

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Twenty-third Session

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UNICEF/WHO JOINTLY ASSISTED ACTIVITIES

Report by the Director-General

1. GENERAL

1.1 At the Eleventh World Health Assembly the Director-General submitted a report on the developments in regard to relations with UNICEF and Joint WHO/UNICEF activities up to the March 1958 session of the UNICEF Executive Board.¹

1.2 The present document reports the developments that have taken place since that date and in particular the decisions taken by the UNICEF Executive Board at its September 1958 session, that have a bearing on the work of WHO.

2. UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN SEPTEMBER 1958

2.1 The UNICEF Executive Board held a meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 2 to 11 September 1958. The allocations it approved were divided between four main programmes as follows:

(i) Basic Maternal and Child Welfare Services	17.06%
(ii) Disease control (57.11% for Malaria Eradication and 10.71% for other diseases)	61.82%
(iii) Nutrition	12.02%
(iv) Emergency aid	3.10%

Fourteen programmes were aided for the first time as follows:

- 5 for Nutrition
- 3 for Tuberculosis control
- 3 for Basic MCW services
- 1 for Leprosy control
- 1 for Smallpox vaccine production, and
- 1 for Emergency aid to Tunisia

¹ See Annex 13, Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org. 87.

3. FORECASTS OF REQUESTS FOR UNICEF ALLOCATIONS

3.1 The Executive Director presented to the Executive Board a forecast¹ of requests for UNICEF allocations for the period 1959-1961 indicating the major lines of aid and their relation to the anticipated resources of UNICEF. The forecast pointing out that it was difficult to foresee with any degree of certainty the pattern of allocations after 1961, however, indicated a likely trend for increased aid to basic maternal and child welfare services and nutrition programmes, for an expansion of aid to tuberculosis and trachoma control campaigns and for a decrease in allocations for malaria, leprosy and yaws campaigns.

4. BASIC MCW SERVICES

4.1 The UNICEF Board approved allocations for twenty-seven basic maternal and child welfare programmes including three new programmes. Allocations for basic maternal and child welfare services in 1958 totalled \$5.5 million, and according to the forecast of allocations, were expected to rise to \$5.7 million in 1959, \$6.7 million in 1960 and \$7.1 million in 1961.

4.2 Two of the programmes approved were for care of premature babies (Austria and Spain). The UNICEF Board reaffirmed its policy that requests for aid in this field should be brought forward with caution and should be primarily to help training of specialized staff. It recognized that programmes can vary considerably, those aiming at saving premature babies of relatively low weight requiring more highly specialized organization and costlier care than programmes designed to save premature babies with a relatively high birth weight. The Board requested WHO to develop criteria, which might be reviewed by the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy, on what constitutes a good programme in this field, and guidelines to determine under what conditions a country is ready for a premature care programme involving highly technical elements.

4.3 In 1950 a WHO Expert Group on Prematurity stated that "an infant with a birth-weight of 2500 grms. or less, that shows any signs of life, should be classified as a premature live birth". Experience since then has indicated however, that in some

¹ Document E/ICEF/R.581

countries quite a substantial percentage of infants may be born with the above birth weight but who are not necessarily premature. In such countries the indications would be for better pre-natal care rather than for an elaborate special "programme for premature babies". For these reasons a second group of experts is being convened to consider inter alia the need for clarifying standards for prematurity and the approach MCH programmes should follow in countries where new-born are naturally of quite low weights. This programme is likely to take some time. It is proposed in the meantime, therefore, to undertake a separate study on the question of developing assessment criteria and guidelines for use in developing programmes for premature care to meet the wishes of the UNICEF Executive Board in good time.

4.4 UNICEF Relations with United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs. The UNICEF Board had before it a report on activities of the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs on matters of interest to UNICEF; the Director of the Bureau pointed out that the main fields in which the Bureau could collaborate usefully with UNICEF (and with the co-operating specialized agencies) were: community development, the welfare aspects of maternal and child health; nutrition education, especially with regard to training of social workers who could be a channel in the education of mothers; the training of health service personnel in the welfare aspects of their work; and disease control campaigns, such as those against tuberculosis and venereal diseases, in which the social aspects were an important element. These developments are, however, too recent for them to be reflected in the WHO programme and in the field activities of the Organization.

4.5 The UNICEF Board looked forward to receiving at its next session the report, currently under preparation on possible UNICEF aid for social services for children, with particular reference to improving the care of children in residential institutions, day care centres or through other methods of care of children outside their homes. A number of representatives emphasized the importance of guarding against the implication that the care of children in residential institutions was an ideal method of child care, and hoped that the study would take sufficiently into account the possibilities of alternative methods. A similar view was expressed by the representative of the World Federation of Mental Health to the Board. The plans for preparing the study in co-operation with the specialized agencies and interested non-governmental organizations was noted by the Board with approval. The

representative of WHO pointed out that his organization in collaborating on the health aspects would take into account mental health as well as physical and environmental problems. Meanwhile staff members of the Organization have been visiting children's residential institutions and day care centres to acquaint themselves at first hand with modern methods and with the problems involved. A consultant has also been recruited to visit the Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asian Regions to look into the mental and physical health aspects of existing day care centres and residential institutions in these areas. On the basis of these fact finding activities the Organization will present its views to the UNICEF Executive Board in a WHO paper on the subject.

