Children could create “*the magnitude of consciousness*” necessary to lend immediacy to the tasks before us and to stimulate leadership and galvanize the necessary public support and social mobilization required to carry the tasks out.<sup>13</sup> In UNICEF’s constant search for opportunities to be maximized for the benefit of children, it was felt that a World Summit would be an unprecedented opportunity to “*capture world attention*”, serving as “*a leverage for stimulating leaders to focus attention on the factors affecting the survival, development and protection of children*” and “*a powerful medium for obtaining renewed commitment to sustained programmes for children.*”<sup>14</sup>

The process of preparing for the Summit could itself be used as a means of both revitalizing cooperation with current partners and enlisting new constituencies in the development of policies and implementation of programmes. Recalling the impact of the 1979 International Year of the Child, UNICEF argued that preparations for the Summit can be “*a stimulus for spontaneous activities for children and the launching of a decade of enhanced and accelerated action for children in all societies.*” High on the list of expected benefits from the high level attention accorded to children during Summit preparations would be the added impetus to efforts to achieve the 1990 goal of universal childhood immunization (UCI); and the powerful boost to entry-into-force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, thereby “*propelling it to implementation much faster than could be otherwise expected.*”<sup>15</sup>

The Summit could spur overall efforts to create a new “global ethic for children” which, in UNICEF’s view, “*could do more than anything else to change the story of what will happen to many millions of the world’s children during the new decade and the new century which will follow.*” Moreover, adoption by the Summit of a basic set of useful and doable goals for children to be achieved by the year 2000 would be extremely powerful levers for improving the lives of children over the next ten years: “*a limited set of basic goals, agreed to by world leaders, supported by the wider processes discussed above, and publicized to a worldwide public, will be powerful advocacy tools throughout the decade.*” The link between Summit mobilization efforts and real improvement in the lives of children would come through post-summit support for national plans of action to close the gaps between the present situation and the year 2000 goals.<sup>16</sup>

### **Process, preparation and participation**

At the request of the initiators and with the endorsement of the UNICEF Executive Board, the Secretary-General extended invitations on their behalf to the Heads of State or Government of all member states of the United Nations, with particular encouragement to those whose countries were members of the UNICEF Executive Board. A Planning Committee was established to manage preparations of the Summit,<sup>17</sup> with UNICEF serving as the Secretariat for the preparation and organization of the meeting.<sup>18</sup> Within UNICEF, a Task Force and various working groups met weekly to develop plans and ensure coordinated efforts in support of the Summit preparatory process and the UNICEF programme of Summit-related activities.<sup>19</sup> Governments and international organizations were invited to submit themes and topics for the Summit. The themes most commonly mentioned included education/literacy; the protection of children in especially difficult circumstances; child survival interventions; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>20</sup> Within the Planning Committee, work on the drafting of the Summit Declaration began in April 1990. Two documents were proposed: a short, compelling political declaration of commitment to action, with a message easily

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<sup>13</sup> The constancy of UNICEF’s theme of leadership at all levels and the engagement of a ‘grand alliance’ for children through efforts to galvanize public support is presaged very strongly in these papers, and will be echoed at the end of the decade in the leadership initiative and global movement for children.

<sup>14</sup> E/ICEF/1989/15 (op cit)

<sup>15</sup> E/ICEF/1989/15 (op cit)

<sup>16</sup> CF/WSC/1990/GEN-002 (op cit)

<sup>17</sup> Initial membership of the planning committee was made up of the personal representatives of the six initiators, but was later extended to 22, including: Bangladesh; Canada; China, Egypt; France; India; Indonesia; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Mali; Mexico; Netherlands; Nigeria; Pakistan; Sweden; the USSR; the UK; the US; Venezuela; Yugoslavia; and Zimbabwe

<sup>18</sup> Principal members of the Secretariat included James Grant, UNICEF Executive Director; Michael Shower, Counselor to the Executive Director and Executive Secretary for the Summit; Djibril Diallo, Special Assistant to the Executive Director (CF/WSC/1990/PC-024, 6 May 1990 :1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Planning Committee, NY 12 January 1990 – Summary of decisions and actions (in *Reference Book: Preparatory and Reference Documentation on the World Summit for Children*, July 1990 )

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF focal points included: Richard Jolly and Kul Gautam on Substantive Issues; Djibril Diallo on relations with Governments; Samuel Koo on Information and Communications; Manou Assadi-Baiki and Hans Narula on programme mobilization; Kimberly Gamble on Public Mobilization; and Bjorn Oldaeus and Suzanne Bischoff on Resource Mobilization.

<sup>20</sup> from WSC Update; see also *Suggested Themes and Topics for the WSC*, Secretariat paper

understood by all sectors of society; and a plan of action, elaborating on specific child-related goals and strategies for the 1990s addressing, inter alia, the mobilization of resources, enhancing international cooperation, and national action in child programmes.<sup>21</sup>

Participation of all sectors of society was encouraged in the preparatory processes leading up to the Summit - international organizations and institutions; NGOs; the media and professional associations; community organizations and public leaders, as well as authorities of government at various levels and young people themselves all took part. The participation of heads of state and preparations around the world were greatly aided by UNICEF's field presence through country offices, regional offices and national committees. UNICEF staff were reminded of their responsibilities in making the most of this historical opportunity to advance the cause of children in an executive directive calling for creativity, hard work and determination to "*reach out to partners, allies and friends to make 'working together for children' a true social movement and not just a slogan.*"<sup>22</sup> Country-level preparation for the summit was designed as a tool for strengthening support for children, mobilizing additional resources, improving policy orientation and accelerating delivery of programme services. In a number of cases UNICEF supported special meetings, seminars and country-specific publications and promoted as well a number of national, provincial or city summits for children as a means of heightening national awareness of children and mobilizing national actors around the children's cause.<sup>23</sup>

The Summit was a major focus for NGOs working in child-related fields, many of whom called for action and organized activities to bring a youth perspective to children's issues. In Geneva, more than 200 participants aged 17-30 representing 20 international networks of youth NGOs in 112 countries adopted a collective letter to Heads of State/Government at the Summit, with an appeal for child rights issued in the name of 275 million youth NGO members. The NGO Committee on UNICEF, representing some 160 International NGOs with consultative status to both ECOSOC and UNICEF, focussed its annual NGO forum of April 1990 on strategies for children in the 1990s, with some 200 representatives from 150 NGOs calling on Heads of State and Government at the Summit to endorse the principle of 'first call for children'; listen to the voices of children and grassroots organizations, prioritize social reform, reduce military expenditures, provide debt relief, and reinforce primary health care, basic education and children's rights. The World Forum of Youth meeting in Helsinki in June 1990 included deliberations on efforts of youth on behalf of child survival and development.<sup>24</sup>

In July 1990, in support of the Summit, the World Conference on Religion and Peace organized a convocation of World Religious and Spiritual Leaders on Child Survival, Protection and Development, producing a declaration and plan of action presented to the initiators of the WSC. Leaders of the 15 largest foundations in the US were briefed on the opportunities afforded by the Summit at their annual retreat, with some expressing positive interest in receiving requests for grants. A number of parliamentary organizations issued declarations or resolutions in support of the CRC and the WSC<sup>25</sup> and both individually and collectively were influential in encourage national leaders to participate in the Summit. Leading artists and intellectuals in Africa met to discuss their role in supporting the event and its goals, while Pakistani cricket hero Imran Khan rallied the public as UNICEF's Special Representative for Sports.

An *Inter-agency information kit* was prepared for the World Summit as a joint contribution of 15 UN agencies and organizations to the information and mobilization efforts undertaken in relation to the WSC<sup>26</sup>. Each agency outlined the situation for children in their areas of operation and looked to Summit as an occasion to renew commitment for the future (*see box*).

As the date for the summit approached, NGO coalitions in a number of countries organized candlelight vigils on Sunday 23 September – with former U.S. presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter the honorary chairs of the vigils in the US.<sup>27</sup> A group of 12 NGO representatives held a private meeting with the initiating heads of government on the eve of the summit and conveyed their views on a range of issues, including debt and adjustment and CEDC. A Children's

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<sup>21</sup> WSC Update

<sup>22</sup> *The World Summit for Children: Country-level opportunities and challenges*, CF/EXD/1990-004.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> WSC Updates

<sup>25</sup> These included the Inter-Parliamentary Union; Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival; European Parliament; Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development; and the Union of African Parliaments (WSC Updates)

<sup>26</sup> "*World Summit for Children: Give Every Child A Future. A Contribution of United Nations Agencies to the World Summit for Children*"

<sup>27</sup> from WSC Updates.

Outdoor Forum was held on the Great Lawn of the UN on 26 September, with some 4,000 children gathered to call on countries to ratify the CRC.

**United in common commitments**

**WHO** saw the Summit as providing both an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary responsibility to promote recognition of the fact that safe motherhood and child survival and development are two sides of the same coin and to underline the importance of comprehensive support for the health and well-being of women and children. **UNFPA** highlighted family planning as a key to both saving lives and improving the quality of that life, noting that enhancing the role and status of women is essential to lowering fertility and improving child survival. **UNDP** called for a focus on lasting solutions to the problems of child survival and development, with particular attention to safe motherhood. **UNESCO** recalled the affirmation that education is a right at the World Conference on Education for All and, in order to make this a reality, called for “a *‘revolution of the mind’, a reordering of priorities both in the North and in the South*”. **UNEP** reminded Summit participants that children had the greatest stake in efforts to preserve the environment while **FAO** drew attention to the direct connection between food and health, and highlighted efforts to improve the wellbeing of the rural poor – particularly rural youths and women. **IFAD** noted that if the political interest manifested at WSC is an indication of the will to combat poverty, then “*this is indeed a Summit of hope*”. The World Food Council saw the Summit as a means of strengthening the resolve of all concerned in the struggle against hunger and poverty. **WFP** drew attention to the devastating consequences of war and disaster on the most vulnerable populations, particularly children, and noted that “*Achieving the objectives set by this Summit requires a strong, soul-searching commitment*”. **ILO** expressed “*hope and trust that this World Summit will be an occasion for us to rededicate ourselves to the universally recognized goals of the abolition of child labour and the protection of child workers*”. The **United Nations Centre for Human Rights** declared that “*The 1990s 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...*” Both the **World Bank** and the **IMF** called for an assault on poverty as a key imperative for the decade.

From *Give Every Child A Future. A Contribution of United Nations Agencies to the World Summit for Children*

With the week up-to and preceding the Summit billed as New York City’s Children’s week, a city-wide rally for children was also held on the Great Lawn of Central Park, on Sunday, 30 September,<sup>28</sup> with the US Committee for UNICEF active in mobilizing ‘host-country’ involvement in Summit preparations. Other national Committees contributed to fund-raising and public information/mobilization activities and strategies around the summit, with several organizing multi-sectoral meetings of national leaders to explore new initiatives in support of child survival, protection and development; others encouraging local ‘mini’ summits, including youth summits. These mobilization efforts were often related directly to the adoption and ratification of the CRC – a challenge which expanded the role of several national committees.<sup>29</sup>

Media coverage of both preparation of the Summit and the Summit itself was extensive in both industrialized countries and the developing world and helped spotlight issues of children in the public eye. Coverage went far beyond the event itself, extending to a broad range of substantive issues relating to children. In-depth, often critical and wide-ranging investigative stories about children appeared in the most important newspapers and news magazines, on television and radio, in developed and developing nations alike. Examples include a special 4-page supplement in IHT 29/30 September; a CBS re-broadcast of 60 minutes segment on children “*40,000 a day*”; cover stories on children in the domestic and international editions of Time magazine; voluminous coverage in the New York Times; a front-page series of children in major Canadian newspapers; and the lead story in the London Times magazine supplement.<sup>30</sup> Stories were also carried in local newspapers, newsletters of grassroots organizations, and national radio programmes around the world. “*Never has there been so much attention paid to the subjects of child survival, protection and development*” said UNICEF Executive Director James Grant (in compilation of media). “*The silence has been broken*”.<sup>31</sup> UNICEF contributed to three videos supporting the Summit: ‘*Today’s Children, Tomorrow’s World*’ produced 3 months prior to the summit; the video ‘*341*’ shown at the Summit itself and in 35 countries after the summit; and a co-production, with BBC TV called ‘*When the Bough Breaks*’. Four issues of a special Summit newspaper were co-produced with Inter-Press Service News Agency, and numerous other information publications devoted space to the summit.<sup>32</sup> As recorded in UNICEF’s annual report following the Summit: “*Through the extraordinary media coverage it generated, the Summit focused more attention world-wide and provoked more soul-searching on the broad range of child-related issues than ever before*”.<sup>33</sup> Post-Summit publications included a pocket-sized booklet with the Summit

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF 1991 Annual Report

<sup>29</sup> from WSC Information Updates

<sup>30</sup> from WSC Updates and the UNICEF 1991 Annual report

<sup>31</sup> preface to “World Summit for Children: Words and Images”, UNICEF, NY

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF 1991 Annual Report: See also compilation of press clippings in the UNICEF publication, *World Summit for Children: Words and Images*, UNICEF, NY

<sup>33</sup> UNICEF 1991 Annual Report, p. 4

Declaration and Plan of action as well as the CRC ; a book on media coverage around the world; and initiation of a new UNICEF quarterly entitled “*First Call for Children*”.

