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PRESERVATION

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Noah —

Please see the
Progress of Nations
reports that I
sent to you earlier,
as well.

* on nutrition
Progress of Nations

see
1996, Page
10-19

Issue Summary: Child Labor

Child labor is defined by Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as any economic exploitation or work that is likely to be hazardous, or interferes with the child's education, or is harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. However, child labor has been inseparably linked to many nations and cultures for years, in some cases, hundreds of years.

The Situation

It is difficult to say how many children are involved in labor worldwide. A recent report released by the International Labor Organization (ILO) titled "Child Labor: Targeting the Intolerable" estimates that there are some 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 working in developing countries. According to the ILO report, approximately 120 million children are working full-time and 130 million work part-time.

In the United States the number of child laborers is fewer, but still disturbing. In 1988, the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that there were approximately 4 million "legal" child workers in the United States. However, it is generally believed by many child advocates that an additional 1.5 million underage children are working illegally on farms and in sweatshops in the United States. The existence of these illegal child laborers has been documented by the U.S. Department of Labor and a number of NGOs.

Some highly publicized cases have recently brought attention to this problem. Children involved in export industries such as clothing production, carpet weaving, or the manufacture of surgical supplies are usually the victims in these cases. Although most child laborers do not work in the export-oriented industries which receive most of the attention and are the focus of most media reports. Many of them work in unregulated and unmonitored parts of the economy such as in agriculture or domestic service.

Child labor has been and can be found in all societies. It is related to poverty, the lack of political commitment to end it, and weak legal and monitoring mechanisms. In the developing world, factors such as enormous debt burdens, bloated military budgets, and structural adjustment programs all affect poor families most drastically. Average incomes have fallen over the past 10 years in many countries and social sector spending -- which previously helped cushion the poor -- has been drastically reduced. In the heightened competition of the global marketplace, cheap and exploitable labor has become even more important and children are being increasingly exploited. This further impoverishes societies because wages are pushed lower by child labor and adults remain underemployed or out of work. The cycle of labor and deepening poverty continues through generations.

Toward an End:

The physical dangers associated with this issue often transcend the moral implications. Hazardous and exploitative child labor has a profound negative impact a child's physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. In many cases, children engaged in labor suffer poor health, a lower IQ, physical harm and abuse, low self-esteem, little or no education, and deprivation of adequate care.

Because child labor is a complex problem, UNICEF has learned from a number of experiences that there are no easy or single-focus solutions. Legal measures such as trade sanctions against imports from countries in which child labor occurs can be counter-productive and actually harm the children. UNICEF believes that a combined approach of education, income-generation, and advocacy activities are the best way of addressing the problem. Education, in particular, is a key strategy to combat child labor. But the education offered must be effective, it must be affordable, of good quality, and should provide the children with vocational skills.

In an effort to help correct this problem, the U.S. Congress has proposed a number of legal instruments and funded programs aimed at ending the abuse of children through labor. You can help by using the attached letter to contact your Representatives and Senators in support of ending child labor.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 1997

SUMMARY



Carol Bellamy
Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund

unicef 
United Nations Children's Fund

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 1997

SUMMARY

"Hazardous child labour is a betrayal of every child's rights as a human being and is an offence against our civilization."

— *The State of the World's Children 1997*

IN *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 1997*, UNICEF's Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, stresses the progress the world has made in protecting children and ensuring their rights. But she also highlights exploitative child labour as one of the worst abuses of those rights and confronts the myth that such practices have been eliminated from the industrialized world.

The report is in three chapters. Chapter I, 'The Convention on the Rights of the Child: A new era for children', explains the profound shift in the world's thinking about children and their rights that has taken place in the past 50 years and is embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention — now the most widely ratified human rights agreement in history — legally obligates ratifying countries to protect children's rights and to ensure that children's best interests are taken into account when actions are undertaken for them.

One of those rights is protection from exploitative or hazardous labour, and the main chapter of the report explores the issue of child labour in all its com-

plexity. Chapter II, 'Children at risk: Ending hazardous and exploitative child labour', surveys the extent of the problem worldwide, while exposing four of the commonly held myths about child labour. It proposes key actions that can be taken to eliminate hazardous child labour, including provision of free and compulsory primary education, implementation and enforcement of legislation, empowerment of the poor, mobilization of society and adoption of corporate codes of conduct.

Chapter III presents statistical tables of health, nutrition, demographic, economic and other indicators — including child mortality rates, immunization levels, school enrolment and safe water access — providing a detailed profile of children's lives around the world.

I. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The world's approach to children has changed dramatically. When UNICEF was created 50 years ago — on 11 December 1946, in the aftermath of the most devastat-

ing war in history — it was out of concern that children would not be adequately protected in the overall relief effort under way in Europe. The international recognition that children required special attention was revolutionary at the time. At the end of the postwar reconstruction period, newly independent developing countries demanded that children's growing minds and bodies be given specific consideration, and UNICEF's relief mandate was enlarged to include child survival and development.

Now, the international approach to children has changed dramatically once again. The idea that children have special needs has given way to the conviction that children have rights, the same full spectrum of rights as adults: civil and political, social, cultural and economic.

This belief was expressed as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which entered into international law on 2 September 1990, nine months after its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly. The Convention has since been ratified by all countries except the Cook Islands, Oman, Somalia, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the United States, making it the most widely ratified human rights convention in history. Ninety-six per cent of the world's children live in States that have ratified the Convention and these countries are legally obligated to protect children's rights.

This profound change is already beginning to have an impact. New laws have been passed and existing laws amended in numerous countries to conform to the Convention. In two striking examples of countries inspired by the Convention, Sierra Leone has demobilized child soldiers, and in Rwanda, children held in adult detention centres for alleged war offences are being moved to special juvenile institutions, with UNICEF's assistance. Major initiatives such as the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in August 1996, and the International Conference on Child Labour, scheduled for October 1997 in Oslo, derive their impetus from the Convention.

UNICEF itself is at a turning-point. In its 50th year, the organization has adopted a mission statement that makes the Convention its guiding force. It will continue to work to alleviate the worst aspects of poverty for the world's children — as more than 12.5 million children under five in developing countries continue to die each year, 9 million of

them from causes for which inexpensive solutions have been routinely applied in the industrialized world for half a century. UNICEF will specifically pursue the year 2000 goals established at the World Summit for Children in 1990. Action towards achieving these goals has already saved the lives of millions of children.

By expressing and protecting all the rights of children, the Convention throws a clear shaft of light on paths that extend beyond the year 2000. Some of these involve protecting children and youth in conflict with the criminal justice system. Others aim to ensure the development of the young child, to support families, to end the use of land-mines and to try to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources.

The most vulnerable children in all societies, rich and poor, must have first call on resources and efforts. The attempt to touch their lives will be complex and will require a sustained attack on the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment. In a world where technology and knowledge are available and easy to share, and per capita income has tripled in the past quarter of a century, there can be no excuses: the rights of all children, including those who are most disadvantaged, can be guaranteed.

Good intentions will now have to be matched with political will. Redirecting just one quarter of the developing world's military expenditure, for example, could provide enough additional resources to reach most of the goals for the year 2000. A similar shift in the targeting of development aid to basic social services — using 20 per cent of official development assistance — could generate much of the rest.

This kind of shift in the way the world uses its resources is no longer an appeal to the charity of those with the power and the purse-strings, but a matter of rights and obligations. Yet the new era in child rights will still need underpinning by popular pressure.

For the past 15 years, *The State of the World's Children* report has mobilized public and political support for child survival and development. Unfortunately, the need for passionate advocacy on behalf of the world's children has not diminished, even now, half a century after the need for UNICEF was internationally acknowledged. As Philip Alston, a leading child rights lawyer and activist, states: "In the final analysis, appropriate policies will be adopted... only in response to widespread and insistent public outrage."

II. Ending hazardous and exploitative child labour

In Malaysia, children work up to 17-hour days on rubber plantations, exposed to insect and snake bites. In the United Republic of Tanzania, they pick coffee, inhaling pesticides. In Portugal, children as young as 12 are subject to the heavy labour and myriad dangers of the construction industry.

Almost all of the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are contravened by these kinds of exploitative labour. It can never be in the best interests of a child to be exploited or to perform heavy and dangerous forms of work. No child should labour in hazardous and exploitative conditions, just as no child should die of preventable illnesses.

Four myths about child labour

The recent surge of interest in child labour has too often been based upon four key myths that it is vital to confront.

The first is that child labour is uniquely a problem of the developing world. But in fact, children routinely work in all industrialized countries, and hazardous forms of child labour can be found in many countries. In the United States, for example, children are employed in agriculture, a high proportion of them from immigrant or ethnic-minority families. A 1990 survey of Mexican-American children working in the farms of New York state showed that almost half had worked in fields still wet with pesticides and over a third had themselves been sprayed.