5. MALARIA

5.1 At the session under review the Executive Board of UNICEF allocated \$6.5 million for malaria eradication and control programmes. This brings the total allocation for these programmes in 1958 to \$8 725 000 constituting 46 per cent. of all programme allocations made during the year. This is higher by \$1 147 000 than the forecast of allocations originally estimated. The increase was due to requirements for more insecticides, or more costly insecticides and in one case, more vehicles, than originally foreseen. On the other hand, allocation requests for certain campaigns anticipated for 1958 were deferred until 1959 because of the need for more planning.

5.2 In statements made by the UNICEF Secretariat to the UNICEF Executive Board it was indicated that there had been a tendency for costs of campaigns to be higher than originally estimated due to a number of factors (extension of the area to be protected to parts of the country not originally included in the plan; the finding of more houses to be sprayed; the increasing use of chemotherapy in conjunction with spraying; the need for a thorough evaluation organization to be set up early in the campaign).

5.3 It was also stated that when the UNICEF Executive Board had decided to increase its expenditure for malaria it had been expected that under favourable conditions total coverage spraying in a programme could be discontinued after four years. It was pointed out that UNICEF commitments, in principle, for individual programmes and forecasts of future allocations were based upon this assumption. A major fact

affecting costs was the possibility that four years of total coverage spraying may not suffice in some cases. Should this occur in a number of programmes it was suggested that the sums forecast, instead of providing aid for some new malaria projects, might be required to continue assistance for those programmes.

5.4 At the UNICEF Executive Board meeting held in March 1958, that Board was informed "that the Executive Director of UNICEF had notified WHO not to count in its planning for malaria work beyond 1960 on more than \$4 to \$5 million annually from UNICEF". At the September 1958 meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board, it was stated that "for planning purposes WHO was notified that only a sum of \$5 million a year should be counted on from UNICEF for malaria work from 1961 onwards". At the same session, the forecasts of requests for allocations for malaria were reported to provide \$7.2 million for 1959, \$6.5 million for 1960 and \$5.2 million for 1961. However, these forecasts were considered "an approximation particularly for 1961".

5.5 The WHO representative replying to three questions put to him by the UNICEF Secretariat said that residual spraying should be sufficient after four years of total coverage. The eradication programme could, in many countries, be suspended without risk after four years of total coverage if transmission had been interrupted. Secondly, it was not possible to say definitely whether the distribution of drugs would be effective without specifying the method of administration. Finally, he indicated that further instances of development of resistance to insecticides might be expected but thus far the development of this phenomenon had not played nearly as important a part as had been feared. The cost of a change-over to phosphorus insecticides could not yet be estimated but was unlikely to be prohibitive.

5.6 The WHO representative further noted that the contributions received by the WHO Malaria Eradication Special Account and the PASB Special Malaria Fund had made it possible to carry out many important tasks, particularly in pre-eradication surveys and to provide increased numbers of technical and administrative personnel. He stressed that eradication programmes should not be interrupted short of total success and that it was in UNICEF's interest to see that the work proceeded until final eradication was achieved.

5.7 The UNICEF Executive Board intends to undertake a close and thorough study of the position at its meeting in September 1959, when it will review the next forecast of allocations in the light of anticipated resources and the balance between aid for

various types of programmes. At that session WHO will provide a comprehensive detailed picture of the financial needs and the technical problems. The Executive Director of UNICEF assured the UNICEF Executive Board that in the course of the next year the matter would be closely studied by the UNICEF Secretariat together with governments concerned and the WHO.

5.8 In a further statement on the status of Malaria Eradication, the WHO representative described in detail the developments in Africa and the prospect that malaria eradication could be introduced on that continent in the not distant future. He recalled that the WHO/MESA had been established to supplement and not to supplant other sources of assistance and emphasized WHO's hope that UNICEF would continue its support of malaria eradication. The WHO representative concluded his statement as follows:

"In summary, it is clear that the original tentative estimates of costs of malaria eradication were based on the best information then available and on the expectation of the quick implementation of programmes. This has not happened everywhere. The eradication programme will take a longer time and the costs will be higher than originally expected.

"There is already a short-fall in the funds needed to pursue the eradication plan for the next five years. The Director-General of WHO is taking every possible step to try to meet the financial gap from all sources, governmental, non-governmental and private.

"Furthermore, the original estimates did not include an eradication programme for Africa. As I have said, recent developments indicate that Africa may be ready for developing eradication in the not too distant future.

"The Director-General of the WHO wishes the UNICEF Executive Board to be fully informed of these facts. He hopes that UNICEF will continue to support the eradication programme in the same way as it had done so far and he hopes that it may even be possible for UNICEF to expand its assistance in this direction. I should like to stress that, in terms of UNICEF's objectives, malaria eradication programmes represent the best long-term health insurance policy to mothers and children in malaria-infected areas all over the world.

