

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

14 February 1990

Excellency,

I write to Your Excellency at the request of Their Excellencies Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada, President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, President Moussa Traoré of Mali, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico, Prime Minister Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan and Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson of Sweden. Their Excellencies have proposed that a World Summit for Children be organized to enhance political commitment for the benefit of children, nationally and internationally. This initiative was endorsed by the Executive Board of UNICEF at a special session last December.

The World Summit for Children will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on the evening of Saturday, 29 September 1990, and all day Sunday, 30 September, if necessary continuing on the morning of Monday, 1 October, for the presentation of the Summit communiqué.

The purpose of the World Summit for Children is 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. 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. It is expected that the meeting will result in a declaration on achieving these goals in the 1990s. The Initiators believe, in particular, that the Summit can accelerate ratification and implementation of the new Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989.

Experience in recent years with the approaches known generally as the "child survival and development revolution" has demonstrated that dramatic progress can be achieved in reducing child mortality and

improving child health and well-being. The necessary mobilization of multiple sectors of government and society to achieve this progress invariably requires the personal and active commitment of national leaders. It has also been demonstrated that this improvement in the survival of children through the involvement of parents contributes to a greater voluntary reduction in births.

The growing impact on children of several critical global problems - notably war and violence, poverty, debt, degradation of the environment, and drugs - must also be a major concern for all political leaders. These issues present a challenge which demands concerted international action.

The Initiators have asked that I convene this World Summit for Children on their behalf by inviting the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the United Nations or its specialized agencies to participate personally. I am pleased to respond with the good offices of the United Nations in support of this historic initiative. I very much hope that Your Excellency will be able to attend.

I would view a new commitment by the world's leaders to protect the lives of children and to promote their well-being as a reaffirmation of our obligations under the Charter of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations". Making the survival and well-being of children a measure of successful development efforts would reaffirm that the ultimate purpose of development is to enhance human capabilities and the human condition.

The Initiators would be grateful if Your Excellency would advise me at your earliest convenience as to whether you intend to participate in the World Summit for Children.

The UNICEF Secretariat, led by Executive Director James P. Grant, will serve as the secretariat of this meeting under the guidance of the Initiators and the Planning Committee for the Summit.

The Initiators, with the support of the UNICEF Executive Board, encourage voluntary contributions by Governments and non-governmental organizations towards the costs of the Summit and related activities. In due course, the Secretariat will forward additional information to your appropriate authorities.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Javier Perez de Cuellar



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