

Remarks by the Secretary-General of the United Nations
H.E. Javier Perez de Cueller
upon the launching of the
First Earth Run

United Nations – New York
16 September 1986

Distinguished guests,
Ladies, Gentlemen and Children:

Let me first of all thank you, my dear young friend, for those inspiring words. It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to United Nations Headquarters for the events that will mark this International Day of Peace.

Let me also say how satisfying it is to see so many children in the embrace of the United Nations at the precise moment when delegates to the General Assembly are gathering in the building just behind me for discussions that may well shape the future which your generation is to inherit.

We are here together to launch the First Earth Run. This remarkable event will bring together people all over the world in an outpouring of support for peace - peace for ourselves and also for our children.

There could be no more appropriate location for this impressive ceremony, which will send a torch of hope, a symbol of cooperation, to all peoples.

The peace we seek means more than the absence of war. It must entail a life of dignity for all. We simply cannot expect true peace to reign for as long as people in huge numbers continue to starve, to go homeless or to be subjected to repression.

Through UNICEF, the United Nations system is working to assure a better future for the world's children. In particular, it is striving to eradicate the principal life-taking viral diseases by the year 1990. This is a stupendous task requiring immense resources. Only a body that enjoys the widest support across ideological, cultural and economic boundaries could possibly hope to achieve it. UNICEF is such a body and we are proud of the job it is doing. But we need further support if our goal is to be attained.

Therefore, to all those people in the towns and cities through which the flame will pass over the remaining months of the International Year of Peace: Please come out and support UNICEF. Show the world that the United Nations is a real force for good. Demonstrate your commitment to all our children ... to peace in our time and in theirs.