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**Statement by the President  
of the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC,  
His Excellency General André Kolingba**

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(interpretation from French)

I wish to tell you of the high priority we attach in our country to improving health conditions, the perinatal period and infancy—for it is true that my country's development can be achieved only if the problems of children are taken into account. Women and children represent 68 per cent of the population, who live in conditions characterized by poverty, infectious and parasitic diseases, lack of potable water and an inadequate health infrastructure. The mortality rate is quite considerable, since it stands at 235 per thousand.

In the past 10 years, with the scant resources at our disposal, my country has made great efforts on behalf of children. Thus, for example, the rate of vaccination has reached 52 per cent, the figure for health services for confinements has reached 84 per cent, and for post-natal consultations, 65 per cent. We intend soon to reach a 75-per-cent overall vaccination rate.

The efforts of the Central African State—despite enormous difficulties and thanks to the help of friendly countries and international organizations—prove our determination to ensure our population the minimum well-being. The results obtained, however, do not permit us to believe that victory is at hand, because faced with a rate of school attendance lower than 60 per cent, and with a known high rate of mortality, the Central African Republic knows that much remains to be done.

The international community must increase its aid and life-saving activities to help a population whose hopes dwindle from day to day. May this appeal be heeded, especially by those whose conscience must be awakened and by those who hope to see children enjoy a happy childhood throughout the world.

On behalf of the children of Central Africa, I thank you.

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Discussion Session III:

# ENHANCING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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## **Introductory Statement by the Prime Minister of JAPAN, His Excellency Mr. Toshiki Kaifu**

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(delivered in Japanese; English text provided by the delegation)

Mr. President, I have the honour to address the theme of "Enhancing child development".

It is estimated that in the world today there are one and a quarter billion children who are at an age when they should be receiving a primary education, and yet more than 100 million are not, because of poverty or because their countries are not at peace.

While the educational environment is better in material terms, problems stemming from the ills of modern society proliferate: the negative effects of education that places excessive emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and a weakening of family ties. These problems cause serious concern about the future of children. What is important is to establish humane objectives for education.

In developing countries, the first priority should be to institute and improve basic education and raise the literacy rate among children, so as to enable them to live with dignity. There is a saying in my country, "Education is a century-long project". National development can take place only when all people have the opportunity to receive education. There should accordingly be no more argument as to which should come first, economic development or education.

In Japan, even in the pre-modern Edo period, many received a primary education—from neighbourhood tutors, or in the schools of the feudal clan.

After the Meiji Restoration, the new Government of Japan gave the highest priority to achieving universal primary education, in order to build a modern State, and to that end attached the greatest importance to the training and recruiting of capable teachers and the enhancement of their social status. Special consideration was given to the remuneration teachers should receive.

It is no exaggeration to say that the policy of promoting education constituted the very foundation of Japan's development. Speaking from my past experience as Minister of Education, I believe it is imperative for the State, which is responsible for maintaining the educational system and facilities, and the family, in which the child's character is formed, to work in harmony with each other as they perform their respective roles.

While education at home is the responsibility of both parents, the role of the mother is of particular importance, and it is therefore a matter of serious concern to us that 65 per cent of all illiterate adults are women. For if a mother is literate and adequately educated, she will provide an environment beneficial to the growth of her child, who can consequently receive an appropriate education at school. Indeed, as has often been pointed out, a mother is a child's first teacher.

This year has been designated International Literacy Year, and the World Conference on Education for All was held in Thailand. I understand that there attention was paid to the respective roles of the Government and the family, and that agreement

was reached on such goals as expanding early childhood developmental activities, promoting basic education through the year 2000 and reducing by one half the illiteracy rate among adults, and especially women.

Building on what I have said so far, I would like to make the following strong appeal: first, the promotion and improvement of education should be given a high priority in national development plans. To that end, firm determination, action and strong leadership are required of all of us. Specifically, I propose that teachers in compulsory education systems be given favoured treatment with respect to the remuneration they receive.

Secondly, in forming the personality of the child, the family and the local community have critical roles to play. I propose that the importance of the education of girls be recognized, as they are the mothers of the future, and that under the guidance of international organizations the countries concerned adopt positive measures to improve literacy among women.

Thirdly, in the promotion and improvement of education, careful consideration should be given to the culture, customs and traditions of each country. It is therefore necessary that countries engage in self-help efforts, including the development of human resources, and my country will not stint in the co-operation it extends to them. In that connection, Japan intends to establish a trust fund for the promotion of literacy for the Asia-Pacific region and thus to promote basic education in that part of the world.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that world peace is essential if children are to receive an education free from fear and with hope for the future. We have great expectations as to the role the United Nations will play in bringing about a just peace, and I have high regard for its recent activities in this area. Japan, with its emphasis on diplomacy centred on the United Nations, intends to participate positively in the entire range of the activities of the world Organization.

We must always remember that it is children who are the greatest victims; it is children who suffer most when peace gives way to war. I would therefore like to urge that the leaders of all countries redouble their efforts to achieve world peace and stability.

## **Introductory Statement by the President of BRAZIL, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Collor**

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(delivered in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation)

Ladies and gentlemen, the enormous number of children in my country and their serious social problems made it imperative that I attend this meeting to attest to the willingness of the present Brazilian Government to face and to deal with these issues head on and, at the same time, to share with you our views on how we can work together to accomplish this goal, on the national level as well as through international cooperation.

Our responsibilities in this regard are on three basic levels: first, children need to have their basic human rights respected. Secondly, children also need to be assured the right to live in societies that enjoy the fruits of progress and that assure them living standards commensurate with the requisites of human dignity. Lastly, children need to be assured of the right to a protected and clean environment. Theirs is the future. Thus, it is our obligation to bequeath to them a habitable planet.

The ethical imperative before us is to confront the unacceptable reality of over 100 million children throughout the world dying before the age of five in the course of the present decade. It is our political and moral duty to reverse that trend, meeting the challenge with the required commitment.

On the national level, we must reallocate governmental priorities and concentrate resources on social programmes in the areas of health, education, housing and sanitation.

In Brazil we are making an unprecedented effort towards that end. Redeeming our children is the Government's highest priority. The new Statute on Children and Adolescents that I approved last May embodies the concept of full protection enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We launched a programme entitled "Ministry of Children", aimed at efficiently and rationally bringing together different areas of Government to assist needy children. We have also launched a national literacy campaign on a scale perhaps never before attempted by any country in the world. In the area of health we have undertaken the greatest immunization campaign carried out in my country's history. We have outlined an emergency housing programme as a first step towards reducing the huge housing shortage in the country. At the same time we are seeking, through another plan, to improve ways to meet the basic needs of poorer people in the areas of sanitation and water supply. In the face of recent reports concerning threats to the human rights and to the very lives of children in my country, I have also called for the restructuring of the Council for the Protection of Human Rights, in the Ministry of Justice, with a view to converting that body into an instrument for the permanent protection of the physical integrity of Brazilian children. The Federal Government, together with State and local governments in cities where the problem is most acute, is already taking steps to put an end to shameful abuses perpetrated against children.