### A momentous event

For those who were in New York in September 1990, the World Summit for Children was a transcendent experience, as the largest group of world leaders ever convened until that time sat down at an immense circular table at the United Nations and discussed, in frank and impassioned terms, their responsibilities to children — and to the future. The lofty halls of the ECOSOC chamber of the UN reverberated during the day with stirring and often poignant language about the situation of children around the world and about collective commitments to improve this. Heroes as diverse as Martin Luther King, Pope John, and Robin Hood were invoked, while leaders drew on the word of poets, philosophers and a nine-year old girl to lend greater power to their messages. Children were acknowledged to be the world’s “*most precious resource*” (SG) and “*the personification of the future*” (SG).<sup>34</sup> The Summit itself was seen to mark the birth of “*a common vision*” (Egypt), a “*new age*” (Mexico), and a “*new level of consciousness*” (Zimbabwe), representing “*a milestone in the evolution of international relations*” (Costa Rica) and providing hope for “*the construction of a common future*” (Italy). A prayer was offered that the Summit would help make the 1990s into “*a decade of doing the doable for the world’s children*” (Grant), for as UNICEF Executive Director James Grant assured the assembled leaders, “*there could be no greater gathering, there could be no greater cause*”.<sup>35</sup>

Deliberations were organized around the four key themes of the Summit: 1) ensuring child survival; 2) protection of children; 3) enhancing child development; and 4) implementation and follow-up. Issues ranging from poverty, debt relief, war and peace, good governance and preservation of the environment were all seen to coalesce in the discussions, for as Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar stressed, “*There is no way in which issues related to children can be segregated from the issues of the overall social and economic environment.*” Children were seen to have real claims on our commitments (France) and on society’s resources and attention; problems related to children were seen to transcend national and geo-political divides, and to demand international solidarity and cooperation. A number of delegates evoked the importance of families, love, and the obligations of parents (England); others spoke out against aggression of all sorts, including “*aggression of the spirit, of the soul, and of the intellect that is being formed*” (Uruguay). Specific protection of children from both the immediate and the long-term effects of war was seen by one leader as among the few viable strategies to “*end the generational transmission of violence that exists in some parts of the world*” (Lebanon). A hush fell over the hall as Vaclav Havel spoke out against the evils of totalitarianism and recounted how in his experience children had finally “*evoked in their parents their better selves*” by forcing them to take a stand on the side of truth. Many delegations used the occasion to announce their commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the video produced by UNICEF predicted would become “*the standard below which any civilized nation, rich or poor, will be ashamed to fall*”. One leader described the Convention as offering “*the philosophical and political legitimacy required to guarantee the safety and rights of children*” (Lebanon); others voiced the sentiments of many in calling for its “*universal application*” (Spain), noting that the essential task was to incorporate its provisions into national laws and ensure compliance, for “*That is a challenge commensurate with our hopes for a better world*” (Poland).

“*Resolving the problems of hunger, malnutrition, health and education will not be the result of a formal ceremony or a heroic action of unanimous decision-making. Rather it will be the painstaking work done consistently over a generation which can become efficient policy*”

Statement by the President of Argentina at the WSC UN, NY 1990

“*History will recall less the impressive number and high status of the official representatives at the World Summit for Children than their concrete actions*”

Statement by the President of Guinea Bissau at the WSC, UN, NY 1990

The need to move from pretty words to concrete actions was emphasized by a number of participants, for “*the best eloquence is the one that*

*gets things done*” (Norway). It was understood that the importance of the Summit could only be measured by the deeds it inspired. “*We undertake this commitment. Everything will reside in its implementation*” (France). Leaders agreed to hold themselves accountable for the commitments undertaken, recognizing that “*the final judges of our efforts will be the children themselves*” (Maldives). This was further reinforced as six children read out the Summit Declaration in the six languages of the United Nations and symbolically presented it for signature, after which the Declaration and Plan of Action were adopted by acclaim by the assembled leaders. In declaring the Summit over, Prime Minister Mulroney of

<sup>34</sup> all quotes taken from *Statements by Heads of State of Government at the World Summit for Children*, United Nations, 29-30 September 1999, UNICEF NY.

<sup>35</sup> UNICEF participants also recall a number of lighter moments such as all-night sessions at Tom’s café; and guiding lost heads of State through the labyrinthine corridors of the UN – all the while animated by the sense of participating in the making of history (from interviews with UNICEF staff)

Canada, as co-president of the Summit, spoke to his fellow leaders, urging them that the time had come “to match our words with action. The real work begins now.”

**Promises, goals and commitments**

The World Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the assembled leaders at the Summit and endorsed in full by leaders of 181 countries around the world called for a series of actions at the national and international levels to support the achievement of specific goals relating to the survival, health, nutrition, education and protection of children and women. The Declaration called for “political action at the highest level” and a “solemn commitment” to give high priority to the rights of children and to their survival, protection and development through both national and international cooperation within the framework of a broad ‘10-point programme to protect the rights of children and to improve their lives.’ By signing the Declaration and Plan of Action, leaders committed themselves to actions aimed at ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; improved child health and well-being through strengthened health systems; eradication of hunger and malnutrition; an enhanced role for women coupled with improved services for maternal health and family planning; support for the family in providing for children; expanded basic education and literacy; protection of children in especially difficult circumstances; protection of children during armed conflicts coupled with measures to maintain peace; preservation of the environment for children; and the alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth.

The Plan of Action further identified seven major goals relating to survival, health, nutrition, education and the protection of children for fulfillment by the year 2000, along with an additional 20 supporting goals (see figure). The development of the World Summit goals was the fruit of an extensive process of consultation and review involving UNICEF and a wide group of partners beginning in the late 1980s. Many of the health and nutrition goals were initially formulated as part of the 1988 “Talloires Declaration” on “Protecting the world’s children: an agenda for the 1990s” issued by the Task Force for Child Survival. Created in March 1984 as a vehicle for the promotion of child survival and development interventions, the Task Force was an influential inter-agency group composed of WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, and the Rockefeller Foundation which periodically brought together health ministers, senior officials from developing countries, and leaders of major bilateral and other multilateral aid organizations to discuss health policy and programmes.

The Talloires Declaration formed the basis for an initial list of WHO/UNICEF common goals for the health development of women and children by the year 2000 that was endorsed in 1989 by the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy as well as by the Executive Boards of both UNICEF and WHO. Thereafter, at the fourth international child survival conference held in Bangkok, Thailand in March 1990, the Child Survival Task Force issued the “Bangkok Affirmation” recommending modification of some of the goals. Goals approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in 1990 drew upon the WHO/UNICEF common goals as well as the Bangkok modifications, and also included others from outside the health sector, specifically goals dealing with child rights and protection of children in especially difficult circumstances, as well as the goals for education, literacy and early child development endorsed by the 1990 World Conference on Education for All.<sup>36</sup> With slight revisions, it was this set of goals which served as the basis of those endorsed at the World Summit as the global goals for the decade.

<b>GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990S*</b>
<b>Major Goals For Child Survival, Development and Protection</b>
1. Between 1990 and 2000, reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rates by one third or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births respectively, whichever is less
2. Between 1990 and 2000, reduction of maternal mortality rates by half
3. Between 1990 and 2000, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half
4. Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal
5. By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80% of primary school-age children
6. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy
7. Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances
<b>Supporting/Sectoral Goals</b>
<b>Women’s health and education</b>

<sup>36</sup> Sources: The Task Force for Child Survival. *Protecting the World’s Children: An Agenda for the 1990s*. March 10-12, 1988; The Task Force for Child Survival. *Protecting the World’s Children: A Call for Action*. Proceedings of the Fourth International Child Survival Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, March 10-13, 1990; *Children and Development in the 1990s: a UNICEF Source book*; UNICEF 1990. *Revised goals for children and development in the 1990s* (E/ICEF/1990/CRP.2, 30 March 1990); *Development goals and strategies for children in the 1990s. A UNICEF Policy Review* (also E/ICEF/1990/L.5, 13 February 1990)

- ◆ Special attention to the health and nutrition of the female child and to pregnant and lactating women
- ◆ Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many
- ◆ Access by all pregnant women to pre-natal care, trained attendants during childbirth and referral facilities for high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies
- ◆ Universal access to primary education with special emphasis for girls, and accelerated literacy programmes for women

**Nutrition**

- ◆ Reduction in severe, as well as moderate malnutrition among under-five children by half of 1990 levels
- ◆ Reduction of the rate of low birth weight (2.5 kg or less) to less than 10%
- ◆ Reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one-third of 1990 levels
- ◆ Virtual elimination of iodine deficiency and its consequences, including blindness
- ◆ Empowerment of all women to exclusively breast-feed their child for four to six months and to continue breastfeeding with complementary food well into the second year
- ◆ Growth promotion and its regular monitoring to be institutionalized in all countries by the end of the 1990s
- ◆ Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production to ensure household food security

**Child health**

- ◆ Global eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000
- ◆ Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995
- ◆ Reduction by 95% in measles deaths and reduction by 90% of measles cases compared to pre-immunization levels by 1995 as a major step to the global eradication of measles in the longer run
- ◆ Maintenance of a high level of immunization coverage (at least 90% of children under one year of age by the year 2000) against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis and against tetanus for women of child bearing age
- ◆ Reduction by 50% in deaths due to diarrhoea in children under the age of five years, and 25% reduction in the diarrhoea incidence rate
- ◆ Reduction by one third in the deaths due to acute respiratory infections in children under five years.

**Water and sanitation**

- ◆ Universal access to safe drinking water
- ◆ Universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal
- ◆ Elimination of guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis) by the year 2000

**Basic education**

- ◆ Expansion of early childhood development activities including appropriate low-cost family and community-based interventions
- ◆ Universal access to basic education, and achievement of primary education by at least 80% of primary school age children through formal schooling or non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between girls and boys
- ◆ Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy
- ◆ Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living, made available through all educational channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication and social action, with effectiveness measured in terms of behavioural change

**Children in difficult circumstances**

- ◆ Provide improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes leading to such situations

*\*First Call for Children, UNICEF*

The process involved in the development of the goals shows a clear evolution in thinking about children between the 1980s and the 1990s, with an attempt to both consolidate the primarily survival-focused interventions of the previous decade as well as to strengthen thrusts towards child development, building on commitments to Education-for-All, and to expand actions in child protection, the latter influenced particularly by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the process of goal formulation, account was taken of both “*the unmet needs and unfulfilled rights of children*” as well as the “*unprecedented opportunities for substantial gains in the well-being of children.*”<sup>37</sup> While the WSC goals retained a determined focus on survival issues (as evident from the sheer volume goals related to health, nutrition and water and sanitation), the door was opened for an ever stronger focus on child development and protection. It would not be until the latter half of the decade, however, when the full impact of the Convention began to be felt more clearly, that the way would be clear for promotion of child participation as the ‘fourth’ pillar of international concern for children.