"There can be no retreat in the eradication programme, as many members of the Board have emphasized. The programme must be carried forward until total eradication is an accomplished fact. If this objective is to be reached, the continued support of UNICEF is essential. To provide the basis for this Board's determination of a future policy on UNICEF support of malaria eradication, WHO will present further progress reports at the 1959 sessions of the Board, giving information on the technical problems and on the financial requirements of the programme."

6. OTHER DISEASE CONTROL

6.1 With the allocations made at its September 1958 session UNICEF is currently assisting eighteen BCG vaccination programmes and eleven other tuberculosis control programmes; twenty-eight programmes against yaws and syphilis; fifteen programmes against leprosy; and eleven programmes against trachoma. In addition it is assisting four penicillin production and two immunization programmes. In 1958 allocations for disease control programmes other than malaria constituted ten per cent. of all programme allocations. In the years 1959-1961, they are expected to range between 17 and 20 per cent. of all programme allocations.

7. NUTRITION

7.1 The UNICEF Board approved aid for five nutrition projects as a result of its approval in principle, in October 1957, of expanded aid for nutrition.

7.2 The UNICEF Board was glad to be informed that WHO was already undertaking a considerable expansion of its nutrition staff and resources. A third medical officer and a technical assistant have been appointed at Headquarters. At regional level advisers in nutrition are being appointed to SEARO and WFRO. At a later stage it is proposed to have advisers also in AFRO and EMRO. The FAO Conference at its most recent session, in 1957, recommended a substantial increase in the FAO nutrition staff during the next four to five years. To allow FAO to begin immediately to expand its staff for joint nutrition work, the UNICEF Board approved an allocation to reimburse FAO up to \$75 000 for the costs of certain new nutrition personnel up to the end of 1959.

7.3 The UNICEF Board noted with interest that the approval of a low-fat peanut flour by the WHO Protein Advisory Group now made it possible to discuss with several interested governments possible UNICEF aid for production of this flour. This flour will be used to improve various types of cereal based low-protein diets.

7.4 The Director-General has already reported to the Board¹ on the formation of an FAO/UNICEF Joint Policy Committee and on its terms of reference as adopted by the UNICEF Executive Board. The FAO/UNICEF Joint Policy Committee held its first session in

¹ See Annex 13, Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org. 87.

Rome on 29 September to 2 October 1958. The Committee's membership made up of five UNICEF and five FAO members, included Austria, Brazil, El Salvador, France, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Philippines, Tunisia and USA. WHO was represented by two staff members. The Committee proposed some changes in its terms of reference which, while altering some of the details, did not affect the substance of the version already reported to the Executive Board of WHO by the Director-General.

7.5 The Committee then went on to discuss the broad areas of joint FAO/UNICEF programme interest and the expansion of aid to maternal and child nutrition. It also reviewed the data on information needed for programme planning and efficient provision of FAO/UNICEF assistance to governments in the field of maternal and child nutrition and considered the part which assistance in the training of personnel in nutrition should occupy in future developments. The joint FAO/UNICEF Committee discussed the general magnitude of operations in future years. It was envisaged that UNICEF allocations to nutritional activities in 1959 would be \$5.35 million or 23 per cent. of UNICEF's resources, in 1960 \$5.88 million or 24 per cent. and in 1961 \$6.36 million or 25.7 per cent. of UNICEF's total allocations.

7.6 In reviewing the relationships of FAO/UNICEF Joint Policy Committee to other bodies, the Committee took note of the scope of the FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition, and that of the WHO Protein Advisory Group, of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Milk and Milk Products and of UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy.

8. PERIODIC PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS

8.1 The question of periodic evaluation reports on individual projects aided by UNICEF was raised in the course of the Board discussion. A brief review was presented to the Board on the present status of evaluations. Evaluation of project experience, it was indicated, was a continuous process carried out by the Secretariat, with the specialized agencies responsible for the technical aspects. On an overall basis an annual progress report for each region and an annual review of the orientation of UNICEF aid is presented to the UNICEF Board at each March session. In addition there are periodic progress reports from time to time on types of programmes: a review has been made of maternal and child health in 1957 and another will be made in 1959 by WHO

for which UNICEF will supply costing data; a review of BCG campaigns was made in 1957, while reviews of malaria, leprosy and trachoma were at that stage being prepared by WHO. The latter have now been presented by the Organization to the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy at its eleventh session in October 1958.

9. STUDY OF UNICEF AID FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

9.1 The UNICEF Board approved a proposal by the representative of Pakistan that the Executive Director study the possibilities of UNICEF aid for primary education and present a preliminary report on this to the March 1959 Board session. Such a study would be carried on in consultation with UNESCO.

9.2 The representative of UNESCO stated that his organization would welcome any increased attention which UNICEF might give to educational questions, particularly in the field of rural primary education. The secretariat of UNESCO would be glad to co-operate with that of UNICEF in a study of the problems involved and the possibilities for future action.