The second myth is that child labour will never be eliminated until poverty disappears. But hazardous child labour can and must be eliminated independently of poverty reduction. The climate is already changing. At the highest level, governments have begun to move on the issue, realizing that they have to make good the commitments they assumed in ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the local level, activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are exploring creative ways to remove children from dangerous work situations and provide alternatives for them.

The third myth is that most child labourers are at work in the sweatshops of industries exporting cheap goods to the stores of the rich world. Soccer balls made by children in Pakistan for use by children in industrialized countries may provide a compelling symbol, but

in fact, only a very small proportion of all child workers are employed in export industries — probably less than 5 per cent. Most of the world's child labourers actually are to be found in the informal sector — selling on the street, at work in agriculture or hidden away in houses — far from the reach of official labour inspectors and from media scrutiny.

Myth four is that the only way to make headway against child labour is for consumers and governments to apply pressure through sanctions and boycotts. While international commitment and pressure are important, boycotts and other sweeping measures can only affect export sectors, which are relatively small exploiters of child labour. Such measures are also blunt instruments with long-term consequences that can actually harm rather than help the children involved. UNICEF advocates a comprehensive strategy against hazardous child labour that supports and develops local initiatives and provides alternatives — notably compulsory primary education of high quality — for liberated children.

What is child labour?

The term 'child labour' embraces a complex reality. Children's work needs to be seen as happening along a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work — promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest — at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development.

To treat all work by children as equally unacceptable is to confuse and trivialize the issue — making it much more difficult to end the abuses of child labour. This is why it is important to distinguish between work that is beneficial and work that is intolerable — and to recognize that much child work falls into the grey area between these two extremes.

UNICEF believes that child labour is exploitative if it involves:

- full-time work at too early an age;
- too many hours spent working;
- work that exerts undue physical, social or psychological stress;
- work and life on the streets in bad conditions;
- inadequate pay;
- too much responsibility;
- work that hampers access to education;
- work that undermines children's dignity and self-

esteem, such as slavery or bonded labour and sexual exploitation;

- work that is detrimental to full social and psychological development.

Among the aspects of a child's development that can be endangered by work are:

- physical development — including overall health, coordination, strength, vision and hearing;
- cognitive development — including literacy, numeracy and the acquisition of knowledge necessary to normal life;
- emotional development — including adequate self-esteem, family attachment, feelings of love and acceptance;
- social and moral development — including a sense of group identity, the ability to cooperate with others and the capacity to distinguish right from wrong.

How many children work?

Nobody knows for sure. Many countries simply do not keep statistics on child labour — on the grounds that something that is not supposed to exist should not be included in official data. But even those countries that do try to assess the numbers of children working are faced with a difficult task because so much child labour is 'invisible' — taking place in the informal sector, in domestic service, in the home and in the fields. These problems of measurement mean that estimates of child labour can differ greatly. All that is clear is that the number of child workers worldwide runs into the hundreds of millions.

The global picture has to be painted in broader strokes. The vast majority of all child labourers live in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Half of them can be found in Asia alone, although their proportion may be declining in South-East Asia as per capita income increases, basic education spreads and family size decreases. In Africa, one child in three is at work, and in Latin America, one child in five works. In both these regions, only a tiny proportion of child workers are involved in the formal sector and the vast majority of work is for their families, in homes, in the fields or on the streets. A substantial increase in child labour has occurred in Central and Eastern European countries as a result of the abrupt switch from centrally planned to market economies. Meanwhile, the growth of the service sector and the quest for a more flexible workforce in industrialized countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, have contributed to an expansion of child labour.

Reliable data based on internationally agreed-upon definitions are needed on this issue if solutions are to be effective.

The roots of child labour

Children are pushed into work that is often damaging to their development by three key factors: the exploitation of poverty, the absence of relevant education and the restrictions of tradition.

Poverty drives children into hazardous labour. Yet if employers were not prepared to exploit children there would be no child labour. The parents of child labourers are often unemployed or underemployed, desperate for secure employment and income. Yet it is their children — more powerless and paid less — who are offered the jobs. In other words, children are employed because they are easier to exploit.