On the international level, we must work together to assure all children the full enjoyment of their basic rights.

For many of us, the 1980s were a time of crisis and economic decline. Millions of children paid the price for national economic adjustment programmes by forfeiting their physical development, health and education.

It is vital that economic growth coupled with social justice once again be accorded the highest priority on the international agenda and that this meeting represent a milestone of political determination in that direction.

Improved living conditions in real terms for children can only be secured through socio-economic development, the raising of general standards of material well-being and the establishment of an international economy able to do away with present distortions. To that end we must promote a just and lasting solution to the issue of foreign debt, including measures to reduce and convert funds for investment into social programmes on behalf of children. It is also necessary to reverse the process of net outflow of capital from the developing countries, to avoid protectionist practices that hamper North-South trade, to remove restrictions on the transfer of technology and to channel additional resources for investment.

The protection of nature has given rise in our day to intense international concern. We are glad that this is so. The adequate survival of our children depends on what we do today to salvage their future environment.

The preservation of the environment calls for constructive dialogue at the international level. It also requires that models of sustainable development be adopted throughout the world. We must meet the basic needs of the poorest among us by breaking the vicious circle that links poverty to the degradation of nature and by promoting genuine ecological awareness leading to a substantial reduction in present-day patterns of waste and depletion of natural resources. We must work together in the further development and dissemination of new and clean environmental technologies and in channelling, preferably on concessional terms, an increasingly greater amount of funds into the protection of nature.

Those are the challenges that lie ahead as an unavoidable stage on the path leading us to a world of peace and well-being, a world in which children are not punished for the errors and lack of foresight of generations that failed to perceive their role as adults as coterminous with responsibility for the future of humanity.

**Commentary by the Prime Minister of the UNITED KINGDOM,  
Her Excellency The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher**

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First, I should like to congratulate the six sponsoring countries on convening this Summit, and particularly you, Mr. President, as well as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the excellent work it does for children throughout the world. I should also like to say that whoever compiled the video film that we saw did a wonderful job. It truly brought home to us the circumstances of many children throughout the world.

The theme I have chosen for my brief remarks is the family—first, because it is one that unites all peoples and all nations; and secondly, because unless we both identify and enhance the role of the family, we shall not succeed in bringing the better life to our children that we all seek. No bond is stronger than that of the family. It sustains us throughout life, in good times and in bad.

May I have just a little bit extra to my four minutes, Mr. President? I want to comment on one or two other things that have been said and, like you, I think it is sad if we don't get a little bit of debate.

I listened with fascination to President Havel's brilliant speech. He spoke of circumstances that many of us, fortunately, have never experienced. I wish to say that I understood both things he was saying. I understood why parents, being fearful for the safety of their children, in fact tolerated the lies and oppression of the dictator. We would all understand parents' fear for their children. I understand how that might have protected their children in the short term, but I understand too what President Havel is saying—that in the longer term it merely subjected many more generations of children to that oppression. It was wonderful to have it put to us like that, and I believe that many of us would like to say that it required a very special brand of courage to fight those dictators, the courage that President Havel had, as did many others whose names we do not know.

I should also like very briefly to say that most of us have not experienced the picture that President Chissano of Mozambique painted. I have seen some of the refugees coming from that country. The children are brutalized. The terror and cruelty are beyond what most of us could ever have imagined, as are the problems in Lebanon of which the Prime Minister spoke.

These are evil things in all three cases, evil things done by wicked people. They bring us hard up against the fundamental nature of human personality and character. In the one case, this is dealt with by supreme courage, and, in the other, we have to do all we can to try to resolve those conflicts.

However, the remarks that I shall make are not particularly addressed to those, but to the way family life has its problems in both the West and the developing countries, albeit of a different kind and a different order. Most people, generally, are anxious to do the right thing for the children, to give them a better life. That is the most natural ambition in the world.

For children, the family is the most important factor in their lives. The dominant influence on a child's health is the family. Does the mother look after the child and go for the injections that she can get? The dominant influence on a child's behaviour is the family and the example it sets. The dominant influence on the success of a child's education is the interest taken by the family in the work of the teacher and the school.

The most important things we can do as parents, I believe, after looking after the material needs of our children, is to give them our time, our affection and our wise counsel. If we fail to do that, and something later goes wrong, we should never cease to blame ourselves, and we should always ask: "Did I take time to understand their problems, to talk things through with them? Was I patient enough? Did they know that home was the place they could always turn to and find loyalty and affection, no matter what happened?"

We also need to give children fun and laughter. It is important to build in happy memories, because they stay with children all their lives, reminding them of the warmth, the laughter and the togetherness of home.

Yet we are finding many family difficulties in the Western countries. That is a lesson that economic progress does not necessarily solve human problems. We still have homelessness among young people, we still have juvenile delinquency, and the use of drugs often has its roots in family breakdown or unhappy family circumstances.

In developing countries, as so many speakers have said so graphically, the problems are of a quite different order. Parents often have to toil unremittingly to provide the barest necessities of life, with little time to devote to their children. Television brings us horrifying images, which we cannot erase from our minds: desperate mothers in famine-ridden countries, their babies in the last stages of malnutrition; and parents in Kurdish villages, as some have already referred to, trying in vain to shield their children from the effects of Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons.

The children of families such as these can know none of the joys, the happiness or the security that should be the right of every child. What can we do? How can we help? Colleagues have already listed some things. Most of all, children need to be protected from war and from want. That is something with which the United Nations can help. We may not always succeed, but we must always continue to try and extend the help we give, whether it be in resolving conflicts or in bringing material help to the children.

We must try to see that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is observed far and wide. It is not going to be enough to sign it. Those things must be observed. I should like to refer particularly to the terrors of child abuse and the trade in child pornography. Those are a blot on civilization. Or should I perhaps not use that phrase? Perhaps "civilization" and "society" are too remote. Let us be more blunt about it: these things are caused by the wickedness of individuals; they must be caught and brought to justice and punished very severely.

More of our help to the poorer countries should be devoted to the needs of families and children. I believe we should make a special effort to stamp out the diseases that are most likely to maim or kill children. Colleagues have referred to them. But this should be done not only through UNICEF or Governments. Many will know that

Rotary Clubs across the world are raising enough money to immunize every one of the world's children against polio. So our duties are not absolved when we have done the things that Governments can do or even when we have done the things that families can do.