Taken together, the WSC goals were seen to constitute an ambitious but feasible, time-bound agenda for the 1990s and – as such - were set within the more comprehensive framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose full implementation was recognized at the time to require longer term commitment and engagement.<sup>38</sup> UNICEF considered

<sup>37</sup> *Development Goals and Strategies for Children: Priorities for UNICEF Action in the 1990s* (E/ICEF/1990/L.5), 13 Feb. 1990.

<sup>38</sup> See *Children and development in the 1990s, a UNICEF Sourcebook*, p. 13. Note: In processes leading to the formulation of the goals, an initial goal on the Convention itself was dropped in favor of its presentation as the embodiment of all the goals as well as others (see *Revised goals for children and development in the 1990s* (E/ICEF/1990/CRP.2), 30 March 1990)

that all of the decade goals were inherent in the Convention, which provided a global legal framework of the protection of children rights in the broad categories of survival, protection, development and participation. It was recognized that “*The Convention on the Rights of the Child embodies the most comprehensive listing of goals for the well-being of children.*”<sup>39</sup> While full implementation of the Convention was seen to be the ultimate objective of programmes for children and development, achievement of the WSC goals was seen as essential for achieving this.<sup>40</sup>

The WSC goals were also conceptualized as a clear contribution to the international development strategy of the fourth UN Development Decade through their focus on the development of human capabilities and the meeting basic human needs, with UNICEF articulating the position that the 4<sup>th</sup> development decade should “*target the fulfillment of unmet needs and unfulfilled rights of children among its highest priorities*” and expressing the hope that “*As codified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, .... these ‘needs’ will truly be recognized as rights of children in the decade of the 1990s.*”<sup>41</sup> It argued further that the starting point of an international development strategy that emphasizes human development must be the well-being of children for “*it is the children whose individual development and social contribution will shape the future of the world. Wise investments made in children’s health, nutrition and education are, therefore, the foundation of national development.*”<sup>42</sup>

While the Summit goals were seen to embody common aspirations for children, the WSC Platform of Action recognized that they would first need to be “*adapted to the specific realities of each country in terms of phasing, standards, priorities and availability of resources*”. It was also recognized that strategies to attain the goals would vary from country to country, and that other development goals may be added that were uniquely important to a particular country situation : “*Such adaptation of the goals is of crucial importance to ensure their technical validity, logistical feasibility, financial affordability and to secure political commitment and broad public support for their achievement.*”<sup>43</sup>

#### The merits of a goal-focused approach

“Goals, once properly adapted to country realities, can serve as powerful rallying points for national action and international solidarity. They can help shift the focus from excessive preoccupation with constraints to exploration of opportunities. By gaining popular understanding and credibility, easily understood human goals may contribute more to real development than all the voluminous development plans of governments and international agencies. Specific, doable goals are more amenable to advocacy at senior levels of government and among other power elites than are generalized development issues. Human goals with the power to inspire can be effective instruments for mobilizing support from groups that would otherwise not be excited about general development programmes. The pursuit of common goals, albeit with different means and localities, can provide a useful focus for inter-agency collaboration. Finally, goals can be powerful instruments for tightening management and accountability”

From *Children and development in the 1990s, a UNICEF sourcebook*, 1990, p. 6..

The perceived merits of taking an explicitly goal-focused approach were seen to be many. For one thing, concrete goals were seen to provide a potent motivational inspiration for action and a rallying point around which partnerships could be mobilized. Moreover, it was felt that having specific, measurable goals for the decade would help foster a culture of management by objectives and would encourage accountability. At the same time, there was healthy debate around the issue of over-emphasis on targets and goals, with caution expressed against restricting ourselves to doing the measurable at the expense of the important.<sup>44</sup>

The goals were recognized as very ambitious compared with historical experience and current trends.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, they were considered technically feasible and attainable through consistent national prioritization coupled with commensurate international cooperation – each supported by the mobilization of all sectors of society in favor of children. It was reasoned at the time that the necessarily knowledge and techniques for reaching most of the goals already existed; that the provision of necessary information and services was within reach; and that the financial resources required (estimated at an additional \$20 billion per year over the course of the decade)<sup>46</sup> were “*modest in relation to the great achievements that beckon.*”<sup>47</sup> It was thus considered possible to achieve the goals through a set of strategic actions so as to accelerate the pace of progress and surpass historical trends.

<sup>39</sup> *Revised goals for children and development in the 1990s* (E/ICEF/1990/CRP.2), 30 March 1990

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Development goals and strategies for children, Priorities for UNICEF Action in the 1990s.* (E/ICEF/1990/L.5), 13 Feb. 1990.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> WSC Platform of Action

<sup>44</sup> E/ICEF/1990/L.5, (op cit)

<sup>45</sup> E/ICEF/1990/L.5, (op cit)

<sup>46</sup> *Children and development in the 1990s, a UNICEF Sourcebook*, p. 245

<sup>47</sup> WSC Plan of Action

### **Provisions for follow-up**

The World Summit Plan of Action set out clear provisions for follow-up on implementation and monitoring of the goals and commitments agreed to, with specific actions called for at national and international levels. National programmes of action (NPAs) were identified as the instrument of choice to ensure country-level follow-up to WSC goals and commitments and to adapt such global goals to national realities. All governments were urged to prepare, before the end of 1991, such national programmes of action for children as an integral part of broader national development planning for revitalized economic growth, poverty reduction, human resources development and environmental protection (*para 34 chapeau and i*). Higher priority was to be accorded to the needs and well-being of children in such plans (*para ii*), and specific actions envisioned for children were to be linked to budgetary processes so as to ensure adequate resourcing (*para 34 iii*). In keeping with the participatory thrusts of the WSC vision and in recognition that progress depended on the mobilization of all sectors of society, preparation of programmes of action by provincial and local governments, as well as NGOs, the private sector and civic groups was welcomed (*para 34.i*), with families, communities, social, cultural, religious, business and other institutions, including the mass media encouraged to play an active role in support of the goals (*para 34 iv*). Each country was also encouraged to establish appropriate mechanisms for the regular and timely collection, analysis and publication of data required to monitor relevant social indicators relating to the well-being of children (*para 34 v*); to reexamine their emergency response systems (*vi*); and to support research and development related to children's needs (*vii*).

While action at the community and national levels was seen to be of crucial importance in meeting the goals and aspirations for children and development, international cooperation was seen as essential in creating an enabling environment for the worldwide efforts for child survival, protection and development (*para 35 chapeau*). All international development agencies (multilateral, bilateral and NGO) were thus urged to contribute to the achievement of the WSC goals and strategies and to report on their plans and activities to their governing bodies (*para 35i*). Collaboration and support were also requested of regional institutions (*ii*) and UN agencies (*iii*), with UN assistance particularly requested to institute appropriate monitoring mechanisms, using existing expertise of the relevant UN agencies, including UNICEF (*iv*). Periodic reviews of implementation were urged, with the Secretary General to arrange for a review at mid-decade (*iv*). UNICEF requested to prepare, in close collaboration with the relevant specialized agencies and other UN organs, “*a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by individual countries and the international community in support of the child-related development goals for the 1990s*” (*para 35 v*).

In its resolution 45/217 of 21 December 1990 on the World Summit for Children, the General Assembly welcomed adoption of the WSC Declaration and Plan of Action; and urged both states and the international community to work for the achievement of its goals and objectives as an integral part of their national plans and international cooperation, with special reference to donors, and UN organizations. It requested the Secretary-General to ensure implementation and monitoring; and to report to the GA at its 47<sup>th</sup> session in 1992 on implementation measures, and in particular on the response of the United Nations system. The stage was set for action.

**CHAPTER 2. STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR FOLLOW-UP**

**Introduction**

In the period both before and after the World Summit for Children, UNICEF was engaged in an intensive process of review, reflection and planning for children. In the immediate aftermath of the Summit, a number of seminal documents were produced which outline UNICEF's responsibilities for global follow-up and country-level support for achievement of the WSC goals and commitments, building on previous strategy development.<sup>48</sup> Another paper, prepared in response to a Board request, outlines UNICEF's role and responsibilities vis-à-vis the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>49</sup> In many ways, the 'story' of UNICEF over the decade can be read as a progressive evolution in and following through on the strategic approaches and priority actions set out in these papers. It is thus important to examine in some detail the strategic thinking, debates and consultations that contributed to the formulation of UNICEF's plans and policies for follow-up action and support for the commitments to children embodied in the WSC and CRC.

**Defining UNICEF's role in follow up to the WSC**

*Pre-Summit processes*

A number of policy papers, reviews, and consultations undertaken by UNICEF in the period just prior to the Summit<sup>50</sup> show clearly the development of strategic thinking within the organization at the time, both in relation to the formulation of a global strategy for children in the 1990s, which was reflected in the WSC Plan of Action and goals, as well as in the articulation of UNICEF's own programme focus, twin tasks requested by the Executive Board in 1988.<sup>51</sup> The *Report from Mohonk* is especially instructive in this latter regard, recording the results of a meeting of key UNICEF staff which marked the culmination of a series of internal consultation and debate on programme goals and strategy development. It suggested that the country programme approach, enriched by a dialectical interaction with the global goal-setting process, should continue to be the basis for priority-setting within UNICEF, with roughly 80% of UNICEF resources to be allocated to reaching specific programme goals and building national capacity for sustained development in health, nutrition, water and sanitation and basic education. The remaining 20% would be devoted to other programme categories such as children in especially difficult circumstances, as well as to advocacy for goals which UNICEF supported but for which it would be unable to mobilize much direct financial assistance. In addition to its own support, UNICEF counted on playing a key role in leveraging resources for attainment of the goals. It was emphasized that while UNICEF's concerns, especially for analysis and advocacy, should be broad, its sphere of specific actions should be highly selective, with priorities determined with national partners in the course of the country programming process.<sup>52</sup>

With the Convention on the Rights of the Child seen as providing an all-encompassing frame of reference for UNICEF's work in the 1990's, UNICEF's strategy would be to instill a new ethic of putting children first, develop a more sophisticated situation analysis, and prepare itself to collaborate with and respond to new allies, partners and critics. Advocacy and promotion of ratification of the Convention was seen as only the first phase of such a strategy. Building on its ground-breaking work on 'adjustment with a human face' and 'children on the front line', UNICEF would also continue to play an influential role in the 'market-place of ideas' – through advocacy for development

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<sup>48</sup> *Report of the Greenwich Consultation* (CF/EXD/1991-001), 18 Jan 1991, including a *Discussion Paper* for the December 1990 Greenwich Consultation on 'Implications of the World Summit for Children for Country programming' prepared by the Planning Office, NY December 1990; and *Programme of Action for achieving the goals for children and development in the 1990s: A UNICEF response to the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children* (E/ICEF/1991/12), 22 March, 1991.

<sup>49</sup> *Role of UNICEF in the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. (E/ICEF/1991/L.7), 6 February 1991

<sup>50</sup> *Report from Mohonk '89: Children and development in the 1990s: Programme goals and operational strategies for UNICEF* (22-25 October, 1989), Planning Office, UNICEF, NY 1989 ; *Development goals and strategies for children in the 1990s. A UNICEF Policy Review* (also E/ICEF/1990/L.5, 13 February 1990)

<sup>51</sup> In its resolution 1988/17 (E/ICEF/1988/13), the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to prepare for consideration by the Board at "a report on the goals, targets and elements of a global strategy for the well-being of children as an essential part of overall development" and a subsequent report to the ExBoard at its 1990 session that would include both the global strategy for children and a UNICEF operational strategy. At its 1989 session, the ExBoard reviewed the report entitled "*Strategies for children in the 1990s* (E/ICEF/1989/L.5) and generally endorsed the proposals; furthermore, in its decision 1989/5 (E/ICEF/1989/12) encouraged the ExDirector to use the ideas contained in that document "as a basis for the global strategy for the well-being of children and for consultation with Governments and other partners in development, as well as to serve as UNICEF input into the formulation of the international development strategy for the proposed fourth United Nations development decade, 1991-2000".