The pool of poor children that can be exploited in this way has increased because of international economic developments over the last decade and a half. Structural adjustment programmes imposed on the economies of developing countries by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have meant cuts in social spending that have hit the poor disproportionately. In Zimbabwe, reports of both the Government and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have linked the explosion of child labour directly to the impact of the country's structural adjustment programme. National policies and priorities also contribute to the problem. Cuts in social spending have hit education — the alternative to child labour — particularly hard. In the countries experiencing economic hardship in the last decade, per capita spending on education has declined significantly. In all regions, spending per student for higher education fell during the 1980s, and in Africa and Latin America, spending per pupil also fell for primary education.

Education is underfunded and in decline. But the school system in most developing countries is blighted by more than just a lack of resources. It is too often rigid and uninspiring in approach, with a curriculum that is irrelevant to and remote from children's lives. As a result, keeping children in school is proving to be even more difficult than enrolling them in the first place: 30 per cent of children in developing countries who enrol in primary school do not complete it, and this figure rises to 60 per cent in some countries. Thus education has become part of the problem. It has to be reborn as part of the solution.

Tradition and entrenched social patterns also play a part in propelling children into hazardous labour. The harder and more hazardous jobs become, the more likely they are to be considered the province of the poor and disadvantaged, the lower classes and ethnic minorities. In northern Europe, for example, child labourers are likely to be African or Turkish; in Argentina, many are Bolivian or Paraguayan; in Thailand, many are from Myanmar. An increasingly consumer-oriented culture, spurring the desire and expectation for consumer goods, can also lead children into work and away from school.

Respect for diverse cultures should not deflect us from using all the means at our disposal to make every society, every economy, every corporation regard the exploitation of children as unthinkable.

The shapes of child labour

The many manifestations of child labour can be broken down into seven main types, none of which is unique to any one region of the world. These are: domestic service, forced and bonded labour, commercial sexual exploitation, industrial and plantation work, street work, work for the family and girls' work.

The most vulnerable and exploited children of all — as well as the most difficult to protect — may well be those in **domestic service**. They are often poorly paid or not paid at all; their terms and conditions are entirely at the whim of their employers and take no account of their legal rights; and they are deprived of schooling, play and social activity, not to mention emotional support from friends and family. What is more, they are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

The isolation of children in domestic service also makes it difficult to establish reliable estimates of their numbers around the world. But some idea of the scale of the problem can be gleaned from local surveys. A survey of middle-income households in Colombo (Sri Lanka), for instance, showed that one in three had a child under 14 years of age as a domestic servant. Another of domestic servants in Uruguay found that 34 per cent had begun working before they were 14.

Bonded child labour occurs mainly, though not exclusively, in South Asia, where children, often only eight or nine years old, are pledged by their parents to factory owners or their agents in exchange for very small loans. Their lifelong servitude never succeeds in even reducing the debt.

In India, this type of transaction is widespread in industries such as *beedi* (cigarette) rolling, carpet-making, matchstick-making, slate and silk. The most notorious of these is the carpet industry of Mirzapur-Bhadohi-Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh state. A recent study of these children describes how they are often "kept in captivity, tortured and made to work for 20 hours a day without a break. Little children are made to crouch on their toes, from dawn to dusk every day, severely stunting their growth during formative years."

The underground nature of the multibillion-dollar illegal industry in the **commercial sexual exploitation** of children makes it difficult to gather reliable data. But NGOs in the field estimate that each year at least 1 million girls worldwide are lured or forced into this form of hazardous work, which can often verge on slavery. Boys are also often exploited.

The physical and psychosocial damage inflicted by commercial sexual exploitation makes it one of the most hazardous forms of child labour. Children involved have to confront serious health risks every day, including respiratory diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and drug addiction.

No social sector can escape responsibility. Families, entrusted with the care, nurture and development of children, may be complicit in allowing their sexual exploitation, and research has consistently indicated that child abuse and incest are common precursors of the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Then, in addition to the people who actually buy sex, there are the traffickers, agents and intermediaries who profit from the sale of children. There are the professional criminals and syndicates that run brothels. There are the entrepreneurs who organize sex tours. And there are all the people, including corrupt or apathetic officials, who look the other way.

After decades of what has amounted to a cross-cultural conspiracy of silence, the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children put the issue on the world's agenda for the first time. The Agenda for Action agreed upon by participants will guide governments in developing programmes to address the problem.

All over the world, children are to be found doing **industrial or plantation labour** in hazardous conditions. The physical risks to these children — from dangerous chemicals or from faulty machinery, for example — are often more evident than the hazards to

their emotional and social development, which are nonetheless profound.

The industries involving children come in all shapes and sizes, from the leather industry in the Naples region of Italy to the brick-making industries of Colombia and Peru, which can involve children as young as eight.

