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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY,  
UNICEF/WHO

There is attached for the information of the Executive Board the report of the Tenth Session of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy.<sup>1</sup>

**E M B A R G O**

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Geneva, 2-3 May 1957



JC10/UNICEF-WHO/6  
15 May 1957

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE TENTH SESSION HELD AT THE  
HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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Attendance

1. The attendance at the session was as follows:

	UNICEF	WHO
<u>Representatives:</u>	Mr M. S. Oxorio de Almeida Professor R. Debré Dr M. Eliot Mr R. Montini Mr M. Shafquat	Dr M. Jafar (Chairman) Professor N. Pesonen Dr L. Siri Dr E. Suárez
<u>Secretariat</u>	Dr G. Sicault	Dr I. C. Yuan (Secretary)  Dr P. M. Kaul Dr W. Bonne Dr J. S. Peterson Dr J. Bierman Dr F. Mortara Dr R. Burgess Dr J. L. Troupin Dr J. Holm Dr H. Mahler Dr N. Ansari Dr M. Giaquinto Dr O. Leroux

Election of Chairman

2. Dr M. Jafar was elected Chairman.

Formal approval of the minutes of the ninth session

3. The minutes of the ninth session of the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (JC9/UNICEF-WHO/Min/1-4) as amended by the Secretary on page 3, paragraph 4, of JC9/UNICEF-WHO/Min/1 were formally approved.

Adoption of the agenda

4. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

- (a) Review of Maternal and Child Health Activities and related training of professional and auxiliary health personnel (JC10/UNICEF-WHO/2)
- (b) Bilharziasis (JC10/UNICEF-WHO/3)
- (c) Assessment and Planning of WHO/UNICEF-assisted BCG projects (JC10/UNICEF-WHO/4)

(d) Ambulatory chemotherapy in tuberculosis control (JC10/UNICEF-WHO/5)

(e) Other business.

Rapporteurs

5. Dr M. Eliot and Dr L. Siri were elected rapporteurs.

Review of Maternal and Child Health and Related Activities

6. The Joint Committee on Health Policy considered the document "Review of Maternal and Child Health Activities and Related Training of Professional and Auxiliary Health Workers" with satisfaction and deems that it makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the problems which relate to the health and well-being of mothers and children in the various countries of the world. It will provide guidance for the future planning and execution of maternal and child health programmes to which UNICEF and WHO are devoting efforts and resources. It is recognized that in those parts of the world where maternal, infant and child death-rates are high, where infectious and parasitic diseases are rampant, and where under-nutrition and mal-nutrition are prevalent, the most rewarding approach to improving the welfare of mothers and children lies in the application of scientific knowledge to the education of mothers in child care and nurture and to the prevention and control of the most important diseases. The Committee therefore recommends that the report, suitably edited, be given wide distribution to all the interested persons and to all governments.

7. The Committee recommends that reviews of selected aspects of the MCH activities be presented to the JCHP every two years, and that adequate provision be made to make it possible to obtain the information necessary for complete and factual reviews. For the 1949 review, it is recommended that a study be made of the activities in MCH centres in each region, with particular attention to the extent to which child care and nutrition education are incorporated in the programme.

8. It is recommended that the funds made available by UNICEF for MCH activities be increased according to the views expressed in this respect at the October 1956 and April 1957 sessions of its Executive Board, as total UNICEF resources allow, and as practical possibilities for their utilization in the various assisted countries present themselves.

9. It is recommended that adequate provision be made to obtain full information of the actual situation in each country with reference to problems related to the life, health and welfare of mothers and children. It is therefore evident that an extension of WHO's technical support to MCH activities will be needed and the Committee recommends that this matter receive the early attention of WHO.

10. It is agreed that the increasing emphasis being given to assistance in the establishment of MCH services as an integral part of the general community health programme is sound and recommends that this policy be continued, particularly in rural areas.

11. It is recognized that trained personnel are the very heart of MCH programmes and that it is the training activities jointly assisted by UNICEF and WHO which have the decisive influence on the expansion and the improvement of MCH services. The Committee endorses the proposal that continuing emphasis be given to training of all categories - physicians, nurses, midwives, traditional birth attendants and other auxiliaries. This will require that both organizations should devote increased attention to the professional training of teaching and supervisory personnel.

12. In view of the great necessity for more doctors and other professional personnel trained in paediatrics and child-care who are needed mainly to assume the responsibilities of leadership and supervision in the development and improvement of MCH services, the Committee supports the recent action taken by UNICEF, with WHO's concurrence, to assist selected medical schools for the purpose of strengthening the teaching of paediatrics, with emphasis on social paediatrics, and preventive medicine. It is recommended that all efforts in training be developed with full consideration for the needs and problems of each area and be specially related to MCH activities. Particular attention should be given to strengthening the nutrition content of the curricula.

