



1946–2006 **Sixty Years for Children**



unicef 

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Unite for Children

The following historical review commemorates UNICEF’s 60th anniversary and traces decade by decade how the cause of helping children internationally has evolved since World War II. It explores UNICEF’s contribution against the backdrop of rapid global changes in political, social and economic affairs, and looks ahead to 2015 – the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals that will transform the lives of millions of children.

The first four of the following chapters were originally published in *The State of the World’s Children 1996* and have been revised and re-edited for this review. The material in these chapters draws on historical research about UNICEF, written by Maggie Black and included in her books *Children First: The Story of UNICEF, Past and Present* (Oxford University Press, 1996) and *The Children and the Nations: The Story of UNICEF* (UNICEF, 1986).

Foreword



UNICEF was born out of the ashes and destruction of World War II. Since its inception in 1946, the organization has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of children by protecting them from harm, curing them of disease, and providing them with food and the opportunity to learn and reach their full potential.

The survival, protection and development of children are universal imperatives that lie at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals, the central objectives for human progress in the coming decade. UNICEF strives to make these goals a reality for every child. This commemorative report highlights the organization's work over the past six decades – its triumphs and its struggles – in an ever-changing world.

Today, as violence, poverty, disease and abuse mar the lives of millions of children, I invite you to look back on the achievements of the past with an eye to the challenges of the present and the future. These pages reflect our commitment and our hopes – and our resolve to unite with others to create a world fit for children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ann Veneman". The signature is fluid and cursive, extending across the width of the page.

Ann M. Veneman
Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund

1946–1959



Helping

children heal from the ravages of war. *Bergen-Belsen, Germany.*



Extending

relief across Europe and into Asia. *China.*



On 11 December 1946, the global community proclaims a new ethic of protection and care of children, establishing the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to respond to the millions of displaced and refugee children deprived of shelter, fuel and food in the aftermath of World War II. Over the next 15 years, UNICEF evolves from an emergency fund to a development agency committed to tackling hunger, fighting disease and advocating for the rights of children all over the world.

The story of UNICEF is a story of childhoods lost and reclaimed, childhoods nurtured and protected. It is the story of how much good the human family can do when it unites to protect the rights of its youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

It is also the story of an organization whose birth was an accident. The creation of the United Nations in 1945 represented the coming of age of an ideal of international cooperation. Its immediate spur was the destruction caused by World War II, but behind this lay a longer-term desire to promote world peace. There was, however, no idea of setting up within the constellation of new institutions a special organization for children.

In the winter of 1946–1947, millions of people in Europe were still without proper shelter, fuel, clothing or food. Children especially were suffering: In some affected areas, half of all

UNICEF: The Agency for Children



Providing

assistance begins with supplies. *Greece.*

1948

UNICEF provides aid to 500,000 displaced Palestinian children.

1953

UNICEF becomes a permanent agency. *UNICEF-supplied milk, Guatemala.*



babies were dying before their first birthday. The Allies, anticipating widespread devastation at the end of the war, had established the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in 1943 to provide general assistance.

During the final meeting of UNRRA, held in Geneva in 1946, voices were raised about the fate of Europe's children. Ludwik Rajchman, the delegate from Poland, was particularly vocal, and the meeting accepted his proposal that UNRRA's residual resources be put to work for children through a United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund – an 'ICEF'. Rajchman is regarded, therefore, as the founder of UNICEF. The Executive Director designate, Maurice Pate, made it a condition of his service that there be no caveats about where the aid (mostly dried milk) might go, insisting that UNICEF support equally children in vanquished and victorious countries. Subsequently, on 11 December 1946, a resolution of the UN General Assembly – number 57(I) – brought UNICEF into being.

Some of the most important early programmes supported by UNICEF were established in Eastern European countries – Poland, Romania and what was then Yugoslavia – and Germany. In the late 1940s,

UNICEF provided relief assistance on both sides of the civil wars in China and Greece. It also sent aid to children affected by the conflict in the Middle East.

UNICEF was established to help children damaged by war. But it stayed in existence to take on a much broader role. While UN Member States had not intended to prolong UNICEF's life beyond the postwar emergency, they did include in its founding resolution the phrase "for child health purposes generally." This caveat would later offer UNICEF a permanent role managing large-scale efforts to control and prevent diseases affecting children.

When the time came in 1950 for the UN to close down its 'ICEF', a successful lobby was mounted to save it. This time, it was the new nations of the 'developing world' that spoke up. How, asked the delegate from Pakistan, could the task of international action for children be regarded as complete when so many millions of children in Africa, Asia and Latin America languished in sickness and hunger, not because of war, but because of the age-old problem of poverty? Again, the plea did not go unheard: In 1953, the General Assembly confirmed the organization as a permanent fixture in the UN system. This was the first turning point in UNICEF's history.



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1954

American entertainer Danny Kaye becomes UNICEF's 'Ambassador at Large'. *Thailand.*



© UNICEF/NDSP/005

1959

UN adopts the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. *A tuberculosis test, India.*

UNICEF at this time dropped the words 'International' and 'Emergency' from its title, becoming simply the United Nations Children's Fund (although retaining its original acronym). It never abandoned the children of crisis – those affected by war, conflict, drought, famine or any other emergency. However, its mission expanded as the post-colonial era presented it with a new challenge.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the winds of change blew away most of the remaining colonial order in Africa and the Caribbean. At the United Nations, US President John F. Kennedy urged an end to poverty in the newly named 'developing world'. UNICEF took up that challenge on behalf of children. This was the second major turning point in UNICEF's history.

The 'development' era redefined the children's cause. Children had previously been seen as objects of purely humanitarian and charitable concern – as children in distress or children in poverty – to be taken into care or given supplementary support. Like refugees, the elderly or the disabled, children were regarded as a special group. According to the new development perspective, however, children were not a separate cause: They were part of every cause. Among the hungry, the sick, the ill-fed, the poorly clothed, the homeless, the

illiterate and the destitute, there were always children. And unless they were orphaned or abandoned, children could never be treated in isolation from their parents and families, and especially not from their mothers.

From this perspective, a mission on behalf of children was no longer neat and self-contained. Helping nations to help their children demanded engagement in many areas of human activity. It certainly involved creating services to help children directly, such as maternal and child health care, early childhood care and primary education. But it also demanded providing services that were not exclusive to children, such as water supplies and sanitation, slum and shanty town renewal, and credit facilities for women entrepreneurs.

The same breadth of concern also extended to policy. Any issue that affected whole communities – agriculture, industrialization, population growth, women's rights, environmental depletion and urbanization – also affected their children. The list grew steadily to include national debt, structural adjustment and the post-cold-war transition.

UNICEF's response to the problems of children evolved into a subset of the growing post-colonial drive for development and the quest to eradicate poverty. Within this broader pursuit, however, UNICEF argued

National Committees

that children had to be singled out because they suffered the most acutely from poverty. As a result, they were also poverty's most sensitive barometer.

THE 1950s: ERA OF THE MASS ANTI-DISEASE CAMPAIGN

Inclusion in UNICEF's founding resolution of the phrase "for child health purposes generally" paved the way for the organization's involvement not only in child feeding but also in public health.

During World War II and its aftermath, disease rates had soared among weakened populations. In particular, forms of tuberculosis – the 'white plague' – had reached epidemic proportions. In Poland, for example, the rate of death among children from tuberculosis increased fourfold during the war.

In 1947, the Scandinavian Red Cross societies sought assistance from UNICEF for an International Tuberculosis Campaign to immunize all uninfected European children. This was to be both the largest vaccination campaign ever undertaken and also the first one to use the bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine outside the controlled circumstances of the clinic.

The International Tuberculosis Campaign began UNICEF's involvement in health care beyond emergency child feeding. Indeed, as the 1940s gave way to the 1950s, the predominant motif in international public health campaigns generally was the struggle to control or eradicate epidemic disease. These campaigns were among the first, and certainly the most spectacular, extensions of war-related international assistance to development concerns. They also changed UNICEF's priorities – extending its programmes geographically to countries in the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and shifting its focus from emergency aid for children to long-term preventive health care.

One feature that makes UNICEF unique in the UN system is its network of 37 National Committees, which has staunchly supported and promoted the organization's work to improve children's lives.

The US Committee, created in 1947, was the first of these. As European countries recovered from the devastation of World War II, National Committees were formed in Belgium, Germany, Scandinavian countries, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, among others. Today, there are National Committees throughout Europe as well as in Australia, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea.

Each committee has its own structure: some are totally independent of their governments; others are virtually sub-departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Despite their unique features, all National Committees share a common mission: to promote and represent UNICEF's voice in the country where they operate, increase awareness of the situation facing children in the developing world and raise funds for UNICEF programmes.

During their first years of operation, the National Committees concentrated most of their efforts on selling Christmas cards and creating networks of volunteer support groups. Later, they became deeply involved in larger drives, such as the highly successful 1959 Freedom from Hunger campaign and the famous Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign. More recently, the Committees have continued to evolve and diversify. They were crucial in persuading governments to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, led the movement against anti-personnel land mines and, most recently, coordinated the October 2005 launch of the global campaign *Unite for Children. Unite against AIDS*.

During the 1990s, the increasing prominence of the voluntary and non-governmental sector, coupled with an outbreak of emergency situations, led to a substantial increase in the overall proportion of funds provided to UNICEF by the Committees and other private sector partners. Between 1990 and 1992, National Committee and NGO contributions rose by 40 per cent, or over US\$80 million. In 1994, non-governmental income from the Committees, greeting cards and the private sector was US\$327 million out of a total UNICEF income of US\$1 billion. As a result, at a time when multilateral aid was dwindling, UNICEF's income increased.

The financial contribution of the Committees remains crucial. Indeed, by 2005, they contributed 37 per cent of UNICEF's overall income. And while the primary recipients of funds raised by the Committees have always been children in developing countries, the beneficiaries of their imaginative campaigns and advocacy materials form a far broader group, including children and teachers in their home countries.

The National Committees are committed, indefatigable partners in the fight to ensure the rights of all children. Their efforts reach the hearts and minds of millions, inspiring them to volunteer their time and money to help UNICEF fulfil its mission.