The numbers of children exploited by plantation agriculture across the world may be as great as those involved in industry — and the dangers associated with their work no less appalling. In Brazil's sugar plantations, for example, children cut cane with machetes, at constant risk of mutilation. In some areas, children make up a third of the workforce and are involved in over 40 per cent of work-related accidents. In Nepal, children work on tea estates for wages so low that they often need to work 14 hours a day.

Street work can be cruel and hazardous for children, endangering their physical and psychosocial development and often their lives. Most of these children struggle at legitimate work on the street for their own or their families' survival. They shine shoes, wash and guard cars, carry luggage, hawk flowers and trinkets of every imaginable kind, collect recyclable junk and find a thousand other ingenious ways to make a little money. The vast majority of them return to their homes in shanty towns and squatter settlements each night: these are children *on* the streets, but not *of* them.

The most common kind of child labour is agricultural or domestic **work for the family**. While children can benefit from a reasonable level of participation in household chores and activities and derive a sense of self-worth from their work on behalf of their families, all too often work for the family demands far too much of them. It may require them to work excessively long hours that keep them from school and can take too great a toll on their developing bodies.

Much of the work for the family within the home is done by **girls**. Most of the hazards faced by working boys are also faced by girls. Yet girls have extra problems of their own to face: from the sexual pressures of employers to exclusion from education. According to ILO, 56 per cent of the 10- to 14-year-olds currently estimated to be working in the developing world are boys. Yet if we were able to measure the numbers of girls doing unregistered work as domestic servants, or work at home that liberates other family members to take up paid employment, the figures would show

more female child labourers than male. Girls also work longer hours on average than boys. This is especially true of girls who carry a double workload — who hold down a job outside the home but must still fulfil their domestic duties on their return.

Taking action

Five key initiatives form part of a comprehensive strategy against hazardous child labour: promoting and enhancing education; building on national and international legislation and improving enforcement; empowering the poor; mobilizing society; and campaigning for companies to take greater responsibility for their actions and those of their subcontractors.

The single most effective way to stem the flow of school age children into abusive forms of employment or work is to extend and improve **education** so that it will attract and retain them. There are now 140 million children aged between 6 and 11 not attending school — 23 per cent of primary school age children in developing countries — and perhaps an equal number who drop out of school early.

Many of these children work, often in jobs that are disabling and dangerous. Millions more are trying hard to balance the demands of work and schooling — and this juggling act is a particular problem for girls.

Primary education must be made universal and compulsory. Good schools need to be created all over the world, with programmes that will attract children to school and reduce drop-out rates. There are innovative programmes already in action all over the world that could serve as models, including the non-formal schools of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and the Escuela Nueva network of village schools in Colombia.

Education systems must teach useful skills that are relevant to children and their parents; be more flexible, adapting to children's circumstances; get girls into school; raise the quality and status of teachers; and cut the family's school bill, removing the costs of books, supplies, uniforms, transportation and other expenses that impact disproportionately on the poor.

Basic education can be afforded if it is made a priority, as the Convention on the Rights of the Child demands that it must be. This is a question not of scant resources but of political choice. It would cost an estimated \$6 billion a year, on top of what is already spent, to put every child in school by the year 2000. That may seem an enormous sum. Yet it is less

than 1 per cent of what the world spends every year on weapons.

Legislation has a vital role to play in combating hazardous child labour. Laws and their enforcement will not defeat hazardous child labour on their own — but the job will also never be done without them.

A country's legal code makes an important statement about what society considers to be acceptable behaviour. UNICEF believes that all countries should establish a coherent set of child labour laws both as a statement of intent and as a springboard for their wider efforts. Governments should also extend the scope of their legislation to include the informal sector, which accounts for the vast majority of child labourers. Child labour legislation can also be a means of educating people and promoting debate on the issue — it has been used in this educative way to combat child labour in Brazil.

Another vital means of preventing hazardous child labour is **empowering poor families** and providing them with economic alternatives to child labour. In India, for example, children are given up into bonded labour because their parents have incurred a debt that they are unable to repay by any other means. One way to prevent this modern form of child slavery is therefore to give alternatives to poor families in urgent need.

Group credit schemes, one means of doing this, are already proving highly successful in many areas of the developing world. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, for example, has achieved widespread international recognition for its success in providing credit to people — particularly women — who would never receive it from mainstream financial institutions.