13. The Committee gave particular attention to sections of the Review dealing with nutrition. In view of the evidence that deficiency diseases are among the most important causes of sickness and of death in young children, the Committee recommends that greater emphasis be given to this problem in MCH programmes with special emphasis in the long-term aspects of nutrition programmes.

14. Since the essential value of skim milk is in the prevention and control of protein malnutrition - most frequent in young children - the Committee recommends that in planning of milk distribution, particular consideration be given to ways of increasing supplies to and in countries where protein malnutrition is prevalent.
15. It is noted that interest in school health is growing and that some activities are beginning in a number of the assisted countries. The Committee agrees that assistance in these areas should be directed towards making the most of the unique opportunities offered by schools for health education. The incorporation of adequate training in health for teachers and the provision of a sanitary school environment are among the most valuable steps towards establishing sound school health programmes. The implementation of the suggestions outlined in the report is recommended.
16. The Committee is of the opinion that UNICEF might usefully give assistance to pilot studies on the health problems of children living in selected cities or towns and their fringe areas, particularly in those communities which are growing rapidly.

#### Bilharziasis

17. The problem of bilharziasis control programmes was considered for the first time by the Committee, and the document entitled "The present situation in bilharziasis control programmes", which gives a brief account of the problem and the value of means of controlling the disease, was discussed. It appears that if each method of control is taken separately - health education, environmental sanitation, molluscicide application, and treatment - it is not sufficient to control the disease efficiently.
18. The combined method of applying at the same time repeated snail control by molluscicide application, well organized treatment of carriers of viable eggs, health education and sanitation measures, will reduce the hazard of transmission, and the cumulative effect, with good timing and a well applied strategic plan of attack, will enable us to break the chain of transmission.
19. In order to apply such combined control methods, it would be necessary to establish pilot projects in each country to determine exact knowledge of local epidemiological factors concerning the environment of man and the ecology of the intermediate host of the parasite.

20. The Committee feels that basic knowledge of the problem and control methods available are not sufficiently developed to warrant recommendation to UNICEF to include projects for the control of bilharziasis among those to which it should give support at the present time. The Committee, aware of the important work already undertaken by WHO in co-ordination of research and assistance to pilot projects in certain countries, asks to be kept informed on the development and progress made in the future with respect to new knowledge in this field.

Assessment and Planning of UNICEF/WHO-assisted BCG Projects

21. The Committee considered document JC10/UNICEF-WHO/4 "Assessment and Planning of WHO/UNICEF-assisted BCG projects", in which the results of the review and assessment of the BCG programme made by WHO in the light of the ten years' experience of the programme and the knowledge which has been acquired were presented.

22. The planning of BCG projects was discussed in some detail, and the Committee agrees that it should be based on prevalence surveys for tuberculosis along the general lines indicated in the document before the Committee. The Committee recommends that in population groups with high prevalence of tuberculosis BCG vaccination should, whenever possible, be intimately connected with other measures for tuberculosis control.

23. The Committee also agrees that in countries where an active public health service for children has not yet been developed to any great extent, plans should be made for repeating the mass BCG vaccination by mass campaign techniques. The time at which the repeated vaccination campaign is carried out and the geographic extent of the campaign should depend on the results of BCG assessment work, taking into consideration also the degree of prevalence of tuberculosis in the population groups.

24. The reasons for the unsatisfactory degree of allergy obtained in the campaign for some groups were discussed. The Committee heard with much satisfaction the importance which WHO has given to the production and value of a heat-stable lyophilized BCG vaccine (glutamate vaccine).

25. The Committee is of the opinion that, in view of the evidence of the protective value of BCG vaccine, UNICEF should continue to give support to mass BCG vaccination.

Ambulatory Chemotherapy in Tuberculosis Control

26. The Committee considered document JC10/UNICEF-WHO/5 "Ambulatory Chemotherapy in Tuberculosis Control" with satisfaction, and noted the progress made during the last year concerning clinical, laboratory and public health research. Two WHO/UNICEF-assisted pilot projects on chemotherapy (in Tunis and Kenya) would be started shortly, and it was reasonable to expect that within about two years' time information about and experience in the organization and administration of a domiciliary treatment service for tuberculosis would be available from these pilot projects. As the preparatory stage for the implementation of a project is usually 1-2 years, it seems appropriate now to agree to support projects in which anti-tuberculosis drugs would be used somewhat more extensively. The Committee wishes to emphasize that this more extended use of the drugs is different from their mass use, because the criteria for the use of the drugs agreed on by the Committee in its last session should still be applied, namely a reliable diagnosis of cases of tuberculosis should be made, and an adequate domiciliary supervision of patients should be guaranteed which would ensure that the treatment will be correctly applied and continued for a sufficient length of time. The Committee agrees that UNICEF should broaden its support of projects in which a somewhat more extended use of chemotherapy is proposed.

Other Business

27. The Committee heard an oral report from WHO on developments of programmes for the control of trachoma and leprosy. In expressing its satisfaction for the information received and the work done, the Committee requested the distribution to its members of the texts of the information supplied. The request was agreed.