<sup>52</sup> *Report from Mohonk '89*

policies targeted toward high risk groups and speaking out on macroeconomic issues, restructuring of debt, military expenditures, and environmental concerns which have great impact on children.<sup>53</sup>

A system of monitoring progress towards the achievement of the goals for the 1990s would be set up as a matter of priority. Essential for this would be improvement of measurement capacity in each country, with resources made available to compile baseline data and strengthen national monitoring capacity.<sup>54</sup>

A number of strategic approaches would be adopted. Advocacy would become increasingly significant, with the ability to influence others and leverage resources for children to become be a key determinant of UNICEF's success in social mobilization at all levels. Going-to-scale was identified as important for achieving most programme goals, but area-based approaches were also to be promoted particularly as a means of testing new ideas and innovations prior to large-scale replication. Disparity reduction would be a key strategic principle in many circumstances, calling for more disaggregated monitoring instruments to help target programme interventions to the disadvantaged, unreached and hard to reach populations. Building on this theme, the 1990 policy paper notes that *"It helps to monitor not only key indicators of progress, but also the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' in the disaggregated population....It is the reduction of disparities, more than the absolute level of the indicator itself, that will measure the impact of development programmes in bringing about greater equity."*<sup>55</sup>

Other strategies included empowerment of women, community participation, and national capacity building. There was no contradiction felt between the pursuit of sectoral goals and the multi-sectoral basic needs approach, since these were seen to be synergistic in effect. It was also recognized that global strategic planning must take regional and country specificities into account, with examples of differential approaches outlined for the least developed countries, countries affected by war, higher

#### Regional perspectives on WSC follow-up

Regional consultations were held in all 6 UNICEF regions to review development priorities and challenges in each region, and to analyze critically the goals and strategies proposed in the 1989 Board document with a view to adapting these to the realities of each region or groups of countries. As reported to the Mohonk meeting in October 1989, all regional consultations strongly endorsed proposals to make the enhancement of human capabilities a central strategic theme for development in the 1990s. Investment in human development, starting with children, was seen as creating an enabling environment for overall national development and international solidarity. In this context, the goals for children and development proposed by UNICEF were considered relevant and, for the most part, feasible, though some regions saw a higher likelihood of achieving them than others. It was recognized even at this time, for example, that with the alarming spread of the AIDS epidemic, many African countries might experience an increase rather than a decrease in U5MR. While it was not suggested that any of the global goals be deleted, the two most commonly mentioned goals to be added were the control of malaria and HIV/AIDS. (In hindsight, the lack of specific goals and numerical targets on these two scourges may have contributed to a lessening of focus on efforts to combat them). Overall strategies considered particularly important to add were building national capacities, working with and assisting grass-roots institutions, promoting community participation, and emphasizing disparity reduction. A common theme running through all regional reports was the importance of measures to reduce poverty and build the economic base for development, including through heightened international cooperation and assistance in which UNICEF role of advocate for development with a human face was important. Another common theme was the importance of national ownership of the goals and the need for adaptation of certain goals and standards to country realities. Adaptation of both the goals and strategies to suit the varying typology of countries was seen to be essential, as was the differentiated definition of standards of achievement and variations in the strategies needed to attain the goals. A need for better cost analysis of attaining the goals was seen as important, along with building partnerships (NGOs, bilaterals, etc) with resources to get things done. Particular points of concern in the regions include: a focus on debt relief in **Latin America**; problems of war, destabilization, pestilence, and food security in **Africa**; issues of rapid population growth and its impact on poverty in **China, SAARC and MENA**; increasing importance given to early child development in **East Asia and Latin America**.

*Report from Mohonk '89:*

income developing countries and the industrialized countries, where an evolving role for UNICEF was seen in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cooperation with NGOs was seen as crucial to achieving the decade goals, as was alliance-building with bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, with advocacy seeking to influence policies.<sup>56</sup>

At the Mohonk meeting, UNICEF Executive Director James Grant emphasized that UNICEF programme goals and strategies should not be viewed just as ends in themselves but as means to opening up opportunities to work on other,

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Development goals and strategies for children, Priorities for UNICEF Action in the 1990s (E/ICEF/1990/L.5)*

<sup>56</sup> *Report from Mohonk '89.*

more difficult objectives “*The ‘dream objective’ is that of creating a global ethic of ‘children first’. This would imply that by the end of the century the survival, development and protection of children would be recognized as the rights of children and obligations of governments throughout the world.*”<sup>57</sup>

Much of this strategic thinking entered into subsequent policy documents, including the 1990 policy review approved by the Board in relation to development goals and strategies for children and priorities for UNICEF action in the 1990s.<sup>58</sup> This paper in addition elaborates more fully on a number of themes, including advocacy and social mobilization which was seen to be responsible for much of the success of the child survival and development gains of the 1980s and was highlighted as an essential ingredient for further progress “*The active participation of NGOs, the school system, churches and mosques, artists and intellectuals, labour unions and peasant co-operatives, women’s movements and neighbourhood associations were mobilized using communications channels offered by newspapers, radios, television and personal contacts which made it possible to reach families that were never reached by conventional government services.....In the absence of such social mobilization and the creation of alliances and partnership for children and human development, the CSD goals in the 1990s will remain an unfulfilled promise.*”<sup>59</sup> Building effective partnerships with all key actors was therefore identified as a key task of UNICEF programme advocacy and resource mobilization.<sup>60</sup>

While recognizing that UNICEF was not itself, nor did it seek to be, a key resource transfer agency, positioning the organization to sound its voice and influence debate on key macro-economic issues was another key theme in the policy paper. Through its analytical and advocacy work, UNICEF proposed to follow up on its seminal work in ‘adjustment with a human face’ with calls for ‘development with a human face’; advocating for poverty reduction and debt relief; evoking issues of trade and commodity agreements; and arguing for strengthened development cooperation and resource flows targeted to the poorest segments of the poorest countries as a contribution to the alleviation of critical poverty. It would also continue to argue that support for the many readily achievable CSD goals “*must be defended as productive investment for national development and not just as essential consumption for social welfare.*” Moreover, in an increasingly interdependent world, and with the Convention opening up new possibilities for UNICEF advocacy in industrialized countries, it was envisioned that UNICEF policy analysis and advocacy in the 1990s could take on a new dimension in helping to foster a global ethic of ‘first call for children’ and build solidarity on the basis of common concerns.<sup>61</sup>

The importance of monitoring and evaluation was further highlighted, with a call for “*new and innovative ways of monitoring and evaluating the attainment of the human goals of the fourth United Nations development decade*”. Arguing further that “*If human goals are to be fundamental in measuring the performance of national and international development in the 1990s, data on changes in IMR, U5MR, MMR, literacy rates, nutritional status, access to water and sanitation and other social indicators must be collected and updated much more frequently than every 5 or 10 years as at present,*” UNICEF proposed to work with countries and relevant United Nations agencies to promote the development and use of these indicators.”<sup>62</sup>

In its decision 1990/2 approving the goals and strategies developed by UNICEF, the Executive Board agreed that these should serve as the guiding principles for UNICEF work in the 1990s, while stressing as well the importance of maximizing the long-term development impact. It noted in this regard that: “*The strategies for children should be situated within general development strategies and should take into account, inter alia, national capacity-building, poverty alleviation, people’s, in particular women’s, empowerment and participation in planning and implementation, sustainability and environmental soundness, and co-ordinated and intersectoral policies, recognizing the necessity for adequate resources to achieve these objectives.*” It identified the focus of UNICEF’s programme activities as follows: integrated primary health care, with special emphasis on child and maternal health, including safe motherhood and family planning; food and nutrition; safe water supply and environmental sanitation; basic education, with a special emphasis on girls and women; and children in especially difficult circumstances. These, of course, corresponded to the 7 major goal areas of the WSC. The 1990-93 medium term plan approved by the Board elaborated in more detail the specific actions to be undertaken by UNICEF in implementing the proposed goals and strategies.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, further

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Development Goals and Strategies for Children: Priorities for UNICEF Action in the 1990s* (E/ICEF/1990/L.5), 13 February 1990

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF. *Medium-term plan for the period 1990-1993* (E/ICEF/1990/3)

planning and discussions were underway to identify more fully the role of UNICEF in response to and support for Summit follow-up actions.

### *Post-Summit planning*

In one of the first organizational follow-up steps, a UNICEF Headquarters consultation was convened in Greenwich in December 1990 to map out priorities for UNICEF support to partnerships at all levels in order to keep the promises of the World Summit for Children. There was a tremendous feeling of urgency and momentous responsibility in ‘seizing the moment’ made possible by the unprecedented level of attention to children generated by the Summit. At one point, UNICEF Executive Director James Grant spoke about “*putting an electric shock*” through the wide ranging group of UNICEF’s allies to stimulate actions commensurate with the Summit’s commitments.<sup>64</sup> The basic thinking is captured in the following passage from the report of the consultation:

*“The challenge provided by the Summit is so broad and all-encompassing that nothing short of a **global movement** similar to that of the movements against slavery, colonialism, or women’s inequality is capable of generating the necessary momentum. To succeed, a movement for children will need to ally itself with, and give a special dimension to, the movements for peace, environmental protection, population and other causes which are likely to dominate the world in the 1990s....The Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit provide a powerful manifesto for this movement. With its reputation, its field office and national committee networks, its working relationships with a whole series of partners and allies, UNICEF is uniquely situated to stimulate and support the involvement of a broad range of forces in such a movement. The challenge is to think and act strategically, to provide the necessary leadership and to act, not as “owners” of the movement but as supportive collaborators in a vast coalition for children.”<sup>65</sup>*

At the consultation, it was stressed that follow-up to the Summit was now to become a normal part of UNICEF’s regular work. Para 35 of the Plan of Action was seen to have “*profound implications for UNICEF both in terms of its own reporting and monitoring responsibilities and as regards collaboration with other agencies with which we must work in genuine partnership.*”<sup>66</sup> In that paragraph, UNICEF, as the lead agency for children, had been requested to prepare, in close collaboration with relevant specialized agencies and other United Nations organs, “*a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by individual countries and the international community in support of the child-related development goals for the 1990s*” (para 35v, WSC Plan of Action). Recalling the December GA resolution urging the involvement of the whole UN system and their governing bodies in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action, UNICEF would need to work closely with the top leadership of the UN agencies, using its periodic WSC reporting responsibility as a mechanism to promote collaboration, and building on the positive experiences of collaboration in the 1990s. In this regard, the growing convergence around a human development focus for international cooperation was seen to bode well for heightened positive collaboration with the World Bank and UNDP.<sup>67</sup>

The consultation also reviewed priorities for working with other key partners. Different strategies were to be elaborated for NGOs at international, national or local levels. UNICEF was to conduct a more systematic analysis of the full field of potential allies, classifying NGOs as those which are more equipped for advocacy and those better at programme delivery. Emphasis should be on those allies most likely to produce significant results for children. Moreover, it was recognized that “*UNICEF, at times, tends to be too overbearing and dominant and needs to be more humble in relation with its allies and also avoid competing with them....In relations with NGOs we should make greater use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and we should work more closely with youth groups.*”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Summing up the consultation in his inimitable way, Grant put it this way: “*We have gotten UNICEF’s surfboard on top of a mammoth wave and we have to stay on top of that wave if we are to retain the advantages of the Summit....If we organize properly...riding that wave will be an exhilarating experience, a rare privilege to shape the future of children and, therefore, the destiny of nations*” *Report of the Greenwich Consultation* (CF/EXD/1991-001), 18 Jan. 1991

<sup>65</sup> *Report of the Greenwich Consultation* (CF/EXD/1991-001, 18 Jan. 1991). An interesting discussion on the nature of movements took place at the end of the Greenwich consultation. In response to some participants mentioning that movements were normally against something – UNICEF Executive Director Jim Grant replied that ours was indeed a movement against “*the appalling and obscene wasting of children that takes place on a massive scale all over the globe,*” agreeing that we should creatively engage with those groups that denounce violations of children’s rights not by entering in the denouncements ourselves, but by providing the information and analysis needed for these groups, and by offering constructive and feasible ways of overcoming these wrongs – “*Letting others stress the negative while UNICEF follows up with positive solutions can be doubly effective for children’s welfare.*”

<sup>66</sup> *Report of the Greenwich Consultation* (CF/EXD/1991-001).

