



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

HER EXCELLENCY MS. M. PATRICIA DURRANT

Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations

Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee of the

Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children

**To the
2002 Annual Session of the
Executive Board of UNICEF**

New York, June 3, 2002

Please check against delivery

Mr. President,

Allow me to thank the Executive Director of UNICEF for briefing the Board on the Special Session for children which marked the culmination of over two years of dedicated effort to solidify and advance the child rights agenda. The Special Session was a landmark occasion. It signaled renewed political will to address the unfinished agenda of the 1990 World Summit and showed a clear commitment to resolve new and emerging challenges which demand immediate action. With the presence of over 70 Heads of State and Government, the Special Session also signaled the priority attached to concerted action aimed at placing the interests of children at the forefront of the international agenda.

The success of the event rests in large part on the active support for the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee. I wish therefore as chair of the Preparatory Committee to extend my sincere appreciation for the very useful support given throughout the process both by the Executive Board and by UNICEF. As the substantive Secretariat for the Special Session, the value of UNICEF's preparatory work at the national, regional and global levels was immeasurable.

Of particular note was the Organization's support to the Preparatory Committee during its two substantive sessions and its guidance and assistance to the Bureau in preparing the outcome document which has set the stage for renewed action to achieve key priorities in such critical areas as health, education and protection from abuse. The successful participation of over 70 Heads of State, NGOs, the corporate sector, parliamentarians and religious leaders in the session added to the profile and global impact of the event and enriched dialogue among all actors involved in promoting "a world fit for children".

The highlight of the Session was the participation of over 400 children who actively engaged in constructive dialogue on priority targets and strategies which are of central concern to their own well-being and development. I wish to commend specially

UNICEF's coordinating role which allowed a rich dialogue among child delegates and for its support for the steering Committee which facilitated the participation of these organisations.

The outcome document represents a comprehensive agenda of commitment for the next decade. The Political Declaration, with its ten key imperatives, builds a framework for concerted action at all levels and contains directions for overall progress on key priority issues. The document also assesses progress made and lessons learned since the 1990 Summit and, through its plan of action, sets clear targets and objectives in four areas, namely promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS. Specific targets have been set for each of these areas with several intermediate goals and targets being identified to strengthen progress towards achieving the 2015 goals of the Millennium Declaration. Of particular importance is the acknowledgement of the broad range of partners required to implement the Plan of Action.

As highlighted in the Executive Director's Report UNICEF's preparation for the Special session was a major element in the assessment of the organization's performance in 2001. It is particularly significant that despite the tragedy of September 11 and the resulting delay in the holding of the Session, UNICEF made every effort to ensure that the quality of its input and performance remained at the highest level.

It should be recalled that the outcome document was developed in tandem with the Medium Term Strategic Plan for 2002 – 2005. There is therefore a clear synergy in the objectives of both documents. It is therefore clear that the commitments and objectives undertaken in the outcome documents form an integral part of the priorities of UNICEF for the next four years. I note in the Executive Director's report that although we are just mid-way through the first year of the new Medium Term Strategic Plan for 2002 – 2005, the secretariat, together with all country and regional offices, already is reorienting the work of the organization to meet the high expectations raised by this new, strategic plan.

The results of the Special Session I am sure will provide much guidance on key areas of focus.

The success of the session demands meaningful efforts to achieve the goals we have set. The Plan of action affirms that in order to achieve the goals and targets within the four priority areas, additional human, financial and material resources are required. Follow-up and implementation will determine the extent to which we create a world fit for children and I am certain that the Executive Board will treat this as a priority in its work.

Once again let me extend my appreciation to the Executive Board for their support during the preparatory phase of the Special Session. Let me also reiterate my deep appreciation to Ms Bellamy in particular and to her staff whose expertise and guidance were invaluable in ensuring the success of the session.