Goodwill Ambassadors

During the early years of UNICEF's existence, raising funds and awareness of children's plight was of paramount importance if the organization was to make a palpable difference to their lives. The commitment and optimism that fuelled those first years brought many talented, resourceful individuals to UNICEF's cause. Danny Kaye, a famous US actor and comedian, was possibly the best known of these early advocates.

Danny's recruitment was the result of a chance encounter with then Executive Director Maurice Pate aboard a flight from London to New York. The plane caught fire in mid-Atlantic and, in the hours while it made its way back to Ireland for repairs, Maurice Pate spoke to Danny Kaye about UNICEF.

The actor, whose reputation was based on his uncanny ability to make children laugh, was enthralled by what he heard and, a few months later, agreed to take time out of an Asian holiday to visit some health and nutrition projects. The idea emerged that he should take along a camera and crew and film his encounters with the children of Asia. Paramount Pictures offered to underwrite the project, release the film commercially and donate the picture's profits to UNICEF. Before Danny left on his journey, he was appointed UNICEF's Ambassador at Large. It was the first diplomatic mission of its kind, and the film – *Assignment Children* – became a resounding success. It set Danny en route to becoming the

single most important celebrity to advocate for UNICEF's mission, making the organization a household name for millions of people worldwide.

Danny Kaye served as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador from 1953 until his death in 1987. Many other celebrities – musicians, actors, athletes – have followed in his footsteps. Sir Peter Ustinov was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador in 1968 and served with passion until his death in 2004. Liv Ullmann became the first woman Ambassador in 1980. Audrey Hepburn was appointed in the late 1980s and traveled widely to famine-stricken African countries. Following her death in 1993, an Audrey Hepburn Memorial Fund was set up to benefit African children in crisis. Other distinguished artists who have contributed their talent, time and commitment to the organization include Harry Belafonte, Roger Moore, Vanessa Redgrave, Angelique Kidjo, David Beckham, Shakira, Roger Federer, Jackie Chan and many others.

These gifted artists possess a wide range of talents and achievements, but they all share the same commitment to improving the lives of children worldwide. They can make direct appeals to those with the power to effect change. They use their talents and fame to raise funds, advocate for children and support UNICEF's mission to ensure every child's right to health, education, equality and protection.

Eradicating yaws

The disease that succumbed earliest and most dramatically to a mass campaign was yaws. This painful condition, spread by a microorganism, could lead to total disability. It was found in tropical, poor and remote rural areas and was contracted through broken skin. In the early 1950s, there were thought to be around 20 million cases worldwide, over half of which were in Asia. The invention of penicillin made dramatic cures possible. One shot cleared the ugly pink lesions, and a few more eliminated the disease from the body.

The campaign against yaws with which UNICEF was most closely involved was in Indonesia. Mobile teams of lay health workers located cases, and health professionals treated them. By 1955, these teams were treating more than 100,000 yaws cases a month. Similarly, in Thailand, nearly 1 million cases

were cured, and full eradication of yaws in Asia became a distinct possibility. Yaws campaigns continued to make remarkable progress throughout the 1950s. Few diseases have been subjected to such a large onslaught in such a short period of time. By the end of 1958, 30 million cases of yaws had been cured worldwide.

Fighting tuberculosis, trachoma and malaria

The virtual eradication of yaws acted as a spur to other campaigns, including a new one for tuberculosis. By the mid-1950s, 3.5 million children worldwide were tested for tuberculosis every month and more than 1 million were vaccinated. Trachoma, too, was under attack. This eye infection, which affected up to 400 million people worldwide, was treated on a mass scale with an antibiotic ointment.

Malaria was another priority. At the mid point of the century, this disease had reached its highest incidence, accounting for 200 million deaths worldwide each year. The malarial frontier was rolled back by spraying homes with DDT, a powerful chemical.

This enthusiasm for dealing with disease through technical interventions extended to undernutrition. When investigations in the early 1950s revealed widespread undernutrition among children on the African continent, international public health experts were so attuned to the heroics of disease conquest that they behaved as if undernutrition, too, were an epidemic infection. They gave it medical labels – *kwashiorkor* and *marasmus* – and the medicine they prescribed was protein. One of the most convenient forms of protein was milk. UNICEF was still heavily engaged with child feeding, and for the first two decades of its existence the heart of its efforts on behalf of child nutrition was the provision of milk.

The mass anti-disease campaigns certainly succeeded in reducing the levels of infection for both children and adults: In Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), for example, between 1945 and 1960 the death rate from malaria dropped from 1,300 per million to zero. In fact, the campaigns were so successful that during the next decade they were sometimes blamed for igniting a population explosion. But, as experience was beginning to show, the campaigns were not quite as perfect as their public image suggested.

Campaign managers had underestimated the operational difficulties and human complexities of sustaining the health support network necessary to continue to treat diseases effectively. In the 1950s and 1960s, contemporary adulation for technology and the 'quick fix' encouraged international public health enthusiasts to believe that, with enough resources, better epidemiological surveillance and extra strategic refinements, they could succeed in eradicating disease. Like their counterparts in other disciplines, public health specialists were new to the challenges of development.

Where people saw painful disease symptoms rapidly disappearing – as in the case of yaws – they were happy to cooperate with anti-disease campaigns. Several of these became notable successes, of which the greatest was the eventual eradication of smallpox. But for other diseases, when people could not always see the cure work so directly, they were less likely to change their behaviour. One of the most difficult challenges was malaria.

The massive anti-malaria campaign launched in 1955 by the World Health Organization and UNICEF ultimately failed because its chief architects misjudged the willingness of both humans and malarial mosquitoes to live, eat, sleep and generally behave according to technical assumptions. Eventually, the malaria warriors were forced to accept that without basic services to back up and consolidate their gains, it was almost impossible to 'impose' health on a population unless it was geographically circumscribed – as, for example, in a relief camp. However, it would take another decade at least before this lesson was fully absorbed.



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Supporting

the global fight against malaria. A health worker sprays against mosquitoes, Ecuador.

1960–1979



1962

Attending to 'the whole child' – nutrition, health, family and education. Myanmar (then Burma).



1965

UNICEF earmarks half its Africa budget for education. Nigeria.



As the world focuses on social and economic development, UNICEF establishes its role as a global agency with a wealth of hands-on field experience running programmes for children and providing countries with material assistance such as vehicles, vaccines and school supplies. In 1965, UNICEF wins the Nobel Peace Prize for its work with victims of armed conflict. The period ends with the International Year of the Child in 1979, during which UNICEF is the lead agency responding to the Kampuchea emergency.

In January 1961, the United Nations resolved that the 1960s would be the Decade of Development. The times were certainly changing. Countries of the rapidly decolonizing developing world were beginning to assert themselves on the international stage. A new age of partnership among nations was beginning. In this new paradigm, to have one part of humanity live well while the other lived in penury was considered morally unacceptable. But there was also a strategic motivation: In the ideological confrontation between East and West, the promise of poverty alleviation was a weapon deployed to build alliances.

As new countries rushed to freedom – 17 former colonies in Africa achieved independence in 1960 alone – the climate was one of excitement and hope. The developing countries, having broken free of their colonial status, now needed to cast off their poverty. For this, they needed aid from their richer neighbours in the form of funds and technical expertise to

The Development Decades

1965

UNICEF Executive Director Henry Labouisse: "The welfare of today's children is inseparably linked with the peace of tomorrow's world." Accepting UNICEF's 1965 Nobel Peace Prize, Norway.



1971

Providing supplementary food for refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). India.



1975

The Mark II pump is invented, transforming village life. India.

help them industrialize. Thus was born the push for development, a concept that, along with more conventional notions of economic investment, embraced a degree of moral and humanitarian fervor.

THE FRONTIERS OF DEVELOPMENT

During the late 1950s, the United Nations had begun to adapt its institutions to take on the development challenge. It already had technical expertise within its specialized agencies, but it also needed a mechanism to channel financial resources. In 1957, the UN established a Special Fund to support the growth of infrastructure and industrialization; this evolved into the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

During the early 1960s, UNICEF tried to absorb the torrent of ideas and chart its own path within them. This quest was guided chiefly by Dick Heyward, UNICEF's senior Deputy Executive Director and intellectual powerhouse from 1949 to 1981. In the process, UNICEF underwent the third important transformation in its history.

This turning point was a special survey of the basic needs of children worldwide. This survey, initiated by UNICEF in 1960, took a year to complete and

was informed by 'state of the art' reports from other specialized UN agencies on the needs of children in their respective areas of expertise: World Health Organization (health and nutrition); Food and Agriculture Organization (nutrition); International Labour Organization (work and livelihood); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (education); and the UN Bureau of Social Affairs (social welfare). The final report, *Children of the Developing Countries*, represented a watershed in nations' views on how to help their most vulnerable citizens.

The report interwove social and economic strands concerning children's well-being in a fresh and innovative way and presented a theory of development that underlined the importance of satisfying human needs during various phases of childhood and pre-adulthood. In particular, it argued that children's needs should be built into national development plans. Children should not be treated as if they were the orphans of the development process or its accidental baggage; they should be a focus of all policies directed at building up a country's 'human capital'. Just as the motto 'children first' had gained currency over the course of the 20th century during times of war and sudden catastrophe, a new version of the maxim was articulated in the context of development.

Leadership in emergencies

Despite its steady transformation to a development agency, UNICEF remained fully engaged in disaster relief in the early- to mid-1960s, responding to humanitarian crises such as the earthquakes in Morocco (1960) and what was then Yugoslavia (1963), the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1960-62) and the famine in Bihar, India, (1966-67). In the late 1960s and 1970s there were a series of catastrophes that brought UNICEF's unique role in emergencies into sharp focus.

Biafra—The first of these catastrophes was the Nigerian civil war of 1967–70. The humanitarian crisis this war provoked – as federal forces besieged the breakaway ‘republic’ of Biafra over a period of two years, eventually leaving its inhabitants starving – proved profoundly difficult for the United Nations. Its mandate did not allow it to intervene in a civil conflict without the permission of the national government, which was not forthcoming. Though UNICEF, as a UN agency, was similarly bound to adhere to the principle of respect for sovereignty, the organization’s unique charter to provide assistance to all children on the basis of need alone and its record of offering relief to children on both sides in conflict situations provided room to manoeuvre. UNICEF provided relief supplies and raised all its funds on the promise that they would be used for relief of the population on both sides. This approach paid off, and the Nigerian Government accepted UNICEF’s neutrality. When rebel resistance finally collapsed in January 1970, with the Biafran population in a state of mass starvation, UNICEF was the only international organization allowed to remain and offer not only immediate relief but also start the process of reconstruction.