The greatest pressure on the Earth's resources, and therefore on the quality of life—and above all family life—comes from what some other colleagues have referred to: unprecedented population growth. The population of the world at the time I was born was 2 billion. It will be 6 billion by the end of this decade. And there is no way in which we shall be able to solve some of the world's problems if population continues to grow at such a high rate.

Family planning is absolutely vital. Otherwise, we shall not be able to get on top of the problems we now have, nor the environmental problems. And I think a thing which particularly affects us, perhaps, in the Western world is absent parents. We should prevent absent parents, mostly men, from walking away from their responsibility to maintain their children. We find single parents—the father has just disappeared. They have a responsibility to maintain the children, even if they walk away from it. Parenthood is for life, and to deny that is the greatest deprivation you can inflict upon a child.

I want to make a particular point here. The help that we give through UNICEF or through Governments is not meant to substitute for the responsibilities of parents. We must not think we can cast all our duties onto Governments. We cannot. The assistance that Governments and UNICEF give is to help parents the better to carry out their responsibilities more fully and effectively.

Just as we want to transmit a good environment and an ecologically stable world to future generations, so we want to hand on a world with children from secure and loving homes to be its future parents.

We all have to have ideals, and we all have to find wonderful language in which to express our thoughts. Very few of us can do it. Not many presidents or prime ministers are writers, although some attain that higher distinction. We have a rather lovely poem in English—which says: "Know you what it is to be a child? It is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness ... it is to see the world in a grain of sand and Heaven in a wild flower. It is to hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour."

So many children are denied these joys, and what we say seems pitifully inadequate. But we go away from here knowing that it is what we do that will count.

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## **Commentary by the Prime Minister of SPAIN, His Excellency Don Felipe González**

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(interpretation from Spanish)

I will contribute to winning friends for the Chair by being very brief.

First of all, I would like to say that I am in complete agreement with the draft Declaration and with the proposed Plan of Action. This Summit expresses the political and ethical commitment that we attach to this Declaration and Plan of Action. I can say that, in Spain, developments have been positive, both as regards problems of survival and protection and as regards the development of children. We are in a position strictly to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We believe, as Mrs. Thatcher has just said, that it should be universally applicable. I am aware that problems related to children are not economic alone. Just as I am aware of this, I believe it is essential for agencies such as UNICEF and others to have the financial resources they need in order to implement the proposed plan of action. I, therefore, wish to state that my country pledges to implement the Plan of Action which will emerge from this Summit. I repeat, this is not enough to resolve all problems, but it is necessary, and we will assume our responsibilities *vis-à-vis* the international community.

One more comment, in agreement with words that we have heard here. Undoubtedly, at the root of the struggle for the development of children, there are family problems involved, there are moral problems and, above all, there is a problem of economic development. Some of those who have spoken have already said this. But I would like to draw attention, in agreement with what was stated by the President of the Federative Republic and by Mrs. Thatcher, that it is not possible, even with a good level of development, to give a response to global demographic growth if we do not take reasonable family planning strictly into account. There will be no balance between economic growth and our response to galloping demography, such as the situation that we are confronting in our world today. So I think we need to be aware of this. And if we work in that direction, then most likely we will be able to act in defence of children and to protect children better than we can with lofty statements.

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**Commentary by the President of the Presidency  
of the SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA,  
His Excellency Mr. Borisav Jović**

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(delivered in Serbo-Croatian; English text furnished by the delegation)

I am honoured to be attending this gathering dedicated to children, with such noble and humane objectives. May I pay a tribute to its initiators and express our appreciation to UNICEF and its Executive Director, Mr. Grant, for their dedicated efforts in preparing and organizing this World Summit for Children.

In addressing the subject "Enhancing child development", the previous speakers have shed light on different aspects of this issue. I wish to draw your attention to the importance of environmental conservation for the destiny of the children of today and of future generations.

Environmental degradation imperils the fate of all mankind. Ecological disasters with dramatic consequences are a serious warning of what the future holds in store for us if nothing meaningful is done. This afflicts children the most, as they are still in the process of development and, at the same time, incapable of defending themselves or recognizing danger.

The present-day generations bequeath their mistakes and delusions to the coming generations. Mr. Milorad Pavić, a well-known Yugoslav author, says:

"Children are the ones whose water we are drinking and whose land we are polluting. ... We have already torn their sky by marking holes in the ozone layer of the Earth, and underneath that torn sky we are leaving them hunger as our legacy."

It is high time that we give this serious thought and do something about it.

Ecological problems have also become acute in those countries which have undergone rapid development over the past few decades. However, thanks to their affluence and material potential—they have been managing to resolve environmental issues more successfully, primarily by the transfer of so-called dirty technologies to the less developed parts of the world. Therefore, ecological problems are being manifested most critically in developing countries.

It is for that reason that I wish to emphasize the fact that over 1 billion people, i.e., one fifth of mankind, still do not have enough food, clean water, conditions for an elementary education and basic health care.

Therefore, we cannot look forward to substantive progress in creating an ecologically sounder society if development and the problems of glaring inequality and poverty are not dealt with beforehand. However, poverty and ignorance lead to mistakes in a large number of these countries already in the first stage of industrial development, a fact which has a very adverse effect on the environment. The cruel price of ecological failures is paid most dearly by children, as the least resistant human beings, who are,



at the same time, unable to protect themselves. It is in the interest of the entire international community to create conditions for the more balanced economic and technological development of all countries, which would take into account the ecological dimension, not only the financial one.

At their ninth summit conference, held in Belgrade in September 1989, the non-aligned countries, particularly stressing the dimension of the threat posed to children's lives, adopted a special document on these problems, entitled "Child survival and development".

Just as Yugoslavia unreservedly supported the initiative to hold this Summit for Children, it most resolutely upholds the adoption of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the Declaration.

I wish to assure you that, within the scope of its national policies and legislation, Yugoslavia will do everything in its power to bring these objectives and tasks to fruition.

## **Commentary by the President of the GAMBIA, His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara**

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Your proposal, Sir, meets with my approval, as I have no option!

In the past few years, commendable results have been achieved in improving child survival through oral rehydration therapy, immunization, and the wider use of antibiotics. These efforts must, of course, be sustained and intensified. But child survival must not be an end in itself; we must focus also on the development of the child to his full potential. To this end, at least three factors are essential: a stable and peaceful social environment, including a stable family environment, as was stated so eloquently by Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom; proper nutrition and health; and education.