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

At country level, priority attention was to be given to supporting implementation of national follow-up action, as detailed in para 34 of the Summit Plan of Action.<sup>69</sup> UNICEF field offices were to advocate and support preparation of national programmes of action, which were to include all Summit goals (appropriately phased and adapted to national realities), and were to be based on a 10-year horizon, involving many actors other than UNICEF. This was to be coupled with selective support, through UNICEF's five-year country programmes of cooperation, for a limited set of goals within the national programme of action, based on UNICEF's comparative advantage and the country situation. UNICEF country programmes and the national programmes of action were thus to be complementary and mutually reinforcing, but conceptually distinct. Special care would be needed to distinguish between the national goals for children and the objectives of the country programme, with the latter to aim at more limited and/or processual objectives which may be stepping stones toward achievement of the broader national decade goals for children. Particular importance within the UNICEF country programmes was to be given to selecting a small group of 'flagship' goals that had a strong likelihood of success and could lead the way toward achievement of other goals, with the success of UCI in particular to be sustained and built upon in all country programmes.<sup>70</sup>

The dual challenge for UNICEF would be to develop country programmes of cooperation that are "*models of affordable, sustainable development for children*" at the same time as becoming "*a full, active, supportive partner in a larger national effort to achieve the whole range of the country's child-related development goals.*"<sup>71</sup> The potential pitfalls for UNICEF of both over-identification and under-identification with the NPAs were underlined. The first threatened to stretch UNICEF's limited resources too thinly and to discourage a sense of 'ownership' and participation by other partners: *We should not let our impatience with getting the job done militate against both sustainability and the sense among partners and allies that the pursuit of the decade goals is truly a cooperative endeavour.*"<sup>72</sup> The second would represent loss of a golden opportunity to exert effective leadership for children. In short, "*The UNICEF country programme should be so designed and so formulated that it forms an integral part of the national programme of action for children, is guided by its broader goals and contributes to their achievement*". Elements of the NPA (and by extension the WSC goals) which UNICEF could not support through direct programme interventions were to be supported instead through assessment, analysis and advocacy, including social mobilization for achievement of all the goals and monitoring of progress. "*In all these and other ways the UNICEF country office and the UNICEF country programme should act as the conscience of a national movement for children.*"<sup>73</sup> In terms of monitoring, it was recognized that "*Systems need to be established soon that will provide a simple and clear picture of where each country stands as regards the goals. Both global and regional mechanisms for monitoring progress toward the achievement of the goals must also be set up; appropriate indicators developed and agreed upon; and the responsibilities of various actors in monitoring identified.*"<sup>74</sup>

Para 34 on national level action was seen to apply equally to the developing world and the industrialized countries, with UNICEF's interest in the later both in terms of advocacy for translation of the Summit commitments into domestic action and the configuration of ODA in line with Summit priorities. UNICEF's involvement was to be both through national committees and through advocacy and policy analysis. Regional office responsibilities were seen to involve both identification of particular programme approaches / strategies / accents as well as identification of "*two or three respected leaders in each region who might personally spearhead the follow-up to the Summit and inspire the transformation of programmes for children into a global movement.*"<sup>75</sup>

Based on the ideas discussed at Greenwich consultation, UNICEF programme strategies and support measures for Summit follow-up were further delineated and set out in a report to the Executive Board outlining UNICEF's institutional response to the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.<sup>76</sup> Again it was stressed that – at country level, "*UNICEF faces the challenge of finding ways to assist Governments in preparing, implementing and monitoring their broader national programmes without dispersing its own limited resources in too many areas and without undermining its highly focused country programmes, which have been the hallmark of UNICEF success.*" It

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<sup>69</sup> "Any representative", said Mr. Grant, "whose country does not fulfil its commitment under para 34 should be prepared to explain the reasons why" (Report of the Greenwich Consultation).

<sup>70</sup> Greenwich discussion paper

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Report of the Greenwich consultation

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Programme of action for achieving the goals for children and development in the 1990s: a UNICEF response to the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children (E/ICEF/1991/12), 22 March 1991.

was proposed that with some adjustments, and a heightened attention to social mobilization and advocacy as a 'sixth' dimension, each of the usual five elements of the normal UNICEF country programming process (situation analysis and assessment; programme development; programme implementation; monitoring and evaluation) could be adapted to relate integrally to the broader national programme of action. Within these parameters, UNICEF pledged support for "analysis, conceptualization and development of national programmes of action and their adoption or endorsement by national legislatures or national conferences on follow-up to the World Summit for Children" as well as support for implementing selected aspects of the national programme of action, "including the conceptualization and development of sectoral and intersectoral programmes related to the Summit goals."<sup>77</sup>

The importance of partnerships was stressed: collaboration with other UN agencies in particular was to be strengthened. Resource mobilization would be supported through innovative measures such as debt relief for child survival and social investment as well as support for budget reviews at national and international level. And a priority focus on Africa would continue through acceleration of the Bamako Initiative, while adequate measures were needed to respond to the AIDS pandemic, particularly through massive education and information campaigns and support for AIDS orphans and other affected children, women and families. A phased approach to follow-up was set out, with 1991 seen as the preparatory phase involving development of programmes of action, consensus-building, training, and mobilization of material, human and monetary resources. The initiation phase was to begin in 1992, when all preparations were in place, a number of programmes under implementation would be achieving preliminary results, and monitoring systems would be tested and improved, with UNICEF support for indicator development and performance monitoring. A mid-decade review would assess progress in 1995, followed by achievement of the global goals by the year 2000.<sup>78</sup>

The Executive Board (in *decision 1991/10*) approved such a strategy and requested UNICEF, working in cooperation with other relevant UN agencies and as an integrated part of its regular activities to provide "full support to developing countries within its mandate, comparative advantage and resources, for the achievement of objectives contained in the Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children." UNICEF was also requested to report in 1992 on follow-up plans and actions. In the Board discussions on these issues, UNICEF was urged to take an integrated approach to programming so as to encourage capacity-building and long-term sustainability. While quantitative targets were recognized as an important measure of progress, an over-emphasis on them was to be avoided, with UNICEF's orientation to be on nourishing national capacities to provide and manage health, education, and basic social services. In programme committee discussions on health sector interventions in particular, it was cautioned that "goals should not be regarded as ends in themselves, but rather as the tools to achieve a better future for children and women": actions to reach such targets should be taken in an integrated and sustainable manner, in the overall context of improved primary health care systems. Interestingly enough, concern of an opposite sort was expressed on the goal for children in especially difficult circumstances which, since it had not been formulated in as a quantifiable goal, risked under-allocation of resources.<sup>79</sup>

### **Defining UNICEF's role in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

*"Through practical action since its creation, UNICEF has contributed significantly to realizing the ideals of the [UN] charter. The Convention provides UNICEF and other operational bodies of the UN family with a new opportunity to demonstrate how the principles of human rights can become an integral part of the daily work of development agencies."*<sup>80</sup>

At the same time as UNICEF was strategizing its follow-up to the World Summit for Children, it was also defining its role in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, responding to an Executive Board request (*in decision 1989/10*) to report on measures taken to promote implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that fell within the scope of the UNICEF mandate. In its report to the Board, UNICEF stressed that support for implementation of the Convention should be seen as an integral part of established country programme mechanisms for programme analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as for information and advocacy, noting that this would necessarily evolve and gain specificity through practical experience in the coming years.<sup>81</sup> Recalling the Executive Board Decision of 1986/12 which had instructed UNICEF to participate in the drafting of the Convention, it described its growing cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights through joint publications, information, meetings and promotion of ratification. UNICEF's advocacy at the time had been largely responsible for

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<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *UNICEF Report of the Executive Board, 1991 (E/ICEF/1991/15).*

<sup>80</sup> *The role of UNICEF in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (E/ICEF/1991/L.7)*, 6 February 1991

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

the inclusion of strong provisions for health, education, and other survival and development rights in the Convention, thus contributing to its widely recognized comprehensiveness as an international instrument. Since adoption of the Convention, UNICEF pledged to work increasingly with other UN and international agencies to “transform the provisions of the Convention into programmes to protect children’s rights and to enhance their chances of survival and development.”<sup>82</sup>

It stressed that the consensus view on children’s rights embodied in the Convention had helped to frame the global goals and strategies for children adopted by the Executive Board (*decision 1990/2*) as well as the programme objectives of UNICEF’s Medium Term Plan for achieving those goals (*decision 1990/3*). It maintained that the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action “are the concrete expression of the commitment of world leaders to marshal the necessary resources to transform the promises of the Convention into concrete possibilities for the full development of human potential.” Quoting the 1990 Board paper on development goals and strategies for children, UNICEF highlighted the interconnected nature of goals and rights for children: while the global goals adopted at the Summit are “essential first steps towards realizing the rights outlined in the Convention,” the full implementation of the Convention “is the best guarantee of achieving the goals and strategies for children and development in the 1990s.” The Convention’s holistic view of children underscores the need for both governments and international agencies and NGOs to take a comprehensive approach to problems affecting children in order to address both direct and underlying causes. UNICEF’s approach in general would be one of constructive engagement in support for implementation of the Convention.<sup>83</sup>

The country programme was seen as the vehicle through which UNICEF would support countries in their efforts to transform Convention ideals into legal safeguards and practical programmes benefiting children. Goals for child survival, protection and development provided the scope for UNICEF action in assisting countries to implement the Convention, with close correlation between the articles of the Convention and specific Summit goals highlighted in this regard. The Convention’s role in strengthening ongoing efforts to provide protection of children in especially difficult circumstances was seen as particularly significant. Based on the results of studies undertaken by UNICEF’s International Child Development Centre (ICDC) to examine how children’s rights can best be integrated into UNICEF programmes of cooperation, it had become clear that programmes for children were enhanced when undertaken jointly with advocacy for children’s rights. The CRC was seen to have potential to strengthen national movements and alliances for children, opening new doors for cooperation among governments, UNICEF and NGOs. The Convention could also enhance the conceptual framework of a situation analysis and can provide a basis for developing comprehensive national policies for human development.<sup>84</sup>

While responsibility for monitoring implementation of the Convention rested with the newly formed Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF proposed to contribute to this through its own situation analysis, programme evaluations and studies on specific issues, with the data generated offered to governments to enable assessment of progress towards national goals and also as a part of global advocacy. UNICEF would also help strengthen national capacities for data collection and analysis, with convergence foreseen in monitoring progress on human development goals and implementation of the Convention. Information and advocacy on children’s issues were seen as becoming increasingly important forms of UNICEF cooperation and “As countries deal more effectively with the most basic needs of their children, programming requires the development of appropriate indicators for measuring quality of life improvements for children.” In some instances, the major share of UNICEF investments was seen as likely to shift towards support for gathering and disseminating information at national and regional levels, to develop a critical body of knowledge on issues affecting children and to promote popular understanding of the vision of children’s rights embodied in the Convention.<sup>85</sup>

With international cooperation a key theme in the Convention, “implementation of the Convention will need to be underpinned by global solidarity and international cooperation if the rights of many children in developing countries, to survive, to be protected and to develop are to be upheld.” Moreover, shared problems such as drug trafficking, drug

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<sup>82</sup> E/ICEF/1991/L.7 (ibid.)