East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)—In November 1970, a cyclone of unprecedented intensity struck the delta region of what was then East Pakistan. Half a million people drowned, crops across a million acres of land were destroyed, and homes, fishing boats and livestock were swept away by a vast tidal wave. More than 4.5 million people were affected. UNICEF’s main contribution was to re-establish water supplies. Equipment for a major programme of sinking tube wells had just arrived when the cyclone hit, and it was used to repair and recommission more than 11,000 wells over the following few months.

Kampuchea (now Cambodia)—In 1979, the Vietnamese army invaded and conquered Cambodia (then Kampuchea), ending the four-year reign of terror conducted by the Khmer Rouge and their leader, Pol Pot. The disruption of agriculture and ordinary economic life under the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1978, exacerbated by the invasion, led to severe food shortages and threatened famine. Because Viet Nam had committed an aggression against its neighbour, the regime installed in Phnom Penh was denied international recognition, no matter how preferable it was to the one it had replaced. Most of the UN system was therefore unable to interact with the authorities in Phnom Penh. But UNICEF had developed ways of navigating around such obstacles. The UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, therefore turned to UNICEF and asked the agency to act as lead agency for the entire UN system inside Kampuchea. The relief operation both inside the country and on the Thai-Kampuchean border was to be run in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross. UNICEF continued to carry the UN lead agency role in Kampuchea up until 1981.

This new concept had significant implications for UNICEF’s own operations. Its representatives could no longer confine themselves to working with sub-departments of Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, but instead had to engage with all branches of government. The situation of children should be discussed within Ministries of National Planning, no less. And because children’s concerns would have to be contemplated by research institutes and within national surveying and planning exercises, these were all activities that UNICEF would henceforth be willing to support.

The other major change was to abandon the compartmentalization of children’s needs. In the future, UNICEF would consider the needs of children along with those of their parents and nurturers, taking into account ‘the whole child’. Instead of treating the child as a set of parts, of which the only ones of concern were those related to physical well-being, UNICEF decided it should be willing to address the child’s broader intellectual and psychosocial needs. The immediate outcome was a change of policy whereby UNICEF for the first time – to the satisfaction of the countries of the developing world – was willing to provide funds for formal and non-formal education from 1961 onward.

Like many other members of the international humanitarian community, UNICEF set out over the next few years to show that the fields in which it was engaged lay at the heart of development. These included traditional arenas such as food, nutrition, and maternal and child health care, and also new fields such as education, women’s issues, water supplies and sanitation. In these areas, UNICEF could provide material assistance in the form of equipment, drugs, vehicles and training stipends. In very poor environments, however, technical advice was futile without the wherewithal to put it into effect.

As a group, humanitarian agencies, including UNICEF, wanted ordinary families to receive tangible benefits. Their vision of development was one in which pride of



1977

Basic services and non-formal education reach the urban poor. A shanty town, Peru.

© UNICEF/HO33-0033/Murray-Lee

1978

Children's services are recognized as women's issues. A community handpump, Bangladesh.



© UNICEF/HO33-0033/Murray-Lee

place went to the needs of the poor – and in the case of UNICEF, the needs of poor children.

But by the middle years of the decade, one further consideration was looming on the horizon. Demographers had discovered that recent declines in the death rate unaccompanied by matching slowdowns in the birth rate were playing havoc with developing countries' populations. The kind of increase that had taken three centuries to happen in Europe was taking place in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America within 50 to 75 years.

At a meeting in Addis Ababa in 1966, UNICEF's Executive Board opted to support the concept of 'responsible parenthood', whose primary objective was to improve the survival, well-being and quality of life of every child, mother and family. The concept embraced improvements in the status of women (a harbinger of the conferences in Cairo and Beijing), promoted literacy and advocated raising the age of marriage and avoiding unwanted pregnancies.

In 1965, UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Earlier that year, Maurice Pate, who had led the organization since its inception, died. His place as Executive Director was taken by Henry Labouisse. Under his careful stewardship, the UN's organization for children gradually became more prominent in

the issues of the day. Even so, it was not until 1972 that the UN formally recognized that UNICEF was a development, rather than a welfare, organization and began to review its work under its economic and social, rather than humanitarian, machinery.

THE 1970s: ERA OF ALTERNATIVES

By the early 1970s, the development movement was running out of steam. The idea that transfers of capital and technical know-how would quickly end gross poverty had been proved incorrect. During the previous decade, many developing countries had achieved high rates of economic growth – increases of 5 per cent or more in gross national product – but little of this growth had 'trickled down' to the poor. On the contrary, their numbers had swelled – as had the gap between rich and poor people, and between rich and poor nations. High rates of population growth were partly to blame, but so too were policies based on simplistic assumptions. The growing community of development analysts attached to universities, governments and international organizations busily began to diagnose what had gone wrong and set out on the quest for alternatives.

So began a new era of development thinking. Since economic growth did not automatically sweep poverty away, development analysts decided that the second

Development Decade must include initiatives deliberately targeted to the poor to help them meet their basic needs for food, water, housing, health and education.

In 1972, Robert McNamara, the President of the World Bank, made what was seen as a landmark statement. Governments in developing countries, he said, should redesign their policies to meet the needs of the poorest 40 per cent of their people and relieve their poverty directly. The cornerstone of the new development strategy was an explicit attack on poverty – albeit structured to avoid damaging economic prospects. Its economic slogans were ‘redistribution with growth’ and ‘meeting basic needs’.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with their localized mini-projects, already enjoyed an intimate relationship with the poor. UNICEF had similar advantages because, although the organization worked at one stage removed, its connections with communities were much closer than those of any other institution in the UN hierarchy.

The early 1970s saw two events of particular significance for international development. One was the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

(OPEC) oil shock, which sent prices soaring and ended the era of cheap energy and cheap industrialization – and therefore of cheap development. The other was the global food shortage brought about by disastrous world harvests in 1972 and 1974.

These events had important repercussions at UNICEF. The oil price hike meant higher prices for fertilizers and all the equipment needed to increase agricultural production. The world food shortage had serious implications for the health and well-being of the 500 million children who lived in the countries designated ‘most seriously affected’. In 1974, the UNICEF Executive Board formally declared an ‘Emergency for Children’. It was believed that even before the crisis struck, some 10 million children worldwide suffered severe dietary shortages. As the price of food continued to rise, child hunger and malnutrition were bound to increase.

At the prompting of Henry Labouisse and Deputy Executive Director Dick Heyward, UNICEF was also urgently considering what kind of programme strategy would reach children most cost-effectively. In 1975, the UNICEF Executive Board reviewed the findings of two important studies: one into the priorities for child nutrition in the developing world, the other – conducted with WHO – into alternative methods of meeting basic health needs. From their conclusions, together with those of an earlier study on education, UNICEF’s own version of the alternative order was rapidly emerging. It was to be known as the ‘basic services’ approach.

MEETING BASIC NEEDS

According to UNICEF, development was failing to reach large segments of the poor because existing services for health, education and agricultural extension were modelled on those in industrialized countries. Existing services rarely reached as far as the village, and even when they did they were usually unconnected to each other. Worse, they were often unconnected to the villagers’ own perception of their needs. As an



1978

World leaders vow ‘Health for All’ through the delivery of primary health care. *Syrian Arab Republic.*

International Year of the Child

In 1973, as the UN was trying to rein in the number of international years, decades and anniversaries and the costly international conferences associated with them, Canon Joseph Moerman, Secretary-General of the International Catholic Child Bureau, decided to campaign for an international year for children.

Though the initial response was less than enthusiastic, intensive lobbying resulted in a critical mass of support for the idea from non-governmental organizations and UN member states by 1976. The International Year of the Child (IYC) was set for 1979, the year of the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Three main objectives were set for the Year: all countries should make a fresh appraisal of the situation of their children; they should be inspired to new efforts to do something for children whose situations needed improvement; and wealthier countries should increase their aid contributions for those whose level of development was far less advanced.

As preparations intensified, the idea of a year commemorating children began to catch on. A network of 85 NGOs formed a special committee for IYC in mid-1977. By the end of 1979 the number of members reached into the thousands. On the government side, the response was just as overwhelming.

alternative, UNICEF proposed a range of integrated basic services that would be flexible enough to be adapted by and within the community.

UNICEF trained and motivated lay members of the community to perform simple tasks such as baby weighing, early childhood stimulation and basic hand-pump maintenance. These volunteers could thus act as 'barefoot' workers delivering local services. The relatively few highly trained professionals who up to then had been performing routine activities were freed instead to supervise the cadres of volunteers. In this way, services could be extended more widely without exorbitant extra costs.

In 1978, at an international conference in Alma Ata, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (now Almaty, Kazakhstan), Ministers of Health from all over the developing world agreed that their health delivery systems must be radically restructured to provide 'primary health care' (PHC) for all their citizens. The critical service was care for mothers and

Optimists had hoped that around 50 countries would set up IYC national commissions; by mid-April 1978, more than 70 had already done so; and by the end of 1979, there were 148 in existence.



As part of their IYC activities, several national governments undertook studies of their children's situation, some for the first time ever. Others examined specific issues such as nutritional status (China, Haiti and Oman); polio (Malawi); immunization (Bhutan); street children (Colombia); orphans (Chad and the Philippines); 'latchkey' children (UK); and refugee children (Finland). Some ran campaigns to get children off the streets and into school (Ghana, Kenya) and some focused on care for the handicapped (Viet Nam, Republic of Korea). IYC media events ran the gamut from films to exhibitions to giant banners to sophisticated telethons and gala events. Taken as a whole, the list of efforts and achievements is long and comprehensive.

"The International Year of the Child," wrote Henry Labouisse in a report issued at the end of 1979 on the situation of children in the developing world, "was not intended to be a high point on the graph of our concern for children. It was meant to be a point of departure from which that graph would continue to rise."

children before, during and after birth. Added to this were emergency first aid, surveillance of young child growth, disease control, family planning, safe water supplies and environmental sanitation. As with basic services, ordinary people would be enlisted in their own preventive care. This radical vision set an ambitious goal, 'Health for All by the Year 2000'.