Governments have the primary responsibility for tackling the child labour problem. But **mobilizing society** provides the best guarantee that a government will take its responsibilities seriously.

This is effectively what happened in the Philippines, where activism by NGOs and church or community groups provoked an enthusiastic response from the Government. This kind of mobilization is paying dividends all over the world: from the South Asian coalition that raids work sites and frees child labourers, to the Kenyan employers' association that has launched a plan of action against child labour, to Sri Lanka's multimedia campaign against the exploitation of child workers, to the West African working children who recently held their second campaigning conference in Mali.

Trade unions and religious, consumer, environmental and human rights groups are campaigning for transnational corporations to assume greater **corporate responsibility** and adopt codes of conduct. These codes would guide the corporations' operations in developing countries and would include prohibitions against hazardous child labour by them, their local contractors and their subcontractors. Some corporations have indeed adopted such codes.

The challenge now is to extend this notion of corporate responsibility for child labour to national companies. The Abrinq Foundation for the Rights of Children in Brazil is one organization — itself financed by the private sector — that is already hard at work on this. Through its child-friendly company programme, it calls positive attention to Brazilian businesses that do not employ children and that support child development activities.

However, while action by all sectors of society is needed, it is governments that have already committed themselves to the goal of eliminating hazardous child labour by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They must now ensure that their commitments are made good.

Ending child labour: The next steps

Hazardous and exploitative child labour violates child rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Immediate action to eliminate such labour must be guided by the best interests of the child. Concern for the well-being of families whose survival may depend upon the earnings of their children must include efforts to expand job opportunities for adults.

Since the causes of child labour are complex and include poverty, economic exploitation, social values and cultural circumstances, solutions must be comprehensive and must involve the widest possible range of partners in each society.

Some specific actions that are urgently needed are as follows:

1. Immediate elimination of hazardous and exploitative child labour

Hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour, including bonded labour, commercial sexual exploitation and work that hampers the child's physical, social, cognitive, emotional or moral development, must not be tolerated, and governments must take immediate steps to end them.

2. ***Provision of free and compulsory education***
Governments must fulfil their responsibility to make relevant primary education free and compulsory for all children (article 28 of the Convention) and ensure that all children attend primary school on a full-time basis until completion. Governments must budget the necessary resources for this purpose, with donors ensuring adequate resources from existing development aid budgets.
3. ***Wider legal protection***
Laws on child labour and education should be consistent in purpose and implemented in a mutually supportive way. National child labour laws must accord with both the spirit and letter of the Convention and with relevant ILO conventions. Such legislation must encompass the vast majority of child work in the informal sector of the economy, including work on the streets and farms, domestic work or work within the child's own household.
4. ***Birth registration of all children***
All children should be registered at birth (article 7 of the Convention). Registration is essential to permit the exercise of the child's rights, such as access to education, health care and other services, as well as to provide employers

and labour inspectors with evidence of every child's age.

5. ***Data collection and monitoring***
Data on child labour are scarce. National and international systems must be put in place to gather and analyse globally comparable data on child labour, if the problem is to be addressed effectively. Special attention must be paid to the forgotten or 'invisible' areas of child labour, such as within the home, on the family farm or in domestic service. Monitoring by communities themselves is important, and working children should actively participate in assessing their situations and in proposing ways to improve their conditions.
6. ***Codes of conduct and procurement policies***
National and international corporations are urged to adopt codes of conduct guaranteeing that neither they nor their subcontractors will employ children in conditions that violate their rights. Procurement policies must be developed to take into account the best interests of the child and include measures to protect those interests. UNICEF reaffirms its commitment to its own procurement policy, through which it undertakes not to buy from any supplier that exploits children.

FACT SHEET

Summing up malnutrition's shame

Higher child mortality

Directly or indirectly, malnutrition is associated in the deaths of over 6 million children under five in the world every year.

Impaired brain growth and development

- Iodine deficiency is the greatest cause of preventable mental retardation in the world. Severe maternal iodine deficiency causes deep and irreversible brain damage in utero. Less serious deficiencies can lower a child's IQ by 10 points.
- Iron deficiency anaemia during infancy and early childhood can lower IQ by about 9 points.
- Low birthweight can reduce IQ by 5 points.
- Children who were severely stunted by the age of two were found to have IQs that were 5 to 11 points lower than those of children who were not stunted.
- One study showed that breastfed children generally had IQs about 8 points higher than children who were bottlefed.