I want to focus on education. Education and development are two sides of the same coin. It is vital that children, who are the human resource of mankind and the leaders of tomorrow, be given comprehensive, high-quality and relevant education in their formative years, when they are most responsive to their social and physical environment.

It is said that the debt crisis and subsequent cuts in government expenditure in developing countries, exacerbated by rapid population growth, have adversely affected the quality of primary education, resulting in high rates of drop-outs, dilapidated school buildings and classrooms, and inadequate furniture and textbooks. The international community has a moral responsibility to increase the level of aid for primary education in the developing countries. The World Bank's loan facilities, providing for the allocation of further funds for primary education, are justified, but, in my view, the \$1.5 billion that the Bank, at the World Conference on Education, pledged to lend annually should be reviewed and increased. This is imperative, as is indicated by these remarks of the President of the World Bank:

"People are the ultimate resource. Sustaining that resource is the all-encompassing goal of development, and education is the well-spring of development."

Again, the debt crisis and reduced government expenditures have acted as a brake on the idea of education for all.

Today—in 1990—approximately 100 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 do not attend school, and one in four adults in the world—almost 1 billion people—cannot read or write.

The declaration of 1990 as International Literacy Year could not have been more timely, especially for women, who, in the developing countries, are actively engaged in all sectors of the economy, especially agriculture. They need literacy and numeracy skills to deal with their marketing management transactions, to improve their productivity, and to generate income for the family. Such family welfare would have a beneficial effect on the children by enhancing their development.

Literate mothers appreciate family planning better, and they feed and care for their children better. Female enrolment for education should therefore be accorded high priority in developing countries. Modern communication techniques should be used to provide education on family planning, food production, nutrition and the environment. An illiterate female population is not conducive to the development of a country's human-resource base. As the saying goes:

"When you educate a man, you educate an individual; when you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

Projects such as "Women in Development", which is sponsored by the World Bank, should be accorded high priority for international support.

**Statement by the President of HONDURAS,  
His Excellency Lic. Rafael Leonardo Callejas Romero**

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It is with great interest and hope that my country—Honduras—is taking part in this Summit. Our presence is an expression of my Government's commitment to do its best to protect the interests and the future of our children.

I shall refer briefly to two subjects—one that is of a general nature, and one that is extremely specific. The first involves the severe economic and social crisis that affects the Central American region. In this regard, of course, Honduras is no exception. We have an obligation to face this crisis very seriously and responsibly. We are aware that only by generating sustained economic growth shall we be able to protect the future of children and of our homeland.

It is not easy for any Government to take measures of economic austerity. Such measures imply enormous sacrifice, and that can have an extremely grave impact on the most impoverished sectors. In our case, 70 per cent of the population are poor, and 54 per cent are in a state of extreme poverty. The mortality rate is 80 per 1,000; 42 per cent of children drop out of school in the third grade; almost 48 per cent of mothers are single.

Hence, this requires that, as and when economic adjustment programmes are put in place—programmes which can seriously undermine the welfare of children in the short run, given their vulnerability—international bodies and contributing countries establish a social security net with the aim of expeditiously providing resources for programmes aimed at child nutrition and the single mother, with the goal of mitigating the immediate impact such adjustment programmes usually have on the poorest sectors.

Specifically, and in the context of this World Summit for Children, I would request the industrialized countries to help in the struggle against drug addiction in children by eliminating toluene from the glue they produce, since that substance contributes greatly to such addiction.

We were one of the first 20 countries that ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and our participation in this Summit reflects our strong commitment to the vitally urgent task of guaranteeing the improvement of the lives of children in the long term.

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**Statement by the Prime Minister of FINLAND,  
His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri**

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After listening to the discussion, I am still convinced that whatever measures are taken, two factors will ultimately dictate the results of our joint Plan of Action. These two factors are: population and environment. The issue is whether we will be able to halt population growth and degradation of the environment. Successful management of these two fundamentally interlinked problems is the prerequisite for sustainable development.

Our generation already has the required knowledge for efficient population control. What is needed in most parts of the world are policy decisions on domestic efforts to support family planning, child spacing and related activities which favour smaller family size.

Our own national experience in Finland clearly demonstrates that improved primary health care services lead to the desired decrease in birth rates. Alongside international support programmes, the national decision makers are still in a key position to initiate new, efficient programmes.

The other challenge the political leaders face is the degradation of our natural environment. The farther away from home a mother has to look for clean water and firewood, the farther away sustainable development remains—and the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental deterioration will never be broken. Of course, the pressure on nature calls for international action; special efforts are needed in industrialized countries to protect our common ecological base on Earth.

Let me join those who have referred to the protection of children during armed conflicts. The recent crises have repeatedly demonstrated that children are the most vulnerable group being victimized by political upheavals and wars. Children are unable to protect themselves. If we are not able to build the foundation for a peaceful world, we will not be in a position to build a sound ecosystem and healthy life for our children, nor for their children either.

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## **Statement by the President of COLOMBIA, His Excellency Dr. César Gaviria**

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(interpretation from Spanish)

I wanted on this day, to talk about the success of my country's new programmes to protect children: the code for minors, the \$200 million we spend every year for child nutrition, the \$100 million we spend every year under a specific programme to reduce child mortality. None the less, given the situation in my country, I am obliged to refer to a problem that affects the children of developing and developed countries alike, that jeopardizes the children of the future and not only those of the present—that is, the problem of drug trafficking.

My country is making enormous efforts on the basis of our principles, not only because of our commitment to the international community to confront the problem of drug trafficking, but also because there is an enormous cost in human lives involved—the lives of our best and youngest leaders. In the last electoral campaign alone, we lost three of our presidential candidates—half of the candidates, in fact. We have lost many of our judges, our lawyers and our police officers in our struggle to combat this terrible scourge of mankind. We are involved in a struggle to which we have devoted all the strength and efforts of our nation and a good part of the resources allocated for children. That is why I wish to cite some figures. Almost \$1 billion has been allocated this year to combating the problem of drug trafficking, much more money than we are able to devote to our children. This is a problem where children are extremely vulnerable, not only in terms of drug use—which we find in schools and colleges in the developed countries as well—but also in terms of criminality. Most of the crimes in our country related to drug trafficking are committed by children under the age of 15. This shows the extremes to which the problem of drug trafficking can lead.

Just as we have mobilized collectively to face the problem of the environment and to deal with the situation in the Middle East in order to protect a small, defenceless country, the international community should mobilize its efforts to fight drug trafficking.