During the first two Development Decades, UNICEF had argued that working for children was part of a much larger social and economic movement. But this emphasis on development and on other great issues of the day had a drawback. It meant that, even within the humanitarian community, the special needs of childhood were in danger of being submerged. Anxious to project children back into the limelight, child-related NGOs managed to persuade the UN to declare 1979 the International Year of the Child. Initially reluctant to commit its energies to a celebratory and possibly superficial affair, UNICEF was eventually persuaded to play a leading role. The International Year of the Child proved far from superficial: It was a remarkable success. The cause of children had reached another turning point.

1980–1989



© UNICEF/HQ93-147/LLeMoyn

1981

Reaching out to children living on the streets. *Brazil.*



© UNICEF/HQ93-147/LLeMoyn

1982 The Child Survival Revolution is launched with 'GOBI' as its operational acronym.

'G' stands for Growth monitoring. *Benin.*



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Aspiring to reduce by half the 15 million deaths each year of children under five years of age, UNICEF mobilizes the international community, national governments and local non-governmental organizations to use four low-cost techniques (collectively referred to as GOBI): Growth monitoring for undernutrition; Oral rehydration to treat childhood diarrhoea; Breastfeeding to ensure the health of young children; and Immunization against six deadly childhood diseases. It launches *The State of the World's Children* as its annual flagship report and advocacy platform.

As the 1980s – the third Development Decade – dawned, the countries of the developing world were beginning to feel the chill of global recession. In the industrialized countries, growth had slumped and unemployment had risen to levels higher than at any time since the 1930s. This slowdown was transmitted to the developing countries, and one major consequence was an international debt crisis, sparked in 1982 when Mexico suspended interest payments on an accumulating mountain of debt. As a result, many African and Latin American countries were hit by recession, along with lender directives to structurally adjust their economies.

The situation had such severe implications for the poor that it prompted a slogan similar to that of the 'Emergency for Children' in the 1970s: 'Adjustment with a Human Face'.

Child Survival and Development

'O' for Oral rehydration therapy, the most cost-effective way to cure diarrhoea-induced dehydration. *China.*



© UNICEF/HQ98-1488/Patunill

'B' for Breastfeeding, the best nutritional start in life. *Egypt.*



© UNICEF/HQ91-0918/LaMoyné

'I' for Immunization. A *polio* vaccination campaign, *Sudan.*

This concept so persuasively answered the anxiety about what was happening to vulnerable groups in developing countries that it quickly entered the lexicon of international development. In a very real sense, this concept moved UNICEF into the mainstream of economic and social policymaking.

At the same time, there were emerging signs of hope for the children's cause. The evolution of the basic services and primary health care approaches had given practitioners of social and human development a new sense of purpose, while the success of the 1979 International Year of the Child implied that the time was right for a new push on behalf of children.

UNICEF's new Executive Director, James P. Grant, who took office following Henry Labouisse's retirement at the beginning of 1980, was determined to capitalize on these opportunities.

In December 1982, in his annual *State of the World's Children* report, Grant launched an initiative known as 'the child survival revolution', whose scope later expanded to include child development. This campaign reversed conventional wisdom. Rates of infant and young child mortality had previously been seen as indicators of a country's development. Now, UNICEF

suggested that a direct attack on infant and child mortality might be an instrument of development.

In a throwback to the mass anti-disease campaigns of the 1950s, UNICEF now proposed to vanquish common infections of early childhood using simple medical techniques. From the primary health care package, it singled out four practices that collectively were referred to as 'GOBI': 'G' for growth monitoring to keep a regular check on child well-being; 'O' for oral rehydration therapy to treat bouts of childhood diarrhoea; 'B' for breastfeeding as the perfect nutritional start in life; and 'I' for immunization against the six vaccine-preventable childhood killers: tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and measles. One of the strengths of this prescription was that all the techniques were low-cost.

The cause of child survival found an extraordinary degree of worldwide resonance, gathering a wide range of allies – national, international, bilateral, non-governmental – from all walks of public and professional life. During the 1980s, UNICEF developed and fine-tuned a strategy of social mobilization. Led by the indefatigable Jim Grant, UNICEF not only enlisted the media and advertising industries, it also invited partners from all walks of society – from religious

Adjustment with a human face

From 1982 onwards, the 'debt crisis' dominated international discourse, and the overarching pattern in relations between rich and poor worlds became one of 'economic correction', under which economies in the developing world were compelled to undergo 'structural adjustment'. This adjustment entailed cutting public expenditure, removing subsidies and opening the economy to foreign investment. In structural adjustment's crudest form, cuts in government spending adversely affected the social sector, including health and education, and thus had a disproportionate impact upon the poor.

UNICEF first questioned the way structural adjustment was working in practice in a study commissioned by Deputy Executive Director Richard Jolly entitled, 'The impact of world recession on children'. The study, published in 1983, concluded that poor children were suffering the worst effects

of the recession and made two basic recommendations: that adjustment policies recognize the need to preserve minimum levels of nutrition and household income; and that countries place a safety net under child health and basic education. This was followed in 1987 by a larger and more significant study, the title of which became celebrated and itself helped to influence international public opinion: *Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth*.

During the 1980s, UNICEF's view began to influence mainstream economic opinion. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank made little attempt to fundamentally redesign adjustment packages but nonetheless acknowledged the need for some kind of safety net for the poor. This shift in viewpoint was another sign that UNICEF's advocacy was now having an impact on global policy and that development could no longer be viewed in isolation from its impact upon children.

leaders to Goodwill Ambassadors, from Heads of State to mayors, from sports personalities to parliamentarians, from professional associations to trade unions – to join the child survival and development movement and spread its message.

UNIVERSAL CHILD IMMUNIZATION

Breastfeeding, growth monitoring and oral rehydration therapy all helped to save lives and promote healthy development in children. But the driving force behind the child survival revolution, the technique that was taken up with the greatest enthusiasm all over the world, was immunization against key childhood diseases. A target of universal child immunization (UCI) by 1990 had been set at the World Health Assembly in 1977, but by the 1980s the average level of immunization in most developing countries was still between 10 and 20 per cent. A key conference in Bellagio, Italy, in March 1984 led to the formation of the Task Force for Child Survival, which involved not only UNICEF but also WHO, UNDP, the World Bank and the Rockefeller Foundation. This group agreed that immunization should be the priority not just for UNICEF's GOBI campaign but for the whole primary health care movement. The campaign thus became far broader than

UNICEF itself, as shown in the vivid phrase, 'a grand alliance for children'.

Successful trials of 'national vaccination days' took place in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Senegal and pilot areas of India and Nigeria. But the test run for the worldwide drive towards universal immunization took place in Turkey in 1985. It was a massive undertaking: 45,000 vaccination posts had to be set up; 12,000 health personnel and 65,000 helpers trained; and the mothers of 5 million children had to be persuaded to bring their children in three times for immunization. But the campaign became a truly national event, involving opinion-formers at every level of society and in every geographical area. Within two months of the campaign's September inauguration, 84 per cent of the target group had been immunized.

The publicity value of Turkey's success was incalculable. It not only inspired nearby countries in the Middle East and North Africa but also reinvigorated worldwide efforts to meet the UCI goal. Above all, the Turkish experience proved that it was possible to mobilize a whole society towards the goal of child survival – not only providing access to a service but also creating a demand for it.

Another inspirational example from 1985 helped give the UCI drive even more momentum. The bitter civil war in El Salvador was temporarily halted on three separate 'days of tranquility' so that children could be safely vaccinated. This ceasefire for children's health offered a practical demonstration of the idea of 'children as zones of peace'. Some 250,000 children were vaccinated in El Salvador, and this pioneering example was to be repeated in later civil wars in Lebanon, Sudan, Uganda and what was then Yugoslavia.

In November 1985, at a special ceremony to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the United Nations, countries recommitted themselves to the target originally set in 1977 – universal child immunization (UCI) by 1990. The expanded programme on immunization (EPI) was vigorously implemented in many countries, including the most populous nations on earth, China and India. From an average of 15 per cent immunization coverage at the beginning of the decade, some developing countries had already pushed their rates to 60 per cent or more by 1985. A goal that a few years earlier had seemed completely unattainable was now within striking distance.

During the rest of the 1980s, scores of developing countries conducted an all-out drive to reach a coverage rate of 75 per cent child immunization or more. This international effort, described as perhaps the greatest mobilization in peacetime history, succeeded in spite of the major cutbacks in social services necessitated by the global economic recession and adjustment crisis.

Towards the end of the decade, optimism was warranted on several fronts. Nutritional progress was encouraging enough to permit world leaders to establish the goal of halving the 1990 rate of child undernutrition by the year 2000. Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia were improving child nutrition. Indeed, during the 1980s, nutritional status improved in every region

of the world (although only marginally in sub-Saharan Africa), and in every category of undernutrition except anaemia.

Moreover, extraordinary improvements were made in access to safe drinking water. According to WHO's end-of-decade review, between 1981 and 1990, the proportion of families with access to safe drinking water rose from 38 per cent to 66 per cent in southeast Asia, from 66 per cent to 79 per cent in Latin America and from 32 per cent to 45 per cent in Africa.

By the end of the decade, the child survival and development revolution was estimated to have saved the lives of 12 million children. This great success notwithstanding, the movement had never taken as its exclusive aim saving children's lives and preventing childhood disease and disability. The wider purpose of the revolution was to revitalize the flagging cause of human-centred development and place children at its leading edge.



1984

Fighting famine in the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions. *Ethiopia.*



1988

Supporting children affected by war and HIV/AIDS. A former child soldier, Democratic Republic of the Congo.



1989

'Education for All' means girls as well as boys. 'Meena', an animated South Asian heroine.

One result was the international conference held in 1990 under the auspices of UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank in Jomtien, Thailand, which set the target of 'Education for All by the Year 2000'. In subsequent years, the World Bank tripled its lending for basic education to US\$1 billion. In 1990, UNDP issued its first annual *Human Development Report*, which declared human beings to be both the means and the ends of development. Human progress rather than economic advancement was once again being considered pre-eminent.