<sup>83</sup> E/ICEF/1991/L.7 (ibid.)

<sup>84</sup> E/ICEF/1991/L.7 (ibid.)

<sup>85</sup> E/ICEF/1991/L.7. (ibid.) From *MTP 1992-95*: Both the mandate to support implementation of the goals for children and development and the mandate to cooperate in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child made it clear that UNICEF support for children was being directed towards more strategic nationwide and world-wide objectives, in addition to the objectives of particular programmes and projects. This expanded role involved advocacy and social mobilization as well as monitoring.

abuse and environmental degradation can only be solved through north-south cooperation. “*The principle of global solidarity is at the core of the evolving role of UNICEF as a global advocate for children.*” The Convention was seen as the legal foundation on which UNICEF proposed to continue to build its advocacy for children at both national and international level. Such advocacy in turn would be of particular relevance to the implementation of the Convention, serving as a means of engendering political support and additional resources for children. UNICEF would continue to build on alliances with parliamentarians, religious leaders, professional groups and children’s rights advocates. National committees were becoming increasingly important in relation to the CRC in the industrialized world, and the networks of international NGOs which had so effectively influenced the drafting of the Convention and generated political support for its adoption would continue as important allies for UNICEF – for example the NGO group for the CRC.<sup>86</sup>

After discussion of the major themes in the report and their implications for UNICEF, the Executive Board (in its *decision 1991/9*) urged all governments to ratify the Convention and encouraged UNICEF to cooperate with developing countries in the following areas: a) development of national mechanisms to gather gender-specific and area-specific data; b) systematic incorporation of Convention issues in the situation analysis; c) review of legislation pertaining to children; d) relevant studies on Convention-related issues; e) strengthening knowledge of the Convention among UNICEF staff and relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies; and f) dissemination of information and education on children’s rights among children, youth and influential groups.

#### **Mid-decade goals: Mobilizing for interim success:**

With such basic policy matters decided, the stage was now set for UNICEF’s action in support of the commitments for children in the 1990s. Follow-up directives and communications to UNICEF field offices offered guidelines for the preparation of national programmes of action;<sup>87</sup> further articulated some of the challenges posed to country programmes in support of WSC follow-up;<sup>88</sup> shared communications sent out through the UN system requesting inter-agency collaboration on the follow-up to the World Summit and goals and strategies for the 1990s;<sup>89</sup> and provided instructions on UNICEF’s reporting obligations regarding summit follow-up actions.<sup>90</sup> Thereafter UNICEF’s task would become a four-fold one of: 1) stimulating and supporting development of the NPA, including through situation analyses assessing the current status of the broad WSC goals; 2) directly supporting, through its country programmes, implementation of selected goals of the WSC; 3) advocating for achievement of the broader goals and commitments of the WSC and implementation of the CRC; and 4) monitoring and reporting on all follow-up – UNICEF’s as well as that of other partners. As mobilization for action proceeded on all of these fronts, and as implementation of national plans of action got underway, a set of interim targets for achievement by mid-decade was formulated as a stepping-stone to longer-term success.

#### ***Formulation of the mid-decade goals***

The mid-decade goals and targets emerged through a series of broad national and regional consultations. In 1992, the OAU organized an International Conference on Assistance to African Children (ICAAC) in Dakar. This was followed by the second Conference on South Asian Children, organized by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Colombo, and a Conference on the Arab Child the League of Arab States held in Tunis. Each conference adopted a set of mid-decade goals, subsequently endorsed at summit level by the OAU, SAARC and the League Ministerial Council. In February 1993, the Joint Committee on Health Policy of UNICEF and WHO adopted a set of mid-decade goals derived largely from those of the OAU and SAARC. These were thereafter endorsed by the Executive Boards of UNICEF<sup>91</sup> and WHO in May 1993. The same session of the UNICEF Executive Board also endorsed the year 1995 as the target date for ratification by every State of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>92</sup> a target further supported by the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. The (East) Asia and Pacific Ministerial Consultation in Manila endorsed the mid-decade goals in September 1993.

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<sup>86</sup> *The role of UNICEF in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (E/ICEF/1991/L.7).

<sup>87</sup> *Annex A of Suggested guidelines for the preparation of the progress report on the implementation of the World Declaration*.... (E/ICEF/1991/17), 11 July 1991

<sup>88</sup> *Programme submissions for the 1992 and 1993 Executive Boards*....(CF/PD/PRO/1991-001): “UNICEF, although committed to all the global goals, can only provide operational support to a selection of them in any given country. In the spirit of the WSC, achievement of the goals is a commitment shared by the head of State and the international community of which UNICEF forms a part.”

<sup>89</sup> *Interagency collaboration on the follow-up to the World Summit*....(CF/EXD/1991-009)

<sup>90</sup> *UNICEF’s reporting obligations regarding Summit follow-up actions* (CF/EXD/1991-011)

<sup>91</sup> *UNICEF Report of the Executive Board* (E/ICEF/1993/14), *decision 1993/16*

<sup>92</sup> *UNICEF Report of the Executive Board* (E/ICEF/1993/14), *decision 1993/13*

At the end of the same month, on the third anniversary of the World Summit for Children, the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened a Round Table on “*Keeping the Promise to Children*” at UN Headquarters in New York, with seven heads of State or Government along with special envoys and foreign ministers from another 17 countries as well as representatives of UN agencies renewing their commitment to the decade goals and endorsing the targets for mid-decade. Thereafter, the mid-decade health goals received further commitment through a gathering of health ministers from 38 countries of the Americas, Asia and Africa meeting in Mexico City in October 1993. Health ministers and bilateral donors also met with the Task Force for Child Survival and Development, sponsored by WHO, UNDP, World Bank, UNICEF and Rockefeller Foundation in New Delhi in February 1994 to discuss the mid-decade goals and strategies to support sustainable health systems, and in April 1994, under the Narino Accord, the Ibero-American Summit also endorsed a set of mid-decade goals for Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>93</sup>

**Mid-decade Goals**

- ◆ Elevation of immunization coverage of the six antigens of EPI to 80% or more in all countries;
- ◆ Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995;
- ◆ Reduction by 95% in measles deaths and reduction by 90% in measles cases compared to pre-immunization levels as a major step towards the global eradication of measles in the longer run;
- ◆ Elimination of polio in selected countries and regions, as a contribution towards global eradication;
- ◆ Ensure that at least 80% of all children under 24 months of age living in areas with inadequate vitamin A intake receive adequate vitamin A (through a combination of breastfeeding, dietary improvement, food fortification and supplementation);
- ◆ Universal salt iodization (USI) in all countries in which IDD is a public health problem;
- ◆ Achievement of 80% usage of ORT (increased fluids) and continued feeding as part of the programme for control of diarrhoeal diseases (CDD)
- ◆ Achievement of ‘baby-friendly’ status in all hospitals and maternities by ending and preventing free and low-cost supplies of infant formula and breast milk substitutes and following the ‘ten steps’ recommended by UNICEF and WHO;
- ◆ Interruption of transmission of guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis) in all affected villages;
- ◆ Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by all countries;

**Partial targets of selected goals by 1995**

- ◆ Reduction of 1990 levels of severe and moderate malnutrition by one fifth or more;
- ◆ Strengthening basic education so as to achieve reduction by one third of the gap between the current primary school enrolment/retention rate and the goal for the year 2000 of universal access to basic education and achievement of primary education by at least 80% of school-age children, and reduction of the 1990 gender gap in primary education by one third;
- ◆ Increasing water supply and sanitation so as to narrow the gap between 1990 levels and universal access by the year 2000 by one fourth in the case of water supply and one tenth in the case of sanitation.

While the list of mid-decade goals varied from region to region - some countries and regional groupings setting additional goals and more ambitious targets - a core set of 10 goals had emerged as achievable by almost all countries. These mid-decade goals came to form the ‘moral minimum’ that all countries needed to achieve by the end of 1995 as stepping stones to the goals for the year 2000. It was believed that achievement of these mid-decade goals and the additional three interim targets would help stimulate and maintain momentum towards the full set of decade goals. In 1994, the Executive heads of WHO and UNICEF wrote to all heads of State with an appeal for leadership in achieving these priority social goals by the end of 1995, as a foundation for achieving the longer-term targets already agreed for the year 2000.

***Operationalization of the goals***

An executive directive on the operationalization of the mid-decade goals was sent out to all UNICEF field offices in 1993, with guidelines on priority actions to undertake to support national achievement of the goals.<sup>94</sup> A Priority Action Plan was developed to help focus action and an inter-divisional task force was established at HQ to monitor progress.<sup>95</sup> Country offices were asked to develop detailed strategies and workplans for achievement of the mid-decade goals, based on a situation analysis and challenges to overcome, including mobilization of institutions, partnerships and political commitments; monitoring arrangements; costs and financing mechanisms; and support required. Efforts were also to ensure that the mid-decade goals and targets were incorporated into national plans of action.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Sources on mid-decade goal formulation include: UNICEF 1994 *WSC follow-up report to the Board* (E/ICEF/1994/12); 1994 *SG report* (A/49/326); UNICEF *MTP 1994-1997* (E/ICEF/1994/3); *SG MDR report* (A/51/256)

<sup>94</sup> *Operationalisation of Mid-Decade Goals* (CF/EXD/1993-008)

<sup>95</sup> The Task Force was headed by Dr. Nyi Nyi

<sup>96</sup> *Operationalisation of Mid-Decade Goals* (CF/EXD/1993-008)

In similar fashion to the *UNICEF Sourcebook on Children and development in the 1990s* issued on the occasion of the Summit, a detailed *Mid-Decade Goals Reader* was prepared and distributed to UNICEF field offices in 1994. Designed as both an advocacy and reference document, the reader contained state-of the art information on each of the 13 mid-decade targets and key indicators; corresponding articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child; programme guidelines and the latest technical knowledge on the goal; a select bibliography of additional information and space for inputting comments and providing examples of good practices.<sup>97</sup>

A number of concerns raised at the time related to the degree of correspondence between such globally defined goals and targets and the nationally-identified priorities and phasing of activities as reflected in a given country's National Programme of Action. Other concerns related to the need to combine strategies for systems-strengthening and sustainability with the mid-decade goal focus on an immediate drive for results.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the strategic thinking that went into the development of mid-decade goal effort – particularly in health and nutrition - foresaw a means of achieving the targets through implementation of sustainable strategies.<sup>99</sup>

In countries where health systems were inexistent or weak, it was suggested that accelerated child survival interventions be merged into an expanded Bamako Initiative approach. In other countries, the existing PHC systems would be strengthened and programmes scaled-up for national coverage. In this way, achievement of the mid-decade goals could lay the foundations for the year 2000 goals through improved case management as well as empowerment of households to appropriately manage their health. Similar strategies were proposed as pragmatic 'Bailey bridge' solutions for achievement of the interim target in education, with an application of the Bamako Initiative to primary education through support for community-based planning, management and monitoring to bring all eligible children into school and keep them there. Such a strategy aimed at making significant and rapid progress in expanding primary education, while laying the foundation for further rapid progress later in the decade through the mobilization of new resources, the strengthening of community capacities, and the expansion of partnerships.<sup>100</sup> For all mid-decade goal achievement, including the goal of universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, intensified social mobilization was seen as an essential element of the strategy and key criteria for success.