Higher maternal health risks

- Iron deficiency anaemia contributes to approximately 20 per cent of maternal deaths in Africa and Asia.
- In a recent trial in Nepal, vitamin A supplementation reduced maternal mortality by 44 per cent.

Lifelong physical disabilities

- Folate deficiency induces neural-tube defects (spina bifida) in newborns.
- Vitamin D deficiency results in poor bone formation, including rickets.
- Stunting is associated with obstructed labour in women and generally with increased mortality and lower physical productivity.

Compromised immunity

Malnutrition impairs the immune systems of at least 100 million young children and several million pregnant women, none of them infected by HIV. Unlike the situation with AIDS, the ‘cure’ for immune deficiency due to malnutrition has been known for centuries: ensuring adequate dietary intake that contains all essential nutrients.

Greater risk of chronic disease

Research indicates a link between malnutrition in early life — including the period of foetal growth — and the development later in life of chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

FEATURE

Malnutrition in industrialized countries

Supermarkets stock fresh fruit and vegetables in the middle of winter. Meats and canned and processed goods of all sorts line the aisles. Food is abundant and readily available in most industrialized countries. As a result, the general feeling is that whatever problems industrialized countries may have, malnutrition is surely not one of them.

Yet, readily available and sufficient food does not automatically bring about good nutrition. On the contrary, obesity is one major nutrition-related problem in the United States. According to the most recent government statistics, over half the American population today is obese, and of children between the ages of 6 and 17, nearly one fourth are obese.

Obesity carries with it increased general health risks, including a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, non-insulin dependent diabetes, certain kinds of cancer, gall bladder disease, menstrual abnormalities and complications of arthritis and gout.

Obese children face traumatic social and psychological difficulties and increased risk for high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, abnormal glucose tolerance and possible orthopaedic problems, such as difficulty with walking. Obese children tend to become obese adolescents, who tend to become obese adults.

A number of factors bring about this disorder and can interact with one another. Besides nutrition, both genetic make-up and cultural behaviour patterns can predispose a person to obesity. Endocrinological and metabolic factors are also involved.

A long-time researcher in the field, Dr. William H. Dietz, noting the increased frequency with which, paradoxically, both hunger and obesity occur in poorer populations in the United States, has suggested that one cause of obesity might well be hunger.

Without question, the poor in the United States do suffer 'episodic food insufficiency'. One recent study concluded that there are more than 13 million poor children under the age of 12 in the United States who are hungry, or at



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risk of being hungry, during some part of one or more months of the year.

Clear signs of nutrient deficiencies have also emerged, according to one recent study, among one- to five-year-olds in poor families as well as in those better off. Defining deficiency as receiving less than 70 per cent of the recommended daily allowance of the 16 standard nutrients measured in the survey, the study found that 6 per cent of one- to five-year-olds from families not considered poor did not receive enough food energy, folate or vitamin C. Over 15 per cent did not receive enough calcium and nearly 20 per cent not enough vitamin E. Fully one quarter did not get enough iron, and over a third failed to receive enough zinc.

For poor children, the findings were even more disheartening: Substantially higher proportions were deficient in 14 of the 16 nutrients. For example, in 40 per cent of poor children iron intake was inadequate, and 18 per cent received inadequate vitamin C.

The very abundance and availability of the wrong kinds of food, eaten with little moderation or balance, is another culprit. Nutritionally deficient foods such as soft drinks, chips, candy and fast foods tend to crowd out nutritionally beneficial ones.