THE GENDER DIMENSION

The momentum behind human-centred development was sustained in particular by the activities of women. International organizations such as UNICEF began to recognize that women had importance beyond their biologically or socially determined maternal roles: Women were also economic providers, organizers and leaders. In many parts of the developing world, women made up one third of heads of households. Up to that point, the development process had pushed women to the margins. This exclusion from social and economic participation acted as a powerful brake on development in general. Future progress would require, therefore, that investment be affirmatively

structured in favour of women: that development become 'gendered'.

This shift in awareness had major implications for UNICEF. Its child survival and development prescription did have two elements that directly supported a women's rights agenda: female education and birth spacing. But for the much more important GOBI ingredients, women were cast in an exclusively maternal role. Throughout the 1980s, therefore, UNICEF resisted becoming involved in the mainstream of the women's cause. Towards the end of the decade, however, it recast its policy on women in development to include the language and dynamic of women's rights, with a special focus on girls.

CHILD RIGHTS AND THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

The movement towards women's rights coincided with mounting pressure for the rights of children, where interest had stagnated somewhat in the years following the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child but been rekindled by the International Year of the Child. The non-governmental organizations working on behalf of children took advantage of this renewed concern to argue that special protection for children should

be more than a high-sounding principle: It should be enshrined in law.

Population growth and rapid rates of industrialization were putting increasing pressures on childhood and family life. The most conspicuous symptom of social stress and family breakdown was the increasing number of children working on city streets – with some also living there. Many other children were being damaged by forces that went beyond poverty and underdevelopment. They included child victims of mass violence and warfare, children with disabilities and children suffering from exploitation – as workers and labourers, or as objects of commercial sexual abuse. In the mid-1980s, UNICEF coined a new term to cover all these categories of childhood disadvantage – children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC).

At this point, UNICEF began to analyse CEDC situations and evolve policy responses. The international children's NGOs, on the other hand, were more concerned with advocacy and legislation to protect these children and bring their exploiters to justice. After the International Year of the Child, the NGOs helped establish an intergovernmental group, under the auspices of the UN Commission on Human Rights, which began to draft a convention to replace the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

In 1987, recognizing the potential convergence of the child survival and development revolution with the movement for children's rights, UNICEF threw its weight into the child rights ring. Although its support arrived relatively late, UNICEF's capacity for international mobilization was decisive.

Two years later, in November 1989, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. On 2 September 1990, the Convention became international law. Within a year, more than 90 countries had ratified it, and by end-September 1995, the total was 179. No human rights convention has ever attained such widespread ratification so quickly.

The magic formula

The 1980s were declared the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. This focus was immensely successful: according to the World Health Organization, between 1981 and 1990, 1.2 billion people gained access to safe water and 770 million to adequate sanitation.

UNICEF had already during the 1970s contributed to these improvements by drilling boreholes and installing community pumps. But though installing handpumps was undeniably beneficial to communities – vastly reducing the amount of time women and children spent fetching water, for example – it could not by itself have an impact on public health, especially without widespread understanding of the importance of hygiene in preventing infection.

In the late 1970s, diarrhoeal dehydration was killing around 5 million children every year, accounting for more than 30 per cent of all child deaths. When a child has diarrhoea and becomes dehydrated, its body rushes any water drunk through its system so fast that little or none of the liquid is absorbed. The conventional Western treatment is to rehydrate the body using an intravenous drip – a procedure that is clearly inappropriate for most cases of childhood diarrhoea and impractical for those episodes which take place far from medical facilities. In 1968, however, researchers in India and East Pakistan discovered that mixing salt and glucose with water in the correct proportions allowed it to be absorbed into the body. When cholera afflicted refugee camps during the Bangladeshi war of independence, oral rehydration therapy (ORT) was used to treat 3,700 victims, over 96 per cent of whom survived. It was not surprising that the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* called ORT “potentially the most important medical advance of this century.”

Oral rehydration therapy became a central part of the new UNICEF GOBI programme and proved to be a compelling recruiting vehicle for the child survival movement. That the largest single killer of children worldwide was not some powerful, unstoppable disease but rather dehydration derived from diarrhoea, and that these deaths could be prevented by something as simple and everyday as a mixture of salt, sugar and water seemed remarkable.

The ambitious global target was to achieve 50 per cent ORT use in diarrhoeal treatment by 1989. Although this was not attained, progress was still impressive: by 1990, 350 million packets of the salts were being manufactured annually, and 61 per cent of people worldwide had access to them in their local clinic or pharmacy. Although only 32 per cent actually used them to treat diarrhoea, this was up from just 1 per cent in 1980. The bottom line was that ORT was by now saving the lives of 1 million children each year.

1990–1999



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1990

The Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes international law. Children rally for children, Ecuador.



© UNICEF/H026-0117/Mera

1990

The first-ever World Summit for Children. UN Headquarters, New York.

1992

Tending the wounds of war. Psychosocial assistance, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



In 1990, UNICEF convenes the World Summit for Children, where 159 countries commit to a plan of action to ensure children’s survival, protection and development. Children are to have a ‘first call’ on society’s resources, in good times and bad, and their rights are to be recognized and protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The commitments of the World Summit and the Convention frame UNICEF’s work for the decade.

The campaign for child survival and development reached a peak at the beginning of the 1990s. On 30 September 1990, 71 Heads of State and Government took their seats at a World Summit for Children. The highlight of the occasion, held under the auspices of the UN in New York, was the signing of a World Declaration and 10-point Plan of Action – including a set of child-related human development goals for the year 2000. These goals included targeted reductions in infant and maternal mortality, child undernutrition and illiteracy, as well as targeted levels of access to basic services for health and family planning, education, water and sanitation.

The Summit was one of the most important moments in UNICEF’s history. It marked the juncture at which children’s issues reached a high point on the international agenda. Its sponsors, including UNICEF and its partners, were determined to sustain the momentum generated by the event and to use it as a launching pad for a wider process of planning

Recognizing Children's Rights



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Responding

to a global surge in refugees and displaced persons.
Refugee camp, United Rep. of Tanzania.

1994

Reuniting 100,000
Rwandan families
after the genocide.
*A tracing centre,
[then] Zaire.*



© UNICEF/HQ/95-0986/Chalassani

and commitment for children. UNICEF was guided by the pursuit of goals for children outlined in the Plan of Action, and its country offices all over the world made extraordinary efforts to ensure that every government produced its own national programme of action for advancing towards the 2000 targets.

KEEPING THE PROMISE

A set of mid-decade goals for children was established, starting with regional meetings in Africa and South Asia. In September 1993, on the third anniversary of the Summit, the United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, convened a round table in New York called *Keeping the Promise to Children*, which reiterated the commitment to the Summit goals and endorsed mid-decade targets. These included universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and progress towards universal primary education, as well as targets for the control of specific diseases and nutritional deficiencies. By mid-decade, the aim was to eradicate, or reduce by a specified amount, neonatal tetanus, undernutrition, polio, vitamin A deficiency, guinea worm disease and iodine deficiency disorders, as well as diarrhoeal and vaccine-preventable diseases.

The establishment of mid-decade goals had been, in part, a manoeuvre to sustain the momentum of the post-Summit process. In 1993, UNICEF began publishing an annual report called *The Progress of Nations*, which was specifically devised to maintain momentum in the drive towards the goals. The report gathered the latest statistics on countries' progress in the key areas of health, nutrition, education, responsible parenthood and women's rights. Somewhat controversially, it used these statistics to rank countries according to their performance, making it clear which governments were lagging behind. Whereas in the 1980s the key indicator for UNICEF had clearly been child mortality, in the 1990s a broad range of indicators related to the well-being of children and women were consistently monitored and targeted for improvement.

In the wake of the World Summit for Children, UNICEF found itself yet again at the forefront of the global push to meet human development goals. This goal-oriented approach to pursuing children's rights and human development was one of Jim Grant's greatest achievements and most significant legacies.

In 1996, countries reported formally to the UN on their progress towards the goals for the year 2000. In many

The 20/20 Initiative

In the early 1990s, financial requirements to achieve universal coverage of basic social services were estimated at about US\$136 billion per year – around US\$70 billion to US\$80 billion more than actual spending. Developing countries were, on average, allocating about 13 per cent of their national budgets to basic social services, while donor countries devoted around 10 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) to finance these services.

In order to eliminate the financial shortfall and ensure a minimum level of basic social services, the 1995 World Summit for Social Development launched the 20/20 Initiative, a compact between developing and industrialized countries. The 20/20 Initiative focused on the effective and efficient delivery of basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition programmes and safe drinking water and sanitation) to the poor and vulnerable members of society.

The 20/20 Initiative called for industrialized and developing country partners to allocate on average 20 per cent of ODA, including contributions through multilateral

organizations and NGOs, and 20 per cent of national budgets (net of aid), respectively, to basic social services, using these resources with greater efficiency and equity. It was believed that the 20 per cent targets would yield the approximate amount needed globally to finance universal access to basic social services in developing countries.

On the government's side, the 20/20 Initiative focused on how resources were allocated and argued that adequate resources for basic social services can be provided even under conditions of fiscal constraint. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for better monitoring of expenditures on basic social services, so that interested parties could set specific targets, increase resources and establish 20/20 compacts. On the donors' side, the initiative advocated for greater concentration of the already scarce ODA resources on basic social services.



instances, there were significant advances. WHO announced on World Health Day in April 1995 that 146 countries had not experienced a single case of polio for at least a year.

COMBATING DISEASES THROUGH INTEGRATED APPROACHES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The focus on child survival and development continued during the 1990s. In an attempt to improve child survival levels, in 1992 UNICEF and WHO developed the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), a new approach to health care that combines strategies for control and treatment of five major childhood ailments that together account for most deaths among children under five: respiratory tract infections, diarrhoeal dehydration, measles, malaria and undernutrition. By 1998, the programme was being implemented in 58 countries. Currently, more than 80 countries have successfully adopted the initiative into their health systems, and more than 40 countries are giving special attention to improving

family and community practices as a key way of reaching vulnerable children. IMCI has proven effective in improving children's nutritional status and increasing rates of exclusive breastfeeding, use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and immunization coverage.