Thereafter, UNICEF's organizational priorities and major programme thrusts for the period through mid-decade (as reflected in the medium term plan for the period 1994-1997) were to be focused on strategies aimed at 1) achieving the mid-decade targets and 2) systems development (including capacity building), particularly in Africa. At the same time, it was recognized that attention was needed to address emerging issues likely to become principal challenges in the next decade. These included such issues as HIV/AIDS; safe motherhood; women's health; substance abuse; diseases related to lifestyle; and children in especially difficult circumstances.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Mid-Decade Goals Reader*, UNICEF NY, transmitted to UNICEF field offices on 5 August 1994

<sup>98</sup> viz. the 1993/16 UNICEF/WHO Joint committee on health policy: "*The Committee welcomed and saw the need for intermediate goals in order to achieve the longer-term targets of the Summit. It noted, however, that individual regions and countries would have to set their own priorities and timetables within those parameters. Country priorities would be most accurately reflected in the NPAs...*" That said, "*The Committee endorsed intermediate goals ..... It noted the importance of investment in capacity-building within countries, together with the motivation and training that would permit the implementation of programmes on an integrated basis – particularly within the framework of PHC – and their monitoring*". UNICEF Executive Board discussions reflected similar concerns: In discussions of the 1993 WSC follow-up paper, for example, one donor country expressed concern that the mid-decade goals might lead to short-term and non-sustainable actions and could favour programme delivery strategies at the expense of capacity-building and empowerment – referring to the optimal 'mix' of strategies identified in a 1992 multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF (board discussions of E/ICEF/1993/12, in E/ICEF/1993/14). So too in Board discussion of the 1994 WSC follow-up paper: "*In general, delegations agreed with the plan's focus on the mid-decade goals as a way to monitor progress and build towards achieving the goals for the year 2000. One speaker, however, said that capacity-building and empowerment should become a major part of the strategy mix and that, therefore, there should be a better balance between the setting of quantitative goals and targets and what was required in individual situations for longer-term development...Some delegations expressed concern about the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the mid-decade goals. Other speakers asked whether sufficient attention had been paid to individual countries' conditions when the goals had been set*" (board discussions of E/ICEF/1994/12, in E/ICEF/1994/13, Rev.1)

<sup>99</sup> The mid-decade goals were intended "*as a focus to mark progress and to serve as stepping stones toward achieving the end-decade goals while, at the same time, reinforcing the importance of issues related to systems-building, multisectoral action, sustainability, political will and social mobilization*" (From UNICEF/WHO joint review (JCHPSS/96.3)

<sup>100</sup> These proposals included as annex to *Operationalisation of Mid-Decade Goals* (CF/EXD/1993-008)

<sup>101</sup> CF/EXD/1993-008 (op cit).

**CHAPTER 3. FROM GLOBAL GOALS TO NATIONAL REALITIES:  
NATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF ACTION**

**Instrument of choice for follow-up at national level**

National programmes of action (NPAs) were identified as the instrument of choice to ensure country-level follow-up to WSC goals and commitments and to adapt such global goals to national realities. The WSC Plan of Action urged all governments to prepare, before the end of 1991, national programmes of action to implement the commitments undertaken in the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action (*para. 34i*). Such plans were to be an integral part of broader national development planning for revitalized economic growth, poverty reduction, human resources development and environmental protection (*para 34 chapeau*). As such, specific actions envisioned for children were to be linked to budgetary processes so as to ensure adequate resourcing (*para 34 iii*). In keeping with the participatory thrusts of the WSC vision and in recognition that progress depended on the mobilization of all sectors of society, preparation of programmes of action by provincial and local governments, as well as NGOs, the private sector and civic groups was welcomed (*para 34.i*), with families, communities, social, cultural, religious, business and other institutions, including the mass media encouraged to play an active role in support of the goals (*para 34 iv*). Moreover, the full co-operation and collaboration of all relevant UN agencies and organs as well as other international institutions was requested in support of the national plans (*para 35.iii*).

While national programmes of action were to embrace all the goals and commitments of the Summit declaration and plan of action, such global goals were to be adapted to national realities. This meant that issues related to prioritization, phasing, availability of resources and definitions of standards of achievement for NPA objectives were to take place at the national level.<sup>102</sup> As recognized in the WSC Plan of Action, “*The strategies for the achievement of the goals may also vary from country to country. Some countries may wish to add other development goals that are uniquely important and relevant for their specific country situation. Such adaptation of the goals is of crucial importance to ensure their technical validity, logistical feasibility, financial affordability and to secure political commitment and broad public support for their achievement*” (*para 6*). NPAs, therefore, were conceived as the instrument through which adaptation and implementation of the global goals would take place, with UNICEF advocacy and support for the development of NPAs a central feature of its support for national-level follow-up to the Summit.

**Participation in NPA processes and preparation**

NPAs figured prominently in the early WSC follow-up reports to the Board and to the General Assembly, particularly through mid-decade. The reports of 1992 and 1993, in fact, focused almost entirely on the processes established for WSC follow-up – including the development of NPAs and participation by NGOs, civic groups, and UN agencies and other partners. Four factors were identified at the time as contributing to the comparatively high level of follow-up to the Summit: 1) the high level of political commitment; 2) the specific, measurable, and time-bound goals arrived at through consensus; 3) widespread awareness and support by NGOs, media and other civic groups; and 4) the active support of the UN system, including UNICEF, in the NPA process.<sup>103</sup>

The early reports note a high level of national attention generated in the processes of NPA preparation. Government bodies responsible for budgets, for example, were involved in NPA formulation in more than fifty countries in 1992, and national leaders presided over a number of planning processes.<sup>104</sup> Many states established or strengthened an existing council or commission to develop the NPA and see to its implementation – in some instances with the head of State of Government as chairperson. Other states assigned the task to an inter-ministerial committee or a line ministry such as planning, health or social welfare.<sup>105</sup> NGOs were actively involved in the preparation and implementation of a number of NPAs, and children themselves were cited as participants in particular countries.<sup>106</sup> In cases where NPA preparation and review were broadly participatory, the very processes established helped stimulate awareness and foster a heightened expectation of accountability.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>102</sup> *Programme of action for achieving the goals for children and development in the 1990s...* (E/ICEF/1991/12)

<sup>103</sup> UNICEF 1992 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1992/12)

<sup>104</sup> UNICEF 1992 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1992/12); also UNICEF 1995 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1995/15); the SG's MDR 1996 (A/51/256); and Tadesse 2001

<sup>105</sup> MDR 1996 (A/51/256).

<sup>106</sup> for example, Ecuador, according to UNICEF 1992 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1992/12)

<sup>107</sup> Ledogar in Himes 1995.

From a regional perspective, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were seen as the most assiduous in their early follow-up preparation of NPAs. WSC goals were endorsed in regional fora, including the first Ibero-American summit meeting, the group of Rio president's meeting, and the first-ever Caribbean Summit for children in Barbados in 1991. Many governments in the region saw their NPAs as '*flagship plans for human and social development*': Mexico in particular was cited for establishing the most systematic follow-up directly after the Summit; this included a biannual review undertaken by the President and cabinet. Early follow-up processes in Asia were also extensive, with NPAs in many countries synchronized with and integrated into national development plans, ministerial consultations conducted, and national assemblies meeting to consider ways and means of implementing the CRC in the context of the WSC goals. SAARC leaders initiated a regional process in support of the NPAs and declared the 1990s the Decade of the Girl Child. ASEAN leaders also discussed WSC follow-up in 1992. In sub-Saharan Africa, the OAU meeting in Abuja in 1991 passed a resolution on implementing the Decade of the African Child and decided to convene an international donor's conference on assistance to Africa's children in 1992 (ICAAC) which would spur further development and implementation of NPAs.<sup>108</sup>

Early reports record a significant level of participation by relevant UN agencies in the formulation of national and sectoral programmes of action. In 1992, for example, UNICEF field offices reported technical and financial support from WHO (49 countries); UNFPA (36 countries); UNESCO (31 countries); World Bank (28 countries) and UNDP (6 countries, organizing inter-agency support to formulation of NPAs, with broad synergism seen between UNDP human development initiative and WSC), as well as bilateral support. UN regional commissions were also active (for example the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).<sup>109</sup> Somewhat later, NPAs also formed the basis for some joint UN responses through country strategy notes.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time, both the early and later progress reports noted that inter-agency follow-up – though substantial – was uneven, both in terms of greater participation by some agencies than others, and more extensive inter-agency collaboration in some countries than in others. Despite the broad-based participatory elements of the WSC and the subsequent GA resolution 45/217 urging the involvement of UN organizations, the tendency for governments and other agencies alike to see the Summit and Summit follow-up as essentially UNICEF concerns was a constant issue over the decade.<sup>111</sup> This, of course, can be linked to more general issues of inter-agency coordination and collaboration within the UN system as a whole, which the reform processes set in motion in 1997 began to address in earnest, and in which UNICEF was an active participant. At the same time, UNICEF itself, with its global mandate to report on and support WSC follow-up, may sometimes have taken on an over-active role, with field offices jumping into the driver's seat in response to strongly-felt internalized pressure to produce NPAs as documents according to the established schedule – thereby short-cutting the longer-term processes of consensus-building and debate that are needed to ensure full national ownership of both process and results.<sup>112</sup>

### **Diverse forms, contents, characteristics**

In the first WSC progress report to the UNICEF Board (1992), some 33 NPAs had been finalized, 24 outlines received, and 71 in preparation.<sup>113</sup> By the time of the mid-decade review of Summit follow-up in March 1996, 155 out of 193 countries had prepared an NPA, either in final form or in draft and implementation was well underway. This figure was to remain more-or-less stable through the end-decade. Countries without an NPA were for the most part those affected by war, disaster, or other extreme difficulties. Even 25 of the newly independent countries in central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of independent states (CEE/CIS) not separately represented at the WSC had by then signed the Summit declaration and some 15 had prepared or begun to prepare their NPAs. Moreover, 18 of the 30 industrialized countries had an NPA by mid-decade, including plans and programmes for domestic action as well as international cooperation.<sup>114</sup>

Guidelines prepared by UNICEF for the preparation of national programmes of action included an outline with the following elements: Introduction; problems and needs of children; status of children and women with respect to the Summit Goals; prioritization and adaptation of the goals; phasing and standards; resource requirements; restructuring of

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<sup>108</sup> UNICEF 1992 *WSC follow-up report to the Board* (E/ICEF/1992/12)

<sup>109</sup> UNICEF 1992 *WSC follow-up report to the Board* (E/ICEF/1992/12)

<sup>110</sup> *MDR 1996*

<sup>111</sup> See also Castillo 1995, and Tadesse 2001

<sup>112</sup> Tadesse 2001

<sup>113</sup> UNICEF 1992 *WSC follow-up report to the Board* (E/ICEF/1992/12)

<sup>114</sup> *1996 MDR* (A/51/256)

national budgets and aid allocations; implementation strategies and approaches; monitoring; research and evaluation; international cooperation.<sup>115</sup> According to UNICEF assessments, the typical NPA followed the guidelines contained in para 34 of the WSC Plan of Action, setting goals for the decade, outlining principal strategies and programmes to achieve them, defining institutional responsibilities, examining the costs of individual programmes and ways of financing them, and identifying indicators and mechanisms for monitoring progress towards the goals.<sup>116</sup> Early progress reports on NPA preparation, however, included content analysis which revealed a high diversity in forms and content, reflecting the heterogeneity of national policies and conditions.