This Organization, the United Nations, where we are meeting, has three agencies dealing with this subject instead of one, and the subject is sometimes treated in a rather bureaucratic way and not with the seriousness required for a problem which, without any doubt, is one of the gravest problems affecting the future of mankind because of the great threat it poses to our children.

Therefore, my country, which is making this vast effort—and making it much more intensely than other nations—asks the international community to demonstrate more seriousness and more multilateralism in combating the problem of drug trafficking, and to tackle it not only in terms of interdiction but also in terms of consumption. In the developed countries—certainly Japan and those in Europe—drug use is increasing much more than it is being reduced in the United States. That is a problem that affects all of us equally and that mankind must deal with.



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**Statement by the President  
of the UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA,  
His Excellency The Hon. Ali Hassan Mwinyi**

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In its report for 1989, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reminded us that "in how we bring up our children are sown the seeds of peace and prosperity or of violence and degradation". The presence of so many Heads of State and Government at this Summit raises our hopes for a world consensus to save succeeding generations from the scourge of abject poverty, hunger, malnutrition, disease, *apartheid* and other man-made calamities.

Tanzania believes that there is an inherent relationship between economic prosperity and the well-being of children. As a result of growing poverty in many developing countries, many children are faced with the problems of a lack of clean water, inadequate primary health care, malnutrition, insufficient food and limited educational facilities. It is true therefore that millions of children are growing up in circumstances which mean that they will never fulfil the mental and physical potential with which they were born.

In Tanzania great efforts were made during the first two decades of our independence to expand essential social services, including health, education and water for the benefit of our children and our population as a whole. Those efforts were made with the support and assistance of friendly countries and international organizations, including UNICEF. The Government has put increasing emphasis on communities' own responsibility for basic social services. Self-help schemes are encouraged, and communities are expected to make contributions to the cost of maintaining the primary education system, the health system, and water supply schemes. As a result of those combined efforts, infant mortality was reduced from 171 per 1,000 births in 1967 to 105 at present. Life expectancy has increased from 35 years at independence to 51 years at present. More people now have access to clean water. Illiteracy has been eradicated by more than 85 per cent.

But our ability to sustain those services has been greatly eroded by the current economic crisis which has affected many developing countries. That crisis has caused a great loss in income through declining world commodity prices, rising costs of essential imports, and debt servicing. The results are not hard to find. Health care has sharply deteriorated because of an acute shortage of essential medicines and equipment. Educational equipment and supplies are in dire shortage. Unfortunately, those who suffer most from this deterioration are our children. Their hope for survival and a better future depends on our collective efforts to create a favourable world economic environment which would be conducive to development efforts and would enable families to meet the basic needs of their children through their own efforts. That can best be achieved through genuine co-operation between all nations of the world to combat poverty. We know that the world has the means and resources to eradicate that poverty.

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**Statement by the President of ROMANIA,  
His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu**

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Mr. President, dear colleagues: Those who remain insensitive to children have lost their belief in the future of mankind. Our gathering here, for the first time in history, is a living testimony that we are looking ahead. It is proof that we want to have a future.

Unfortunately, in Romania we inherited a tragic situation from past political régimes. As a result of wrong policies, an impressive number of children were disregarded. I have particularly in mind the orphans and the disabled. They are part of our society. We deplore their suffering, and we are ready to take all necessary steps to overcome the present situation. Now we will have to see the crude reality, and we will have to cope with it. In a free and open society such a tragedy can no longer be silenced.

In facing this serious matter, the Romanian people felt encouraged by the assistance we were provided by friendly countries. We have been moved by such solidarity, and we are deeply grateful to those who cared for our needs. But we are aware that the main effort has to be made by us. Child development requires a strategy whose design will be well thought out and whose implementation will be consistent.

A few days ago Romania ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the forthcoming legislation will be aligned to those international standards. Our new Constitution will guarantee the right of the child to develop and will protect the mother and the family—an issue that was so rightly emphasized here by Prime Minister Thatcher. Improving the health of the younger generation, the quality of their life and their education will be a high priority. We are building an educational system focused on the human personality, in conditions of freedom and dignity. In pursuing such a policy, we find valuable guidance in the Declaration and the Plan of Action we are about to adopt.

We acknowledge that the status of the children and of the most disadvantaged categories of the population is indicative of the level of development in a country. We know that we still have a lot to do in this respect. We want to learn from others how to solve everyday problems and in particular to make public opinion and authorities sensitive to the importance and urgency of the needs of children. That is the spirit in which we attend this Summit, and I warmly congratulate its initiators.

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**Statement by the Prime Minister of ICELAND,  
His Excellency Mr. Steingrímur Hermannsson**

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So many good words have been spoken around this table today that I find very little to add. Not having been given time to comment on the fine speeches, I shall limit myself to two items which I found to be rather lacking.

To start with, I should like to stress the extreme importance of basic education today. It should be given a very high priority. It is necessary not only for the development of the child itself, because only a well-educated youngster is able to communicate properly in the complex society of today—but also for the country itself, because only a country with a large group of healthy and well-educated youngsters is able to develop properly in this age of technology and information.

I should also like to stress that every country's education must be based on its own cultures and thus strengthen the identity of that country. We in my country, Iceland, have found this to be extremely important.

Then I should like to say a very few words about the problems which we have in the so-called developed countries and which we have not discussed very much around this table. We in Iceland are very fortunate with respect to children's welfare. The mortality rate of infants is only 6 per 1,000—a 99.4 per cent survival rate, which I believe is, along with Sweden's, the highest in the world. We have a literacy rate which I think is as high as can be achieved. Yet we notice in this fast-moving society of today, with the increasing demand being made for material gains, that there are problems in the development of children.

And what about youth violence and drug problems in the big cities? Can that not be traced to something having gone wrong with the development of the children? I believe that we in the so-called developed countries have to face those problems much more seriously than we have done so far.

In conclusion, may I agree with those who have stressed here that progress in the economic and other fields has to go hand in hand with the implementation of the fine words we have spoken here and the Declaration that we have yet to sign. Economic progress is necessary in so many, if not all, countries of the world. And may I finally also agree with what President Havel said. A totalitarian Government today will not honour proper and free education for children any more than it did in the past. Thus all progress—economic and political—has to be secured in order to see those things happen, come true, which we are promising today.

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**Statement by the President of URUGUAY,  
His Excellency Dr. Luis Alberto Lacalle**

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(interpretation from Spanish)

Mr. President, we have been listening to very distinguished statements on items on our agenda, but now we wish to speak about improving the development of children. While disease, war and violence have a negative impact on that development, we also have to take into account another dimension of the child—the child as a human being in his intellectual and spiritual dimension. Together with the aggression of poverty and of war, we have another type of aggression, an aggression of the spirit, of the soul, of the intellect that is being formed. These acts of aggression take place through the communications media, which have become a source of education, teaching violence, degradation and all the defects of the human race. Prime Minister Thatcher said just a while ago that we have to give our time to our children, but when we do not give them that time, they occupy it by listening to the mass media, from which day by day they learn bad examples, the demonstration of the ills of mankind often glorified and presented perversely as virtues.