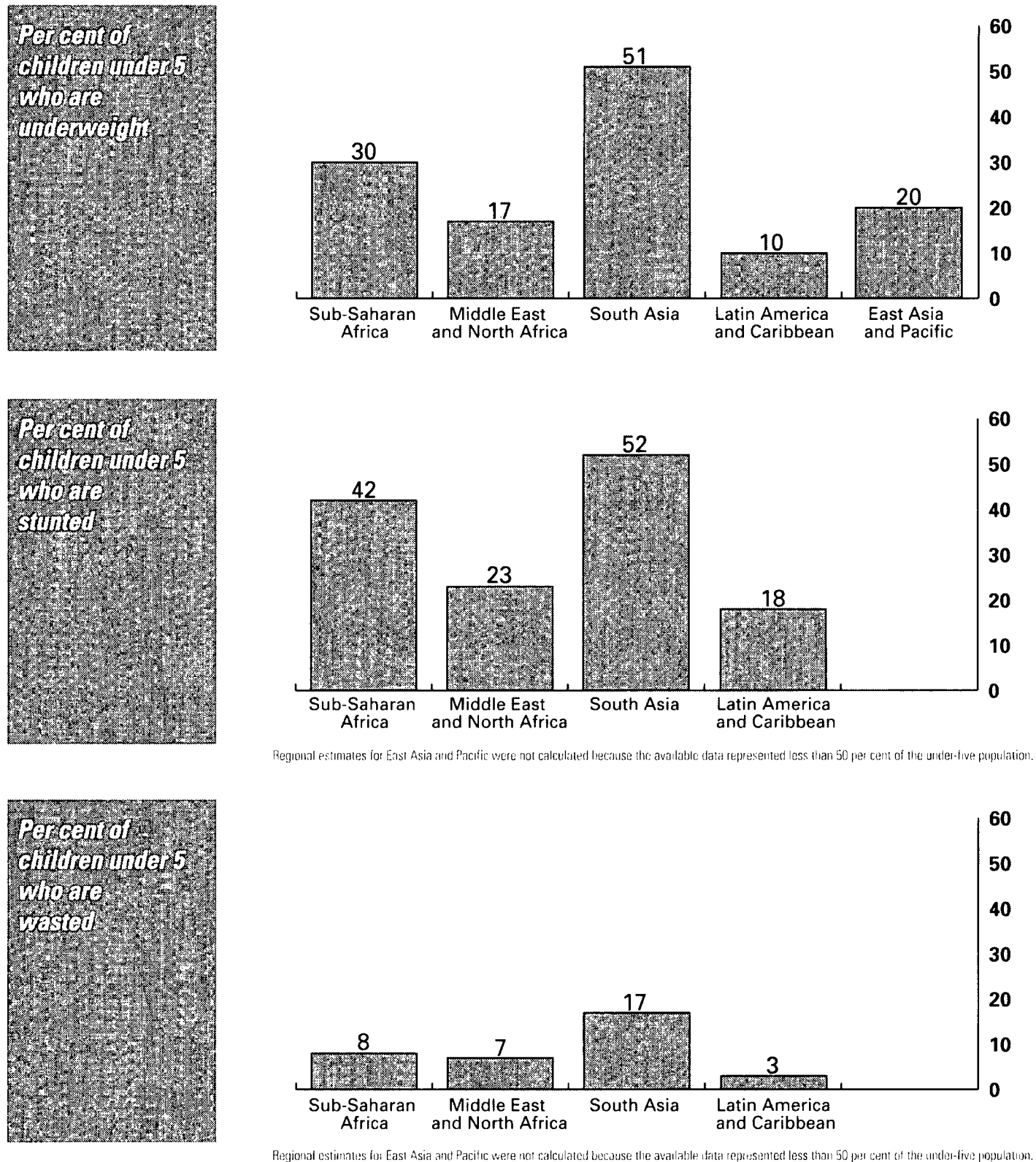
And the increasingly sedentary pattern of life in the modern industrialized world is yet another suspect. A study published last year found that 10- to 15-year-olds who watched more than five hours of television a day were 4.6 times more likely to be overweight than youngsters who watched two hours or less.

Other industrialized countries show similar patterns, particularly among less well-off groups. One British study describes the diet of lower socio-economic groups as providing simply "cheap energy," comprising mainly foods such as full cream milk, fat, sugars, jams, potatoes, cereals and meat products. The diet includes few vegetables, fruit or wholewheat bread and is low in essential nutrients: calcium, iron, magnesium, vitamin C and folate. The study also shows a correlation between the diet and poor health.

In France, recent reports say that the poorest people spend over one fourth of their income on food, yet what they buy is similar to the inadequate diet of the British poor: bread and other starches, coffee, milk, sugar, processed meats and hardly any fruit or vegetables. Not surprisingly, a field study of one of the poorer suburbs of Paris found that the children who lived there were at risk nutritionally. Significantly, a study of newborns in France found that fully 63 per cent showed iron deficiency and 55 per cent suffered from anaemia.

Ways need to be found to change these nutritional patterns since plentiful food alone is clearly not a solution. Taking care — in what is eaten and when — is as necessary a step in industrialized countries as it is in the developing world.

Child malnutrition across the globe: A regional comparison



Note: Malnutrition rates in these charts reflect moderate and severe levels of underweight (low weight for age), wasting (low weight for height) and stunting (low height for age). Data were compiled by UNICEF in 1997 based largely on Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and other national household surveys (1990-1997).