

# Focused Squarely on Results

An Interview with Ann M. Veneman,  
Executive Director, UNICEF, New York



Ann M. Veneman with a group of children at a kindergarten in Ningxia Province, China

**EDITORS' NOTE** The recipient of a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Davis; a master's degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley; and a juris doctorate from the University of California, Hastings College of Law, Ann Veneman served as the 27th Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture from 2001 to 2005, when she assumed leadership of UNICEF.

**ORGANIZATION BRIEF** As the children's agency of the United Nations, UNICEF works in over 150 developing and transitional countries to help children survive

and thrive. The world's largest provider of vaccines for poor countries, UNICEF works to advance the Millennium Development Goals by supporting child health and nutrition, quality basic education, access to clean water and sanitation, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. With a staff of nearly 10,000 and total resources of almost \$3 billion annually, UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of governments, businesses, foundations, and individuals.

## What are UNICEF's focus areas?

There are three. The first is health – reducing child mortality and addressing issues that impact a child's ability to thrive and survive. We also focus on the health of the mother, because a healthy mother is more likely to produce a healthier child. The second area is education. We are working to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, and to make sure that valuable, quality education is delivered. The third area is child protection, including violence against children, trafficking of children, child labor, and child soldiers.

### Is UNICEF mostly focused on Africa today?

We work in over 150 countries, but our level of engagement varies depending on children's needs. UNICEF's activities are focused where they are most needed, and where they can deliver results. Africa clearly meets both those criteria.

### Will the Millennium Development Goals be met by 2015?

We are seeing significant progress in many parts of the world, and we have the potential to meet the goals in many countries. Egypt has already achieved its Millennium Development Goal on child mortality, and Ethiopia has seen a 40-percent drop in child mortality since 1990. Vietnam is also on the right track. I have a great deal of hope, and if we maintain our sense of urgency and our focus, we will see significant progress.

### What is the nature of your partnership with the NBA?

UNICEF works with organizations like the NBA and celebrity Goodwill Ambassadors to promote its mission, because of their ability to garner media attention. NBA players have promoted AIDS education, and UNICEF has also been involved with the NBA program called Nothing But Nets, which seeks to wipe out malaria. So much of what we do is about education, and working with organizations like the NBA gives UNICEF an additional opportunity to educate. By harnessing the resources of UNICEF and our partners, we are focusing on results for children around the world. ●

# A Model Campaign

An Interview with Kathy Bushkin Calvin, Executive Vice President and  
Chief Operating Officer, United Nations Foundation, Washington, DC



Kathy Bushkin Calvin

**EDITORS' NOTE** Kathy Bushkin Calvin had a career in politics, journalism, and public relations before joining America Online in 1997. She was President of the AOL Time Warner Foundation prior to joining the UN Foundation in 2003.

**COMPANY BRIEF** The United Nations Foundation ([www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org)) was created in 1998 following Ted Turner's historic gift to support UN causes. The Foundation builds public-private partnerships to address the world's most pressing problems.

## What is the UN Foundation's current focus?

One of Ted Turner's goals when he donated \$1 billion to start this foundation was to activate others' support. So from day one, we have been building platforms for others to engage the UN and its work. Because we work with the UN, we have the benefit of engaging with phenomenal programs that are well-delivered, well-documented, and trusted on the ground.

### How helpful has it been to have NBA players participating in the Nothing But Nets campaign?

It has been indispensable. NBA players are authentic in their enthusiasm. They've gone to the countries to see the nets being delivered, and when they've come back, they've said it has been a life-changing experience. And they're even more compelling in their arguments for why this work is important. The players are role models in the best sense of the word, and I really admire the NBA for encouraging and supporting their athletes in this way. I was at the NBA All-Star game in Las Vegas, and I saw the players working with kids. And to see their commitment to the next generation, their values, and their willingness to give us the space to make children's issues one of the key messages during that period was really special. We've really developed a model campaign. But it wouldn't be a model campaign, frankly, without the participation of a group like the NBA.

### How focused are you on measuring the results of your initiatives?

We are absolutely focused on metrics. I believe this is one reason why health is such a popular area of support. You can measure vaccinations, you can measure delivery of bed nets, and you can take people to see very clearly the problems. I think metrics are very important for corporate comfort, and fortunately at the UN, there are tremendous systems for measuring, monitoring, and reporting back.

### In your opinion, what is the future of corporate social responsibility?

While CSR is crucial now because it is driving the philanthropy sector to become much more responsive, I think we're going to move beyond CSR eventually. It's going to be part of what companies do every day. For me, that's what makes this job so exciting. And the fact that NBA Cares is as big a deal as it is and that David Stern takes this so seriously, and wants this to be as critical to the brand as other aspects of the players' talent and celebrity, is very telling. So I think we're in an interesting era, and organizations like ours, and the NBA, are right at that leading edge. ●