

## UNESCO Says Hanoi Affirms Aid Will Get to the Children

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., side agency in their areas at April 10—Vietcong authorities this time. have told the United Nations Children's Fund that assistance for children will be given high priority "because Vietnam has lost so many men in 20 years and because children are the future."

Henry R. Labouisse, executive director of UNICEF, said that the message received recently from the Vietcong office in Geneva supported the conviction held by agency officials that food, medicine and other relief goods sent by the agency to Vietcong-controlled areas of South Vietnam would go to children and not be diverted.

UNICEF has tried in over 28 years of operation in more than 100 countries to keep relatively close supervision over the distribution of relief supplies. But there have been instances when this effort has had to be relaxed — in getting help to Biafran children during the Nigerian war in 1968, for example.

### Openness to Observers

Last week UNICEF opened its first office in Hanoi with two staff specialists in relief work: Jacques Beaumont, who is French, and Ruth Lederer, an American citizen who has worked in Latin America.

Moreover, the Vietcong have expressed willingness to have UNICEF representatives travel to Da Nang, Hue and other cities where they could see the relief operations.

Mr. Labouisse conceded that it was doubtful that the Communist authorities wanted a large staff from the children's fund or from any other out-

The agency's relations with the North Vietnamese and with the Vietcong have been developed slowly and painstakingly over the last two years, he indicated during an interview. He added that "too much flag-waving about who gets in first" might be misunderstood.

UNICEF offers of aid were pressed after the signing of the Vietnam peace agreements in Paris on Jan. 27, 1973, mainly because members of the agency's board were increasingly insistent that the agency should comply with its mandate to help children and to do so without political discrimination. It was pointed out at that time that the agency had been assisting children in the provinces controlled by the Saigon Government since the nineteen-fifties.

Mr. Labouisse said that he felt Secretary General Waldheim had been right in refusing the United States' request that he call on the Vietnam Communists not to impede the evacuation of refugees because to have done so would have injected political issues and could have endangered the assistance programs. He expressed dismay that few women and children had been able to get aboard planes and ships that were supposed to be removing civilians only to safety.

The director said that he was unaware of any criticism of the activities of his own agency, which now is working jointly on civilian relief with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The two aid agencies have received, in response to an appeal by Mr. Waldheim last week, \$9,221,423 from nine governments.