A child at the age of 18 has seen more than 100,000 killings on television; over 100,000 violent deaths have been witnessed on television by that age. Hence, the enormous damage being done by a magnificent medium in developing and developed countries alike, right in the home, without any distinction between children in the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia or Latin America. This is why we Heads of State must say that we completely agree with article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which our Government has just signed. That article says that the States Parties will encourage the mass communications media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural interest to the child. Of course, as far as the right of information is concerned, that must be ensured. But as Governments we must all—and I appeal to my fellow leaders—fully enforce in our lands whatever rules we have in order to avoid violence, pornography and all those other forms of aggression against the child that occur in our own homes day after day, and that we invite—that is the word—the communications media in all countries to exercise their freedom to inform in a responsible way, their right to enter into our homes in a responsible way so that we can protect, along with the physical integrity of our children, their souls and spirits.



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**Statement by the Prime Minister  
of the REPUBLIC OF VANUATU,  
His Excellency The Hon. Father Walter H. Lini**

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First, may I, on behalf of my people and the Government of Vanuatu, express our deepest appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the other initiators for the steps that you have taken to make sure that the Summit was convened and also to express our deepest gratitude to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which has organized this very important meeting.

Also, may I personally express my happiness over the fact that I was able this morning to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Vanuatu will ratify the Convention upon my return there.

In Vanuatu child development is given top priority by the Government in its national development plans, in particular in the area of education and health, which account for more than 50 per cent of the Government's recurrent budget. May I also inform the Summit that for the first time this year Vanuatu children have organized themselves and declared a national children's day to be celebrated each year in Vanuatu as a step in the direction that they would themselves like to try to be involved, in the way that they would like to see the development of children in Vanuatu.

Many have said that education is very important in the enhancement of the development of children. Education has to be mental and spiritual, and I can say that in Vanuatu we have been able to do that over the last 10 years, but we still face problems. We have been able to provide the means of employment for people who have reached the level of secondary and university education, but we have not been able to provide for the majority of children with primary school education who find themselves unemployed and almost useless in their own society.

In Vanuatu the Government has provided for free primary education for all children. About 85 per cent of children aged 6 to 12 enrol in primary schools. Many have also expressed the fact that family stability and unity is very important, particularly for enhancing child development. In Vanuatu, the family—particularly the extended family—under our social system and traditional values, is very important in this respect. Our efforts to provide a better future for our children depend on the improvement of our national economy. In this respect, special attention should be given to the least developed countries.

In conclusion, may I add, on behalf of the South Pacific Forum, that we in the South Pacific would welcome the convening by UNICEF of a meeting in our region so that follow-up actions could be undertaken to enhance the development of children in our region.

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Discussion Session IV:

**IMPLEMENTATION AND  
FOLLOW-UP**

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**Introductory Statement by the President  
of the REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL,  
His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf**

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(interpretation from French)

We have come together here in this symbolic place in order to take up, together, the challenges which face us all and which we have turned into goals to be achieved. These goals are familiar to you, being contained in the Declaration and Plan of Action prepared by the Summit Planning Committee. What we must do is ensure that after this gathering, the implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action will be pursued with a zeal in keeping with the generosity of the positions we have adopted, so that those positions are followed by specific deeds. This requires ways and means to be found and follow-up and assessment systems to be set up.

I think we can find the means if we take the path of greater international solidarity, which should be reflected in an optimal reallocation of resources for financing development. In this context, the principal world powers, which have now turned resolutely in the direction of disarmament—a trend which I hope will continue, in spite of what is now going on—might devote some of the resources freed as a result to financing the Plan of Action.

However, there is nothing to indicate that the developing countries will be able to get back on track for healthy and lasting growth unless the debt crisis, which is still seriously handicapping their development, is resolved. In this regard, the main creditors of the developing countries could be called upon to reconsider their approach to settling this crisis, which cannot be solved simply by debt rescheduling and consolidation. Market measures of that kind, even if they do allow the exchequers of the countries concerned a breathing space, still provided no real budget savings capable of financing development and therefore of financing our programmes for children.

For this reason, it might now be time to implement more radical measures, such as: cancelling all or some of the bilateral debt, but with a clause tying the resources which would have gone towards the debt to financing programmes of activities to benefit children. This could be done, since some creditor countries have already cancelled debts; and setting up systems to follow up and assess the implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action, which could be done on various levels: at the international level, first of all, by UNICEF and by a follow-up committee which we could set up, along the lines of the Planning Committee we constituted. After that, the continental and regional levels would be overseen by existing, appropriate bodies and by non-governmental organizations; then, on the national level, by the national committees set up to prepare for the Summit.

The national committees, indeed, are vitally important in mobilizing societies behind the Convention and the Summit Plan of Action; structures of this kind are the best frameworks within which to carry out regular assessments of how well the objectives set out in the Plan of Action are being achieved and take any additional steps

which may be necessary. They ought also to make it possible to check whether national law in their countries is in conformity with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to check whether the Convention, a legal instrument, is being effectively applied.

This is the direction I think we ought to take if we want the generous positions we came to in our meetings to be followed up by action which will not disappoint the hopes we have raised.

## **Introductory Statement by the Prime Minister of ITALY, His Excellency Dr. Giulio Andreotti**

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(interpretation from French)

Martin Luther King, in his sermon of his last Christmas, reminded us that as long as we speak about peace as a remote objective, it will never be attained. Peace, he stated, will be achieved only when each person feels it as a commitment and a personal undertaking, as a moral imperative to which one has to align oneself and one's activities. Although it is true that the only way to foresee the future is to prepare for it, we wish to confirm our moral commitment and act in a timely way to assure a future of genuine peace and well-being for future generations. It is in this spirit that I recall the words of this man of peace.

There is a new solidarity today which has given life to a united and determined world coalition such as has never existed before. It is in this same spirit of universal co-operation that we must act against this silent enemy, which is called under-development, including democratic under-development, while eliminating our age-old selfishness.

We are aware that we must steadfastly confront and resolve the knots of interdependence between the North and the South, while easing the obvious concern that the recovery of democracy in Eastern Europe will involve the abandonment of the South.