Throughout the 1990s, UNICEF continued to scale up its immunization initiatives. In 1996, it joined WHO in publishing *State of the World's Vaccines and Immunization*, a review of immunization progress, constraints and challenges for the future. During the same year, UNICEF supplied 1.2 billion doses of vaccines reaching children around the world, half of which went towards the Global Polio Eradication Programme. By 1998, UNICEF was providing vaccines and other support to polio immunization campaigns in 97 countries, reaching 450 million children, two thirds of the world's children under five. As a result, polio had been nearly eliminated worldwide – although its complete eradication would remain elusive. Two thirds of the world's children under five were again immunized against polio in 1999, when UNICEF became the main supplier of vaccines to developing countries.

The decade also saw the organization play a strong role in fighting two other major diseases: malaria and HIV/AIDS. In 1998, UNICEF moved to the global forefront of combating malaria by becoming a founding member of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership, along with WHO, UNDP and the World Bank. Since its creation, RBM has directly contributed to global advocacy and increased resources for malaria programmes, as well as to the development of new preventive and treatment technologies, such as long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

During the 1990s, UNICEF scaled up its efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and assist children affected by the disease. In 1996, UNAIDS was created, with UNICEF as one of the agency's co-sponsors. In 1999, UNICEF played a leading role in supporting HIV prevention programmes in more than 20 countries. That same year, the organization backed a pilot programme to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV in 11 countries, including 9 in sub-Saharan Africa alone. Women and their partners were provided with voluntary counselling and testing, and pregnant women received drugs to prevent transmission of the virus to their babies.

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were the overarching influences on the UNICEF of the 1990s.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force as international law on 2 September 1990, having been adopted by the UN General Assembly the year before. It had already proved to be an effective framework for international action. By the close of 1995, the Convention, as it came to be known within the children's movement, had been ratified by 179 countries. Even then, five years after its introduction, the focus was already shifting to implementation, with UNICEF and partners encouraging all countries to live up to their most basic commitments to children.

The Convention and the children's movement assumed increasing importance as the 1990s wore on. Like the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention articulated something fundamental about humanity's sense of itself and established a reference point for all future generations.

Guided throughout by the principles of 'non-discrimination' and 'actions taken in the best interests of the child', the Convention lays out in specific terms the social, economic, civil, protection and participation rights of children and the legal duties of governments to them. Children's survival, development and protection are no longer matters of charitable concern but of moral and legal obligation. Governments are held to account for their care of children by an international body, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to which they have to report regularly.

The key underlying advance is the recognition of the child as a complete individual. Seen through the Convention's lens, children are no longer objects of sympathy or subjects of parental rule, but are active, empowered actors in their own development in accordance with their age and maturity.



1994

UNICEF and UNESCO invent the 'school-in-a-box'.
Refugee camp, United Rep. of Tanzania.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to:

	Articles*
Non-discrimination	2, 30
Actions taken in their best interests	3, 18
Survival and development	6
Identity	7, 8
Family relations and parental guidance	5, 7–10, 18, 21, 25
Protection from illicit transfer and illegal adoption	11, 21
Freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion	12–14
Freedom of association and peaceful assembly	15
State protection of privacy, home, family and correspondence	16
Access to appropriate information	17
Protection from abuse and neglect	19
Special protection and assistance if deprived of the family environment	20, 22
Protection from armed conflict	22, 38–39
Special care if disabled	23
Health and access to health-care services	24
Benefit from social security	26
A decent standard of living	27
Education	28–29
Rest and leisure, play and recreation, culture and the arts	31
Protection from child labour, trafficking, sexual and other forms of exploitation, and drug abuse	32–36, 39
Protection from torture and deprivation of liberty	37–39
Dignity and worth, even if the child has infringed the law	40

* Articles refer to articles 1–40 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Those cited refer explicitly to children's rights or the obligations of States Parties to children.

Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2005*, page 4.

TWIN TRACKS AND NEW PARADIGMS

It soon became apparent that there was a symbiosis between the Summit goals and the Convention. When country offices pushed for more action, they could use a national government's ratification of the Convention as another lever; similarly, pressure to implement the Convention would inevitably accelerate progress towards the Summit goals. Governments no longer simply had to be encouraged to meet the goals for children; they could be reminded that they had a legal obligation to do so. As UNICEF celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1996, the organization was fully embracing the human rights-based approach to development, working to put the rights of children – particularly the most marginalized and disadvantaged, who were most at risk of exclusion from mainstream development and poverty reduction initiatives – at the centre of the development agenda.

The new climate of children's rights had other repercussions. Child protection became more central to UNICEF than it had ever been before. In the mid-1980s, pressure from country offices such as Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Kenya and the Philippines had led UNICEF to develop the concept of 'children in especially difficult circumstances' – encompassing street and working children, abused and neglected children and child victims of armed conflict. But protection issues still played a relatively minor part in the organization's programming efforts. The Convention's establishment of child protection as one of the key arches of child rights made this an impossible position to sustain.

To address this important issue, UNICEF strengthened its protection capacities throughout the 1990s. In 1996, for example, the organization placed particular emphasis on reaching the most vulnerable children in towns, cities, slums and squatter settlements, working closely with mayors



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Advocating

for the right to education. *Yemen.*



© UNICEF/WHO/041/Pfeifer

Easing

the impact of sanctions
on children. *Iraq.*

and municipal governments to place child rights at the top of the local political agenda. During the same year, UNICEF supported two major initiatives to protect children: the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, the first international gathering dedicated to combating this global problem; and the ground-breaking UN study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, by Graça Machel, a specialist on children in armed conflict.

UNICEF's efforts to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse also included a decade-long campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines, which threaten children's sight, limbs and lives in many countries. In 1997, two thirds of the world's nations signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, which UNICEF helped draft and strongly promoted. Additional attention was given to preventing child labour and assisting children affected by it. In 1997, UNICEF joined other participants at the International Conference on Child Labour in adopting a global agenda for eliminating the worst forms of child labour. Three years later, the organization helped 29 countries introduce education programmes aimed at preventing child labour.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child offered UNICEF a new role in industrialized countries. Once its initial responsibility for post-war Europe had been laid aside, the organization had been focused largely on the basic needs of children in developing countries. The rights perspective changed this. Children in industrialized countries were plainly in need of protection from exploitation and abuse; child poverty there, too, was far from uncommon, in relative if not absolute terms. UNICEF's national committees increasingly found their own voice and the organization as a whole felt its way towards a responsibility for all the world's children, not just those in developing countries.

Overseeing UNICEF's journey deeper into the territory of children's rights was Carol Bellamy, appointed as the fourth Executive Director in May 1995 following Jim Grant's death four months earlier. Formerly an elected politician in the United States, a lawyer and head of the Peace Corps, Bellamy's first emphasis was on consolidation after the whirlwind of the Grant years. But from the outset her public policy statements reflected both the new primacy of children's rights and the multifaceted nature of UNICEF's responsibility for children in the turbulent last years of the 20th century.

2000–2006



Striving

to eradicate poverty and hunger and to reduce child mortality. *Malawi.*



2002

Working to achieve universal primary education. *Back-to-school campaign, Afghanistan.*



As a new millennium begins, world leaders pledge to eliminate the scourge of global poverty and discrimination by 2015 through the Millennium Declaration and eight Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF works with governments, UN organizations and civil society to ensure that children are integral to the MDGs and that the promises of economic, political and social development are met.

The UN Millennium Summit of 6–8 September 2000 was the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government that had ever been held. Convened to set out the role of the United Nations in the 21st century, its outcome document, the Millennium Declaration, adopted six core principles: freedom, equity and solidarity, tolerance, non-violence, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The summit also settled on what came to be known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – eight specific objectives to be met by 2015. In both its overwhelming focus on human development and its adoption of time-limited, quantifiable targets, the Millennium Summit echoed the approach of the World Summit for Children.

A MILLENNIUM AGENDA FOR CHILDREN

The agenda adopted at the 2000 Millennium Summit and reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit is highly focused on children. Each of the MDGs is connected to the well-being

Children: At the Heart of the Millennium Development Goals

2002

The UN Special Session on Children. For the first time ever, children address the UN General Assembly, New York.



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Promoting

gender equality and maternal health. A woman is comforted after the death of her child, Sierra Leone.

Combating

HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Orphans whose mother died of HIV/AIDS, Lesotho.



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of children – from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to building a global partnership for development. The Millennium Declaration itself contains extensive commitments for children, including a section on “protecting the vulnerable”. In this, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs reflect many of the obligations that have been adopted by States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Millennium Agenda has guided UNICEF’s work since 2000. The organization is dedicated to ensuring that everything possible is done to bring these goals to fruition. At the outset of the decade, UNICEF also strengthened its advocacy for the protection of children, taking an active role in drafting and promoting the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000 and became effective in 2002. These were the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Both have been ratified by more than 80 governments.

UNICEF’s work on ending the involvement of children in combat accelerated in the early years of the 21st century. The organization played a key role in securing

the release of children from armed forces and other combatant groups in Afghanistan, Angola, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda, among others. Another milestone was set in July 2002 when the statute of the International Criminal Court entered into force, making the conscription, enlistment or use of children under 15 in hostilities by national armed forces or by armed groups a war crime.

THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

In addition to the MDGs, UNICEF’s work in the opening decade of the 21st century is also guided by the compact that emerged from the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, which took place in May 2002. This major event was specifically intended as a follow-up to the World Summit for Children to review progress during the 1990s. The Special Session was the culmination of years of work by thousands of organizations. It was unlike any other UN conference. The widest possible range of civil society organizations working with and for children played an active part in organizing the Session from the start.

In 2001, six leading organizations that work with children – the Bangladesh Rural Advancement

Committee (now known as BRAC), Netaid.org Foundation, PLAN International, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision – came together to announce their commitment to building a Global Movement for Children. This worldwide movement aimed to draw in everyone who believed that children’s rights must be the first priority, from caring parents to government ministers, from responsible corporations to teachers and child protection officers.

The Global Movement for Children aimed to mobilize support all over the world for a 10-point agenda to ‘change the world with children’. In its most popular form, this campaign urged people all over the world to *Say Yes for Children*, signing up to support key actions to improve the world for children. Between April 2001, when Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel made the first pledges, and May 2002, when they were presented with the latest pledge tally in New York, more than 94 million people worldwide had joined the *Say Yes* campaign.

The point of all this advocacy and popular mobilization was to create a climate in which political leaders felt compelled to take their responsibilities to children seriously. At the Special Session, world leaders

ultimately agreed on an outcome document called ‘A World Fit for Children’, which committed them to completing the unfinished agenda of the World Summit for Children and included 21 specific goals and targets for the next decade.

CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION

The Special Session was also unique among UN meetings in another respect: It encouraged the active participation of children.

Over 400 children from more than 150 countries convened at the UN General Assembly in New York City in May 2002. They took part in the Children’s Forum, which lasted for three days, was opened by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and closed with a ceremony presided over by Nelson Mandela, Graça Machel and Nane Annan. Between these two events, the only adults present were a few interpreters and facilitators. Children started off in regional groups, establishing the ground rules of respect for each other and ‘unity in diversity’ which were to govern their time together. They then divided into groups to discuss eight key issues and elected a group to come up with a common statement reflecting their views. The statement was eventually read to the General Assembly by 13-year-old Gabriela Azurduy Arrieta from Bolivia and 17-year-old Audrey Cheynut from Monaco.

The participation of children at the Special Session was a landmark moment – one that challenged UNICEF and all the other children’s organizations present to develop and maintain this active encouragement of children’s participation in all of their work.

STATES OF EMERGENCY

Following the conflict in Afghanistan and the deposing of the Taliban, UNICEF was called upon to play a major role in the reconstruction of the country’s education system. The ‘Back to School’ campaign in 2002 showed how much is possible when the international



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Ensuring

environmental sustainability. *Children pick through garbage, Nepal.*

The achievement of universal primary education (MDG 2) and the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015 (MDG 3), will necessitate that governments and international donors and agencies include all children who are currently excluded from education.

Although evidence shows that girls' education has been expanding all over the world, progress was insufficient to ensure universal gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005. To this day, many of the world's children, the majority of whom are girls, do not receive a basic education. In 2005 alone, 54 countries were found to require additional efforts to achieve this goal.

Within the context of the Millennium Agenda and in an effort to advance girls' education indicators, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched in 2000. UNGEI is a universal movement and an important platform for girls' education that embraces a broad spectrum of partners, including governments, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, civil-society organizations, the private sector, religious groups, parents, teachers, communities and student organizations. UNGEI aims to contribute to the elimination of gender

discrimination and gender disparity in education systems through action at global, national, district and community levels. UNICEF is the lead agency and secretariat for UNGEI, and is working strategically with UNGEI partners to promote girls' education in more than 100 countries.

Girls' education is facing many challenges, from emergencies and HIV/AIDS to deepening poverty and persistent disparities. To scale up actions in order to achieve the education and gender parity MDGs, including the target of universal primary education by 2015, UNICEF, within the UNGEI partnership, is currently advocating for and strategically acting on a number of initiatives. These include abolishing school fees and other user charges in primary education; promoting massive and equitable distribution of an 'Essential Learning Package' of supplies and services to boost enrolment and enhance quality; and making use of schools as centres of learning and for delivery of other services (e.g., care and support) where children are under threat from HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and social unrest. Meeting these objectives is not an easy task, but it embraces the spirit of the Millennium Agenda. Universal challenges require effective, consistent and concerted partnership. UNGEI can prove to be such an example.

community is committed to tackling a crisis. Starved of education through many years of conflict, but particularly under the Taliban, the hunger of Afghan children for the chance to go to school was overwhelming. The role that UNICEF played in supplying educational materials under emergency conditions was a unique achievement, the largest such operation it had ever undertaken. On 23 March 2002, when around 3,000 schools across Afghanistan opened their doors to millions of boys and girls, 93 per cent of the educational supplies had been delivered. By September, a total of 3 million children had enrolled, double the original estimate. Around 30 per cent of these children were girls, a major achievement in a country where, even before the Taliban, only 5 per cent of primary-school-age girls attended school.

The 'Back to School' campaign was an achievement of which UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy was particularly proud, for girls' education had already been established as one of her 'signature issues'.

UNICEF was given lead agency status when the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched by the UN Secretary-General at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000.

Education was a key priority in the early years of the new century, not least because the earliest of the MDGs was the achievement of gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2005. UNICEF launched its own acceleration strategy in 2003, identifying the 25 countries most at risk of failing to achieve the 2005 goal and pledging to work with them, treating girls' education as a case for urgent – even emergency – action. Investing in girls' education, the organization argued in *The State of the World's Children 2004*, is a strategy that will not only protect the right of all children to a quality education, but will also jump-start all other development goals.

Afghanistan was the most dramatic example of the value of education in an emergency situation. Through

Children and HIV/AIDS

Every minute, a child under 15 dies of an AIDS-related illness. Every minute, another child becomes HIV positive. Every minute, three young people between the ages of 15 and 24 contract HIV.

These stark facts underline the devastating impact that HIV/AIDS is having on children and young people. The children of sub-Saharan Africa are hardest hit, but unless the HIV pandemic is halted and sent into retreat, Asia is on course to have higher absolute numbers of HIV infections by 2010. Millions of children, adolescents and young people are orphaned, made vulnerable or living with HIV/AIDS and urgently need care and protection. If rates of HIV infection and AIDS-related deaths continue to rise, the crisis will persist for decades, even as prevention and treatment programmes expand.

HIV/AIDS is denying millions of children their childhoods. The disease exacerbates the factors that cause exclusion, including poverty, undernutrition, inadequate access to basic social services, discrimination and stigmatization, gender inequities and sexual exploitation of women and girls.

National governments committed themselves to addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS on children in the Declaration of Commitment endorsed at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, and reaffirmed that commitment in a follow-up session in May 2006. But progress has been slow. Children are still often overlooked when strategies on HIV/AIDS are drafted, policies formulated and budgets allocated. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders pledged to scale up responses to HIV/AIDS through prevention, care, treatment, support and mobilization of additional resources.

In 2002, UNICEF was recognized as the lead agency within UNAIDS for promoting care and support of orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2003, UNICEF convened the first Global Partners Forum on Orphans and Children affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2004, UNICEF and its partners accelerated efforts to put children with HIV/AIDS on the global agenda. The organization increased substantially its procurement of antiretroviral drugs and testing and diagnostic material.

These efforts culminated in 2005 when UNICEF and UNAIDS launched the global campaign on children and AIDS – *Unite for Children. Unite against AIDS*. The campaign includes partners from every sector of the global community in a concerted push to ensure that children and adolescents are not only included in HIV/AIDS strategies, but become their central focus. An overarching aim of the campaign is to meet Millennium Development Goal 6, which aims to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Achievement of the campaign goals will also have positive implications for the other MDGs.

its long experience of humanitarian crises, UNICEF has learned that education is not a luxury to be provided in an emergency only after other elements are in place. On the contrary, it should be given priority and started as soon as possible. The goal is to create 'child-friendly spaces', a concept that was developed during 1999 in response to the Kosovo crisis, the earthquake in Turkey and the violence in what was then East Timor (now Timor-Leste), and subsequently applied in other conflict zones such as Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Iraq, among others, and in the aftermath of natural disasters.

CORE COMMITMENTS TO CHILDREN IN COMPLEX EMERGENCIES

Education is just one part, however, of UNICEF's now well-established and comprehensive plan for responding to children in emergency situations, which was codified as a set of 'core commitments' in 2004. In the short term – the first six to eight weeks – the plan calls for several critical actions. These include a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women; measles vaccination, vitamin A, essential drugs and nutritional supplements; child and maternal feeding and nutritional monitoring; safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene; assistance to prevent families being separated; and schooling and other learning opportunities.

UNICEF was among the first to respond to the Indian Ocean tsunami that struck in late 2004, working with partners to provide comprehensive assistance to countries affected by the disaster. The agency provided support to help rebuild and restore the educational, water and sanitation systems and worked to protect affected children from exploitation, trafficking and abuse and to reunite separated children with their families.

In the longer term, these core commitments also include organizing child protection and combating HIV/AIDS, which figures more prominently in 21st century UNICEF programmes than ever before.



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2005

The Indian ocean tsunami generates a record-breaking humanitarian response. One year after the disaster, Indonesia.



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Promoting

global partnerships to accelerate progress for children around the world. A camp for people displaced by conflict, Liberia.

All UNICEF country offices, for example, are now engaged in HIV/AIDS-related programming, advocacy or interventions, and in 2005 the organization launched the global campaign *Unite for Children. Unite against AIDS* to ensure that children become the central focus of HIV/AIDS strategies.

CHILD SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT REMAIN CENTRAL TO UNICEF'S WORK

Notwithstanding its increased emphasis on child protection, education and HIV/AIDS, child survival and development remain central to UNICEF's mission and are at the forefront of its new Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2006–2009. As part of its Immunization Plus approach – which exploits the opportunity of immunization to deliver other life-saving services – UNICEF has integrated the delivery of insecticide-treated nets with routine vaccination and antenatal care visits. Since 2002, this integrated approach to children's and women's health has been known as the Accelerated Child Survival and Development Strategy (ACSDS), and has been applied in 11 countries in West and Central Africa reaching about 16 million people, including 2.8 million children under five. This successful package of services and activities has resulted in a 10 to 20 per cent reduction in under-five mortality rates.

UNICEF's vaccines reach more than a third of the world's children, and the organization is a key partner in the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), a groundbreaking partnership launched in 2000 to help countries strengthen their immunization services and introduce new and underused vaccines for children. Governments in industrialized and developing countries, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, non-governmental organizations, vaccine manufacturers and public health and research institutions work together as partners in the Alliance. UNICEF is also now the world's largest supplier of anti-malarial mosquito nets.

As these facts attest, over the decades UNICEF has expanded the range of its concern for children without relinquishing any of its former responsibilities. This expansion has been reflected in its overall income, which more than doubled during the tenure of Jim Grant and more than doubled again during the term of Carol Bellamy.

In May 2005, Bellamy was succeeded by Ann M. Veneman as UNICEF's fifth Executive Director. During the first year of her tenure, Ms. Veneman has emphasized the use of the MDGs as a road map for achieving meaningful results for children in the next 10 years, and focused on launching and re-energizing partnerships and campaigns such as ACSDS and *Unite for Children. Unite against AIDS*.

Looking Ahead

For the past 60 years, UNICEF has represented the needs and rights of children everywhere. It has worked across national and social divides to provide integrated services for children and their families. In the new millennium – and in the context of a revitalized and reformed United Nations – UNICEF pledges to strengthen all its partnerships to accelerate achievements for the world’s youngest citizens.

