Remarks by Mr. James P. Grant
Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
upon the launching of the
First Earth Run

United Nations – New York
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Today, a great journey begins. A journey of hope; a journey of commit-
ment; a journey of action. A journey around the world, linking neighbor
with neighbor, and nation with nation.

Today a torch leaves this center of the world’s hopes for a different future
for its children. That torch, carried along its journey by citizens of each
country, carries itself their message: “Give the world a chance. Children
need peace”.

For UNICEF, this great journey offers the possibility of involving tens of
millions of people in the Child Survival and Development Revolution - the
very real capacity of the world to, in just a few short years and at very
low cost, reduce by half the current daily toll of 40,000 needless child
deaths – the only war we want.

For the leaders of the world’s nations, the First Earth Run offers the
opportunity to visibly reaffirm their commitment to the peaceful resolution
of conflicts and the welfare of children. Indeed, just as the torch will draw
its flame from the traditions of an ancient culture – the Native American
Indians who created the flame this morning, the Earth Run evokes anoth-
er Indian tradition – that of tribal leaders passing the peace pipe around
their circle, affirming their own pledge to peace.

And for the people of the world, the First Earth Run offers an opportunity
to collectively express their most fervent prayer – indeed, their demand –
for a more peaceful, healthier world for their children. And it is in that
expression that we invest our trust ... for in the long record of history, vir-
tually every great change in the world’s course – every great force for
good – has originated among common citizens who said: “This is what
we want; this is what we expect of our leaders”.