

8 December 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly
devoted to the 60th Anniversary of the Operations of UNICEF**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Honoured Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, I am honoured to welcome you to this special meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary the United Nations Children's Fund.

I would like to welcome all the children who are with us today. You have a special role and responsibility in this commemorative event because you are representing children from all over the world.

As we have just seen in the film, UNICEF has worked on behalf of children - who frequently are the most vulnerable among us - from the earliest days of this Organization.

Over the past 60 years, UNICEF has shown us that children's right to survival, protection and participation are central to development. We will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals unless we ensure that these fundamental rights of the child are realized.

The name UNICEF has always been synonymous with action:

- from its early relief work for children affected by war, continuing to this day;
- to campaigns against disease, and for child health, nutrition and education in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s;
- to the Child Survival and Development Revolution and the drive for Universal Child Immunization in the 1980s;
- to its work for child rights in the 1990s, as a force behind the adoption and near universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- its work today to achieve results for children through the Millennium Development Goals.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedicated staff who have served UNICEF and the children of the world so well over these 60 years. These women and men

deserve our special thanks. In particular, we should pay tribute to those who, in the call of duty, have lost their lives working in difficult conditions in the field.

The name UNICEF is also synonymous with advocacy. Its National Committees and networks of volunteers in 37 countries have sold millions of greeting cards to raise funds and to raise awareness of UNICEF's work. Beginning with the appointment of the actor Danny Kaye as its first Goodwill Ambassador, UNICEF has relied on these Ambassadors to spread the word about children's issues.

UNICEF was closely involved in the historic World Summit for Children, which took place in 1990 in this General Assembly Hall. UNICEF was also a driving force behind the 2002 General Assembly Special Session on Children. This culminated in a Declaration and Plan of Action entitled "A World Fit for Children". The Assembly will review progress towards the goals of "A World Fit for Children" in 2007.

Distinguished delegates,
Honoured Guests,

In congratulating UNICEF today for 60 years worth of achievement, let us also remind ourselves that we have much more to accomplish before we can say that we live in "a world fit for children". Too many children still die of preventable diseases, go hungry, are denied their right to an education or are forced into early marriage or hazardous work. Too many children have been orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. And, too many of them will never experience a childhood.

On this sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Children's Fund, let us deliver on the promises that we have made in this very Hall to the children of the world.

Thank you.