In an ideal world, UNICEF would not need to exist. In a world that abided by all the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – that ensured children were given the best possible start in life, were educated to their full potential and were protected against harm and exploitation – there would be no need for a UN agency for children. But if looking back over the 60 years of UNICEF’s organizational life proves nothing else, it shows that whatever progress is made, whatever advances in development are achieved, there will always be new challenges and new emergencies, new ways in which the cause of children will need a determined advocate.

UNICEF argued in its *The State of the World’s Children* report for 2005 that childhood is under threat from three directions in particular. The rights of over one billion children remain unfulfilled because they suffer from one or more forms of extreme deprivation; millions of children are growing up in families and communities torn apart by armed conflict; and HIV/AIDS has led to rising child mortality rates, sharp reductions in life expectancy and millions of orphans, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 would go a long way to address these childhood ills.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Headline statistics on human development can seem very positive if you look far enough ahead into the future. Take under-five mortality, which UNICEF has always argued provides

Unite for Children

as reliable a guide as any single indicator can to the health of a society. If current rates of progress (those between 1990 and 2005) are steadily maintained, average world child mortality rates would dip below 10 per 1,000 live births in 60 years or so, around 2065. At this point, the whole world would enjoy child mortality rates almost as low as those currently experienced by industrialized countries – whose average rate is presently 6 per 1,000 live births, compared with 87 in the developing world and 155 in the least developed countries. But the soaring child mortality rates in southern Africa since 1990 as a result of HIV/AIDS – impossible to have foreseen or even imagined in 1980 – demonstrate that the reduction of child mortality is unlikely to take so straight a path.

Even if it were possible to draw a straight line into a future relatively free from preventable and unnecessary child deaths, to do so would be a betrayal of the children now in the world and those to be born in the coming decades. As part of the Millennium Development Goals, the world set itself a target of reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds of its 1990 levels, bringing it down to 35 per 1,000 live births by 2015. The current rate of progress on child mortality is unacceptably slow and would not see that target met until 2045. More pointedly and more meaningfully, if the goal to reduce child mortality is met, millions of lives that would otherwise be lost will be saved.

UNICEF's history has proved the value of setting clear targets based on the world we live in now, not on some distant dream of the future. That is why UNICEF is so firmly and completely committed to

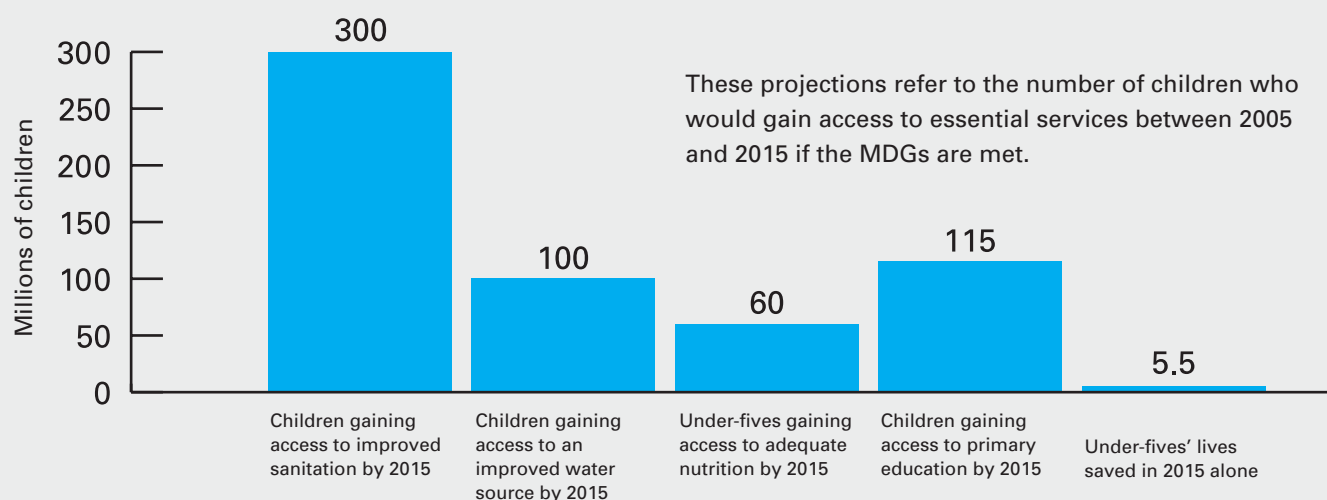


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Strength in unity

Effective, creative and consistent partnerships are required to achieve the Millennium Agenda for children.

Meeting the MDGs would transform millions of children's lives in the next 10 years



Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2006*, page 4.

the achievement by 2015 of the MDGs, which would transform hundreds of millions of children's lives.

The 2005 World Summit showed that progress towards the MDGs has not been swift enough in some regions and in many countries. The Summit's outcome document also starkly spelled out the measures needed to put the world back on track. There must first be a concerted effort to offer immediate access to essential services to more of those children and families who are currently denied them. These 'quick impact initiatives' – outlined in the 2005 report of the Millennium Project and endorsed by world leaders at the Summit – can provide a vital kick-start to human development and poverty reduction. But they are only a beginning; they must be complemented by longer-term initiatives rooted in a human rights-based approach to development.

This brief history has noted the shift within UNICEF – in the wake of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – from dispensing aid towards a human rights approach. The implications of this shift are fundamental. It no longer becomes acceptable to

be satisfied with percentage improvements or the greatest good for the greatest number. The deprived or exploited children of today cannot be ignored simply because smaller proportions of children will face similar difficulties in 2015 or 2045. Their rights are being denied right now; their plight is urgent. As UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children* report for 2006 explained, the millions of children all over the world whose rights are most infringed are probably also those who are hardest to reach with essential services and hardest to protect from exploitation, abuse and neglect. These will be the children most likely to remain invisible to the eye of the development planner, least likely to benefit from the initiatives launched as part of the Millennium process. Even as it throws itself fully behind the drive towards the MDGs, UNICEF undertakes to do all it can to reduce the exclusion and invisibility of these children.

Nothing UNICEF does is in isolation, however. From its very inception, UNICEF was founded on partnerships. It has always tended to work in support and encouragement of others' programmes – whether those of national governments or non-governmental

Partnerships

organizations – rather than launch its own initiatives. In recent years, a formidable movement has coalesced around the idea of child rights, of which UNICEF is just one member. This movement embraces not only governments and international agencies but the private sector and the media, voluntary organizations and community groups. UNICEF is also fully engaged in the process of UN Reform, which forms another strand of the Millennium Agenda and which will lead over the next few years to much greater synergy in UN efforts in human development all over the world. A strengthened and reformed UN will benefit children, as will any partnership that is effective in bringing a country closer to achieving the MDGs. Effective partnership is not just an idealistic notion; it is an urgent necessity if the goals are to be met and the most marginalized children are to be reached.

This global partnership shares a vision of a world fit for children. It shares the sense that such a world need not be a distant prospect, far in the future, but can be realized within a generation, provided a huge first step is taken before 2015. In this world, every single child will be in school, with all the empowerment and protection against abuse that this implies. In this world, every child will be immunized against the main killer diseases. In this world, no infant will lose its life for want of a few simple, inexpensive doses of oral rehydration salts; no child will be locked away in a workshop, labouring in conditions that approach slavery, or face abuse, exploitation or violence without recourse to justice and protection.

This world can be closer than we think – but it can also be impossibly far away. Progress is not inevitable, not something that emerges fully formed from the test tube of technological advance. It depends instead on the choices we make as an international community, and on the resolution with which we make things happen. Throughout its 60-year life, UNICEF has cherished the idea of a world in which children come first. Let us now prove that this is an idea whose time has come.

Partnerships are a central feature of UNICEF's efforts to achieve greater results for children, fulfil children's rights and help countries realize the MDGs. When it was founded in 1946, UNICEF's mandate included working with relief and child welfare organizations, relationships that have been instrumental in contributing to policy decisions to benefit children. Since then, the organization has been working with an ever-widening range of partners who share its commitment to ensuring that children can grow up in a protective environment, safe from violence and exploitation and free of poverty and discrimination. They share a vision of a world where gender is not a liability and where children are healthy and free to learn and develop to their full potential. In the 1970s, for example, UNICEF's civil society partners pushed for the International Year of the Child, which eventually led to the proposal for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As UNICEF commemorates its 60th anniversary, partnerships remain the backbone of the organization's work. Current partners include governments, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, academic institutions, faith-based organizations, youth organizations and sports organizations. The National Committees for UNICEF work with donor governments and civil society in industrialized countries to raise funds, advocate and secure visibility for children. The organization supports programmes in 156 developing countries and territories and works with governments, lawmakers, media and civil society in all developing regions to ensure that children's rights are placed at the centre of country-level policy and programmes for poverty reduction and development. Through corporate alliances, UNICEF partners with private companies who share the organization's goal of creating a world fit for children. These partners' contributions extend beyond financial support and include research and development assistance, technical expertise and access to logistics networks and extensive communications channels.

As a member of the United Nations family, UNICEF is engaged in the reform process that is redefining the ways UN agencies work together to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. In this decade, UNICEF and other UN agencies have been increasingly engaged with new forms of global partnerships and with the leadership of regional and intergovernmental bodies on policy-related and investment issues, notably in the context of the Millennium Agenda and the plan of action of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, 'A World Fit for Children'. In the spirit of UN Reform and with the aim of accelerating progress towards the MDGs, UNICEF is working closely with other UN agencies in such partnerships as the *Unite for Children. Unite against AIDS* campaign, the UN Girls' Education Initiative, Education for All, End Child Hunger, and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. The organization is also a key contributor to major UN studies and initiatives, such as the Millennium Project's report and the landmark UN Study on Violence against Children. Consistent, effective and creative partnerships at all levels are a powerful instrument in our collective efforts to improve the lives of children everywhere.

In the six decades since it was formed, UNICEF has evolved from an emergency fund to a development agency committed to protecting the rights and meeting the needs of children, wherever they may be, whatever the conditions of their lives. It has worked across political, national and social divides to provide integrated services to children and their families. In the new millennium – and in the context of a revitalized and reformed United Nations – UNICEF pledges to strengthen its partnerships to accelerate achievements for the world's youngest citizens.

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