Tenth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE
TENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda item 9

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN THE
LIGHT OF THE PRESSING NEED TO ACHIEVE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN THE
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, THE CONTINUATION OF THE ARMS RACE AND THE
CLOSE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT, INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 29 May 1978 from the Chairman of the Executive Board
of the United Nations Children's Fund addressed to the President
of the General Assembly

At the closure of its annual session of Friday, 26 May 1978, the Executive
Board of the United Nations Children's Fund unanimously requested that the
attached message should be transmitted to the tenth special session of the General
Assembly, devoted to disarmament.

In transmitting this message through you, Sir, I request you to choose a
favourable time during the special session to read it out or to have the text of
the message distributed as an official document of the tenth special session of
the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

In my dual capacity as Chairman of the Executive Board and Head of the
dlegation of the United Republic of Cameroon to the special session devoted to
disarmament, I have pleasure in wishing you every success in your important task.

(Signed) Ferdinand CYONO
Chairman of the Executive Board
of the United Nations Children's
Fund

* Reissued for technical reasons.
ANNEX

Message of the UNICEF Executive Board to the tenth special session of the General Assembly adopted by consensus on 26 May 1978

At the end of its annual session, the Executive Board of UNICEF respectfully addresses the following message to the tenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, now being held at United Nations Headquarters:

1. Meeting under the same roof as the tenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, and discussing new plans for promoting the well-being of children in developing countries, the Executive Board of UNICEF wishes the General Assembly success in its difficult task of devising concrete ways to reduce armaments in the world and to promote peaceful relations between nations. The Board feels that, at different levels, both the special session of the Assembly and the UNICEF Executive Board are working in the best interests of future generations.

2. The General Assembly, at its thirty-first regular session in December 1976, proclaimed 1979 as the International Year of the Child. The resolution urges all Governments to expand their efforts to provide lasting improvements in the well-being of their children. Many Governments are making plans in this direction.

3. The unmet needs of the world's children are immense. Just in the developing countries with which UNICEF co-operates, on the average:

   (a) The infant mortality rate is eight times that of the industrialized countries;

   (b) Malnutrition affects one quarter of all children;

   (c) Less than one half the children of primary school age attend school;

   (d) Less than 20 per cent of rural children have access to adequate health facilities.

4. The UNICEF Executive Board expresses the hope that, during the deliberations of the tenth special session, the participants will have ever in mind the objective of all Governments to provide safer, more constructive lives for the children who will be the world citizens of tomorrow. One means to this end is a reduction of the dangerous and crushing burden of armaments; another is the provision of adequate services to meet the essential needs of the younger generations.

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5. The Board therefore appeals to the special session to take whatever steps it appropriately can to assure that there may be a reduction of expenditures on armaments so that a portion of the savings can be channelled through national or multinational programmes towards meeting the minimum requirements of children everywhere—adequate nutrition, safe water, primary health care and suitable education. These are entitlements under the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and are based equally on the principles of humanitarianism and the pragmatic necessities for sustained development.