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* reminds us that interdependence between peoples is not a hypothesis or a discretionary option. It is a given, and it is on the basis of this condition that in our common efforts we must not set ourselves impossible goals or yield to Utopia, even if we must acknowledge that it drives us forward and that today's history is to some extent yesterday's Utopia. We know with certainty that the consequences of the crisis will once again afflict the poorest populations and their children, whose lives are endangered in the attempt to pay their fathers' debt. We no longer have time for old-fashioned rhetoric. We must give substance to the need to eliminate between now and the end of the century the principal cause of the stark division between North and South. We must equip the institutions governing the processes of economic adjustment with genuine sensitivity to the social aspects, thus avoiding rigid and purely macroeconomic cures, so that the primacy of the development of man, of whom the child is a privileged indicator, will prevail over the primacy of the economy and profit.

It is time to combine with an understanding of the diagnosis—which has long been known—an operational understanding of the remedies. I consider that the debt of the developing countries to bilateral and multilateral agencies must be virtually cancelled out by transforming it into long-term loans at minimum interest rates, payable in local currencies, so that they may be turned into new investments for economic development and the protection of the environment.



We can thus contribute, among other things, to improving the basic social and health structures and to intensifying programmes of vaccination, drinking water, improved nutrition and training.

The United Nations today is capable of assuring the role of guarantor of a new complex mechanism and of transforming debt into human solidarity.

The communities and Governments of the South must play the role of true protagonists in the construction of a common future. One must forcefully uphold the democratic principle of open participation by local communities, going even so far as imposing such participation as a condition to obtain financing.

There cannot be a more appropriate occasion to affirm that the possibility of ending the arms race is a genuine historic opportunity, not only because the arms race is dangerous and immoral, but because ending it would make it possible to utilize enormous resources to far more noble ends—a more equitable distribution of wealth and genuine social justice world-wide.

New ways of ensuring the future of our children have not been indicated. But we all know that there are methods and instruments at our disposal. All that is required is to have the confidence to want to make use of them and to know how to make use of them.

I should like to end my statement by quoting a young, nine-year-old girl from a village in the south of Italy. At the funeral of a friend of hers who had been assassinated by those who would make—but they will not succeed—Italy under-developed as a result of criminality, she said:

“Leave us a world where mankind can enjoy life, freedom, security within the family, the certainty of duties and rights, and the happiness of living with others.”

We have the possibility of seeing the hopes of that young girl become reality with the solemn Declaration and the Plan of Action we shall adopt today.

It is our duty to take up this challenge.

**Commentary by the President  
of the REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,  
His Excellency Cde. Robert G. Mugabe**

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As I view this forum and its principal objective, I think we are gathered here to try and acquire a new commitment to the welfare of the child. It is not that we have not been attending to the needs of the child; it is rather that what we have been doing has not been enough. I want to believe, therefore, that after this conference we shall have a new commitment, a new level of consciousness and a new dedication to the needs of the child. But the child that we have in mind, as we have already been told, is one whose mind is inhibited by various factors and hence ill-educated or not educated at all in some cases, and whose body is also afflicted by various diseases and who needs programmes of action. The programmes of action that from now on we will be called upon to implement should be those that will address the problem as we see it from the point of view of our nations.

This problem is best known when we have statistics, when we have a mechanism for collecting and analysing statistics and are able therefore to bring the nature and the extent of the problem to the attention of those in Government.

Hence, the nations—our nations—should address the problem, but our nations have limited resources, and where the limitation of resources exists we naturally expect that those countries that are more developed than ours should be able to come in with complementary or supplementary resources in the various areas. But apart from that, there are areas where even if we jointly apply our resources there is very little that can be done unless the environment is propitious. I am thinking now of the environment in terms of peace and security. In southern Africa we have such an environment that makes it difficult for us, especially Mozambique and Angola, to address the question of the welfare of the child.

You have terrorism going on, and in some cases this terrorism is aided and abetted by forces from within the international field. This terrorism has created refugees and a welfare problem of great magnitude, and we are called upon there not only to use our own resources but to appeal to the world to come to our rescue. But we are also called upon to use the various forms of pressure that can remove the causes of the situation as we find it.

In other words, if *apartheid* is removed, then necessarily there will also be a better condition for the child and a better environment in which we, using our national policies, can improve the lot of our children. So I would want us to go away with the view that our national and international policies must converge so that the welfare of the child can best be taken account of.

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## **Commentary by the Prime Minister of TUNISIA, His Excellency Dr. Hamed Karoui**

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(interpretation from Arabic)

It is a great honour for me and for other Arab countries to take part in this World Summit for Children. First of all, I would like to convey to the United Nations, and in particular to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), my deep gratitude for this great initiative, the first of its kind in history. In devoting this Summit to the world's children, we are actually showing concern for the future of humanity as a whole.

The countries of our region have always been interested in the fate of children, and this continues to be the case. Our countries have always devoted a great deal of attention to children, from the standpoint of their health, education, upbringing and living conditions. This is what is set forth in the Arab Charter on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Arab States in 1983.

The unremitting efforts in the area of child welfare in the Arab world have succeeded in achieving a number of objectives. In the area of health care, we have been able to realize the highest reduction in child mortality: approximately 50 per cent over the decade of the 1980s. Many Arab States have far exceeded the international immunization targets. Other significant achievements have been made in such areas as the environment and the provision of drinking water.

With regard to education, we have been able to raise school attendance to 80 per cent among the children of some Arab countries. Increasing attention has been paid to pre-school training, day care and family centres. Special care is provided in the case of deprived families and those who cannot take care of their children, especially in cases of natural disasters, wars or earthquakes.

In their endeavour to improve the quality of life for children, the developing world, including the Arab countries, faces certain challenges which can be dealt with only through a concerted effort to usher in a new economic order that would bridge the enormous gap between the industrial countries and the developing countries.

While we meet here at the highest level, with a view to answering a better future for children, the Arab children in the Arab occupied territories in general, and the Palestinian children in particular, live in limbo. Their plight is so tragic that in all conscience we should not keep silent *vis à vis* Israel's practices.

It is necessary for the family of nations to redouble its efforts to put an end to this aggression and bring peace and justice to the region. At the same time, the international community is called upon to make a concerted effort to put a stop to racist oppression in South Africa.

On this occasion, I should like to reaffirm our commitment to the rights of the child and our determination to face up to all the challenges which are involved in the drive to enable children throughout the world to lead a decent and happy life. We hope that we will come to a meeting of the minds on the occasion of this historic Summit so that children may be placed at the forefront of our scale of priorities. A just peace for all nations is a basic prerequisite for a prosperous future for our children and mankind as a whole.