Some NPAs were developed as broad perspective plans; others were detailed down to the project level, complete with costing (though most accounts report the costing elements as rather weak). Some were closely linked to the human development strategy framework; others focused on children's rights. Some highlighted poverty reduction; others children and the environment. Some, particularly in Africa, emphasized relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the wake of emergencies. NPA goals were tailored and adapted to the national context, with additional ones added, for example on AIDS and malaria. Recurrent strategies included: community participation; decentralization; disparity-reduction; empowerment of households, especially women; and involvement of NGOs.<sup>117</sup> The mid-decade review reported that *"in the majority of developing countries, the goals and strategies of the NPA are being incorporated into national development plans"*,<sup>118</sup> a finding largely confirmed through the review at end-decade, which referred to this as the 'integrative approach' or 'mainstreaming'.<sup>119</sup> While some NPAs included estimates of the resource implications of achieving the goals, this was found to be a weak element; moreover, such cost analysis of the goals was seen to have had only a limited impact on national resource allocations and budgetary processes in most countries.<sup>120</sup>

### NPAs as instruments of decentralization

NPAs were formulated at a time when many countries were undertaking administrative reforms favouring decentralized governance. This helped promote decentralization of NPA's, with sub-national programmes of action at the state, provincial, district or municipal level in some sixty-five countries, representing all regions<sup>121</sup>. Decentralization was particularly marked in Latin America – with decentralized NPAs underway in sixteen out of twenty-four. In the case of Brazil and Mexico, the two largest countries, all states were involved.

#### NPA decentralization in Latin America

The Latin American and Caribbean region took an early lead in efforts to decentralize the NPA process to provincial and municipal levels. Ministers and other representatives of 19 Latin American governments meeting in Mexico City, Mexico, in October 1992 to evaluate progress made with respect to NPAs in their countries, affirmed that NPAs should be a basic component of strategies to combat poverty and reduce social inequalities, and called for wide participation in their implementation, as well as for application of NPAs at local government levels, fiscal and budgetary policies that favour children, and appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. They also recommended an annual regional meeting of those responsible for NPAs in order to compare experiences and review progress. The second International Colloquium of Mayors, Defenders of Children, held in Mexico in July 1993 and the follow-up meeting of the Latin America and Caribbean Mayors' Coordinating Group, held in Quito, Ecuador, in November 1993 set the pace for the new participation of local governments in the achievement of the NPA goals, with noteworthy initiatives the establishment of a Code for Mayors as Defenders of Children and the Certification of Public Works for Children.

(from UNICEF 1993 WSC follow-up report)

A study of NPA decentralization processes conducted by the Innocenti Centre in 1993/94 offered a number of useful insights into the key factors necessary for the effectiveness of such local planning exercises,<sup>122</sup> with general implications for UNICEF support identified. Both the Innocenti study and a later end-decade assessment of lessons learned in the NPA process<sup>123</sup> noted that NPA decentralization, like state decentralization itself can produce both positive and negative outcomes, but that they do offer potential for appropriate translation of global goals to local realities and enhanced participation at the local level. At the time of the Innocenti study, a number of UNICEF country office staff felt that sub-national programmes of action helped focus actions in the manner of the earlier area-based approaches and provided an important means of revitalizing community participation around a coherent set of integrated interventions.

<sup>115</sup> *Suggested guidelines for the preparation of the progress report...* (E/ICEF/1991/17), 11 July 1991, Annex 1

<sup>116</sup> Ledogar in Himes 1995, 57

<sup>117</sup> UNICEF 1993 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1993/12)

<sup>118</sup> MDR 1996

<sup>119</sup> Tadesse 2001

<sup>120</sup> MDR 1996

<sup>121</sup> MDR (A/51/256), also SG's EDR, p. 118.

<sup>122</sup> Castillo and Akehurst 1994 and Castillo and Dunbar 1995

<sup>123</sup> Tadesse 2001

### Linkages with the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Early WSC follow-up papers monitored the status of preparation of NPAs as well as the status of ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child - taken together as the “two concrete instruments” to help keep the promises and commitments of the WSC.<sup>124</sup> As the chief means of ensuring national follow-up on the broadest commitments of the World Summit for Children, NPAs served as potentially powerful tools to promote implementation of the Convention, which figured as the first point in the 10-point WSC action plan. An early review found that a number of NPAs were, in fact, closely linked with implementation of the Convention, with that link made explicit in more than 20 NPAs from all parts of the world.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, a number of early NPAs went far beyond the vaguely formulated WSC goal on “improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances,” to define more precisely national protection targets for the disabled, for street children, orphans and abandoned children; for working children and for child protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation, including sexual exploitation and prostitution. Legislative reforms figured as a part of many NPAs, while others included a focus on communication and social mobilization for the implementation of the CRC or established new institutional mechanisms for children, including intersectoral partners responsible for child rights.<sup>126</sup>

The establishment of universal ratification of the CRC as a mid-decade goal had the effect of linking activities directed at the achievement of goals through NPAs with the underpinning legal framework provided by the Convention. In many countries, processes of CRC ratification and implementation were supported by the same actors as those most concerned with NPA implementation. Moreover, the agenda for children was considerably strengthened by States parties’ self-imposed legal commitment to the rights and obligations enshrined in the Convention. “As a timeless international treaty, the Convention legitimized the goals; meanwhile those countries endeavouring to achieve the goals were simultaneously endeavouring to honour the rights designated in the Convention. Many countries’ NPAs reflect a growing understanding of these linkages”. The accountability of programme activities under the NPAs has also been linked to the Convention monitoring process. “The Committee has made a point of reviewing NPAs with a view to reinforcing the linkage between the achievement of the goals for children and the implementation of children’s rights. The recommendations of the Committee on States parties’ reports have been a frequent subject of media attention, which has helped to keep Governments and international organizations under scrutiny with regard to the fulfillment of the promises made to children at the Summit.”<sup>127</sup>

An assessment undertaken as part of the end-decade review process found that while most NPAs were not initially rights-based, their process-based orientation and openness to ongoing strategy development fostered evolution into an increasingly child rights character, reflecting the Convention as normative framework. Moreover, a number of NPAs had both substantive and extensive interfaces with the Convention.<sup>128</sup> Even when formulated more particularly as an instrument for translating the 27 specific global goals of the WSC into national plans and programmes, NPAs helped set a time frame and target interventions aimed at the survival and development rights of the CRC - described as “essential first steps towards realizing the rights outlined in the Convention”<sup>129</sup> and as “the minimum core obligations” of states parties to the Convention.<sup>130</sup> NPAs have, in fact, featured among the important documents requested by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in their review of States Parties reports on implementation of the Convention.<sup>131</sup>

It is clear from these assessments that “NPAs bring important organizational resources to bear on the implementation of child rights.”<sup>132</sup> The challenge, as perceived throughout the decade, was to more fully link, at both national and international levels, the processes of implementing and monitoring the Convention and NPAs.<sup>133</sup> While the end-decade

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<sup>124</sup> UNICEF 1993 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1993/12)

<sup>125</sup> UNICEF 1993 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1993/12)

<sup>126</sup> Ledogar in Himes 1995.

<sup>127</sup> MDR 1996

<sup>128</sup> Tadesse 2001

<sup>129</sup> *The role of UNICEF in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (E/ICEF/1991/L.7)

<sup>130</sup> Himes 1995.

<sup>131</sup> UNICEF 1993 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1993/12)

<sup>132</sup> Ledogar in Himes 1995, p. 59.

<sup>133</sup> Himes 1995 : “Achieving an approach to the CRC based on social planning and management by verifiable objectives would represent a major step forward in the human rights field. This accomplishment would also convert the Convention on the Rights of the Child from just another declaration of noble intentions to a genuinely effective tool for enhancing the well-being of children and ensuring the respect, protection and fulfillment of their now widely recognized rights”

reports submitted by national governments suggest that this was successfully done in a number of cases, the challenge remains with us as we move into implementation of the World Fit for Children.

### Assessment of the NPA experience

With NPAs such a prominent part of UNICEF's progress reports to the Board, particularly through mid-decade, Board members from both donor and programme countries had ample opportunity to express their views on their relative merits. In discussions of the WSC follow-up report of 1994, for example, many delegations praised NPA processes and called for continued support, including in monitoring. Individual delegates characterized NPAs as a "valuable experience, rallying many levels of society on behalf of action for children"; referred to the NPA linked with the CRC as representing "national landmarks"; and noted how the NPA became "part of reconstruction processes after war". Some spoke of "developing NPAs as a strategic thrust for the future"; and highlighted the importance of NPA monitoring as "a central means to sustain momentum to date" and a way of "bringing together national agencies in a shared monitoring initiative." Some praised "national capacity-building as a major thrust of the NPAs"; spoke highly of the "integration of mid-decade goals into NPAs serving to accelerate progress on longer-term goals of WSC"; and pointed to potential of "NPAs as costing and fund-raising mechanisms." Referring to the linkages between NPAs and UNICEF country programmes of cooperation, some felt that "NPAs are in fact the coherent implementation of country programmes," and that "NPAs should be the main strategy followed by UNICEF in its country programme"; with "value-added through links to country strategy notes." In reply to these last comments, the UNICEF Executive Director noted that, in fact, the "UNICEF country programming process was merging increasingly with NPAs so that the country programme would become a concrete expression of the UNICEF contribution to national commitments to children."<sup>134</sup>

Taking stock of the NPAs at mid-decade, the overall view was broadly positive, with NPAs seen to be part of a living process, rather than just documents that, once completed, are left to gather dust on ministry shelves.<sup>135</sup> In short:

*"NPAs have been a critical component of the goal-oriented approach pioneered at the global level by the World Summit for Children. Although the quality and effectiveness of these programmes of action vary between and within countries, the NPA process has been a unique experience from which much can be learned and on which much can be build in the future. Preparation of NPAs provided opportunities for many capacity-building activities and mobilization exercises, some of which have had valuable spin-offs for social and economic development in general, independently of their immediate contribution to the achievement of the Summit agenda."<sup>136</sup>*

An assessment at end-decade drew a somewhat more mixed picture of the NPA experience. A number of the NPAs were indeed found to be truly effective instruments to motivate systemic action and cross-sectoral monitoring of the status children, adapting to changing circumstances, and harnessing dynamic alliances. In other cases, however, "the strategic intent of [NPAs] was not followed through with active processes of coordination, collaboration and monitoring", such that the "transition from visionary strategic plans to broad-based action has not been fully accomplished."<sup>137</sup> Success in doing so was found to depend on a number of factors, including consensus-building and participation in the establishment and implementation of shared goals and priorities; effective target-setting and institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring, including at sub-national level; support for capacity-building; and adequate resourcing; all of which needs to be coupled with sustained political commitment. Altogether, it was estimated that "roughly one third of the 155 countries that prepared [programmes of action for children] appear to have realised significant value-added ...in terms of national visioning for children beyond survival and traditional welfare, motivating systemic action and engendering a culture of cross-sectoral monitoring of the status of children."<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, as the Secretary-General's review of progress at end-decade concluded:

*"The national plans have elevated the profile of children in international and national political agendas and have advanced the mainstreaming of children's concerns in public policies and budgets. The establishment of benchmark goals and targets through NPAs has led to better monitoring of children's situations. Planning for children has also served as a vehicle for wider coordination in the social sectors, at the national, provincial and local levels. Accountability has been*

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<sup>134</sup> Report of the 1994 Board discussions (E/ICEF/1994/13/rev.1)

<sup>135</sup> UNICEF 1995 WSC follow-up report to the Board (E/ICEF/1995/15)

<sup>136</sup> MDR 1996

<sup>137</sup> Tadesse 2001.

<sup>138</sup> Tadesse 2001, ii

*strengthened, as has awareness of the problems faced by children who lack access to basic services or mechanisms to ensure the protection of their rights”<sup>139</sup>.*

Four key qualities were seen to be present in many of the positive experiences since the World Summit in national planning for children. These include 1) sustained levels of political commitment; 2) broad participation, especially among subnational governments and civil society, in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of plans; 3) processes of mainstreaming of child-focused goals, priorities and strategies into wider national frameworks for development planning, resource allocation and implementation; and 4) high-level coordination and monitoring of policies and strategies for children, with technical and administrative support from clearly identified agencies. These were the qualities which helped generate high levels of national ownership and consistent follow-up in the most positive experiences of national plans of action, and without which action planning for children could be rendered an isolated technical exercise without wider influence.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, Report of the Secretary-general (A/S-27/3)*, 4 May 2001, para 431, p. 117

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 434, p. 118