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**Commentary by the President  
of the REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES,  
His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom**

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Mr. President, allow me first of all to fulfill a promise I have made to the children of my country. Two months ago a message was passed on to me through the tiny hands of thousands of children of the Maldives. It is at the request of these children that I convey their message to this esteemed gathering. The message, ladies and gentlemen, is a plea for international understanding and co-operation in the face of the serious threat posed by rising sea levels to the very existence of our low-lying and environmentally fragile nation, the coral islands these children will inherit.

That this serious message was passed on to me at a time of nation-wide celebrations to mark the twenty-fifth year of independence is testimony to the deep concern in the mind of our children about their future. I have no doubt that the outcome of this Summit and our firm determination to give every child a better future will contribute to the reduction of such fears and generate feelings of optimism and hope among all our children about their future. In the name of our children, I thank the initiators of the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and all those involved in this noble endeavour.

From the new vision that is reflected in the Declaration and the Plan of Action, we must now move towards new and firm commitments to ensure the effective implementation of the new vision. To make the new vision a reality, each country will need to conduct a diagnostic analysis of the present status of its children, establish a time-bound target for meeting the basic needs of children, and define specific implementation strategies to attain them.

I am happy to recall that the Conference on South Asian Children, held in New Delhi in 1986, and the second Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), held in Bangalore the same year, generated substantial support for children at the regional and national levels. While significant achievements have resulted from these initiatives, much more remains to be done.

In the Maldives, as in other SAARC member countries, the resources available are far from adequate to fulfill the task at hand. This means that we shall need to generate additional national and external resources. Of crucial importance, however, is the need to mobilize an even more powerful resource for child development: the awareness, commitment and energy of all concerned.

I call upon religious leaders, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and businesses to play a more effective role in mobilizing these important and vital resources.

Each country should create a suitable framework for monitoring its own progress and tracing improvement from the present situation through intermediate targets to the ultimate goal. I should like to suggest that preliminary efforts with regard to the implementation of the Plan of Action be reviewed at an appropriate gathering sched-

uled for the end of 1991. At the forthcoming summit meeting of SAARC, to be held in the Maldives in November of this year, I shall propose that, beginning in 1991, the Heads of State or Government of SAARC member nations review at their annual meeting their countries' progress in the implementation of the decisions taken at this Summit.

In our efforts to make the new vision a reality we must avail ourselves of the new mood of international co-operation and global action, the like of which has never been witnessed on so universal a scale before. There is now considerable scope in the developed and developing world to allocate more funds for the real war, the war on human poverty and deprivation, in which children should receive the highest priority, for it is children who should have first call on society's capacities.

In conclusion, may I say that the final judges of our efforts will be the children themselves. When every child has a family that gives him love and care, a school to go to, healthy food that allows for normal growth, a society that protects him from disease, mistreatment and abuse, and a clean and safe environment, then we as leaders, policy-makers and caring people will have fulfilled at least part of our dream.

**Commentary by the Prime Minister of NORWAY,  
His Excellency Mr. Jan P. Syse**

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We all know that the best eloquence is the one that gets things done. We also know that the importance of this Summit can be measured only by our deeds.

Most of us in this assembly have children. We would all go the extra mile for them, to use a Biblical expression. If my two children starved or were abused, nothing could stand in my way to helping them, and I am sure that all the mothers and fathers in this assembly feel exactly the same way. What we must learn is to lift our eyes from the particular to the general, because the general is nothing more than the sum of the particulars. The children we are talking about today are not abstract entities. They are living human beings. And they need us, just as our own children need us.

Children face problems all over the world. But the overwhelming challenge is the catastrophic situation in many developing countries. A mobilization of resources from the rich countries is urgently required. We do not need Robin Hood to teach us that the rich must give. But the developing countries must assume their responsibilities. They must accelerate reforms. They must put the rights of the individual at the centre to release the potential of their human resources.

Children are always among the most vulnerable. Our aid must be restructured to give them protection and opportunities. If more than 100 jumbo jets filled with children crashed every day, there would be an outrage. But that is the number of children who are dying every day of starvation and disease.

Earlier today we heard of the need to establish the right instruments to monitor the implementation of our Plan of Action. I agree. In Norway we have established a special institution for securing the interests of children. He is called the Ombudsman, or Commissioner, for Children. He acts as a watchdog to bring about progress, and his work has shown us that child suffering and abuse are certainly not reserved for the developing world. Watchdogs such as our Commissioner are badly needed everywhere.

Today more than 10 per cent of Norwegian aid is spent on health, mother and child care and family planning. I urge donor countries to structure their aid to meeting the commitments of this Summit. Norway is the largest *per capita* contributor to UNICEF and, in spite of our small size, the fourth largest contributor in absolute terms. We are proud of that fact. But this is not a race we would like to win: it is a race that we must all win.

The real work will start when the Summit is over and the world leaders return back home. I am tempted to say: Let us go home. Or—more to the point—let us go to work.



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**Statement by the Prime Minister of IRELAND,  
His Excellency Mr. Charles J. Haughey**

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Joint Presidents and dear colleagues, this year's report of UNICEF states that in the 1980s a beginning has been made in eradicating preventable killer diseases affecting children. We have seen how—particularly in the poorest countries—the idea of prevention of disease can take hold and thereby save or at least transform the lives of millions.

However, today more than 20 million children suffer from severe malnutrition, and 150 million are underweight. For hundreds of millions of other children inadequate basic health, education and other social services severely constrain prospects for a worthwhile and satisfying life.

The challenges facing the world community to alleviate this situation are therefore immense. The implementation of the objectives and priorities of the World Declaration and Plan of Action will be crucial in achieving success.

In this regard we must in particular commit ourselves as political leaders to ensuring that the ideals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child become a reality which actually improves the daily life of children everywhere. I particularly welcome the emphasis in the Convention on the need to provide for children's development within a secure family setting. It is within the family that cultural identity is established and that moral, intellectual and social development is fostered.

I also welcome the Convention's stress on the need for basic education in all its aspects. Basic education provides a crucial foundation for a life of dignity and self-reliance for every individual in society. It is also required to enable the full realization of the human potential.

The developed countries have a special responsibility in bringing about an international political and economic environment that is just, secure and humane. Such an environment is required to advance the well-being of all the world's children. However, for the developing countries, especially the least developed ones, it is vital to support their development efforts. The success of these efforts, which must be supported by the developed world, offers the best chance for improving the situation of the hundreds of millions of children who even today live in poverty and destitution.

I congratulate our Co-Presidents, the Secretary-General, UNICEF and its Director General on the brilliantly successful organization of this historic Summit, and I pledge Ireland's full support for the Convention, the Declaration and the Plan of Action.