At the General Assemblies held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1984, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the International Federation of the Blind, each of which had been in existence for approximately 20 years, decided to dissolve their respective organizations and establish a united world body, the World Blind Union, with a new Constitution and with objectives and activities oriented towards the socioeconomic aspects of the blind and their integration and full participation in society.

The Executive Board at its seventy-fifth session noted in resolution EB75.R13 that "official relations will lapse with the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind in view of the fact that this organization has been dissolved".¹

In the meantime, working relations with the new World Blind Union have been strengthened and its application for admission into official relations is annexed for consideration by the Executive Board at its seventy-seventh session.

¹ Document EB75/1985/REC/1, p. 11.
APPLICATION FROM AN INTERNATIONAL NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
REQUESTING OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH WHO

1. Name of the international nongovernmental organization
   (hereinafter referred to as "the organization")

WORLD BLIND UNION
UNION MONDIALE DES AVEUGLES

2. Address of headquarters and name of person to whom correspondence should be addressed

Mr Anders E. Arntz
Honorary Secretary General
World Blind Union
S-122 88 Enskede
Sweden

3. General objectives

The purpose of the Union shall be to work for the prevention of blindness and towards the advancement of the well-being of blind and visually impaired people, with the goal of equalization of opportunities and full participation in society, if necessary by special, legal or administrative measures; to strengthen the self-awareness of blind persons, to develop their personality, self-respect and sense of responsibility, and to provide an international forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of blindness.

4. Main activities

The main activities are to provide means of consultation between organizations of and agencies for the blind; encourage exchange of experience; collect and disseminate information; keep members informed about all social and legislative matters relating to blindness and its prevention; carry out studies in the field of service to the blind and prevention of blindness; provide guidance in fields of rehabilitation, vocational training and employment; promote creation of national coordinating bodies.

The World Blind Union will represent the blind and those who work in their service at the international level by placing the needs and aspirations of the blind before the United Nations and its specialised agencies; recommend measures for improving their standards of living and encourage all social and legislative action to achieve the full integration of the blind in the general community.

Standing Technical Committees (10): Finance Committee; Social Development; Access to Information and Culture; Research; Rehabilitation, Training and Employment; Aid to Developing Countries; Status of Blind Women; Activities of Deaf-Blind People; Recreation and Leisure Activities; Louis Braille Memorial Committee.

The World Blind Union will organize congresses, conferences, training seminars and other meetings for achievement of these objectives.

A quadrennial General Assembly will be held. The Funding Assembly took place in Riyadh in 1984 and a General Assembly is planned to take place in London, United Kingdom, in 1988.

Submitted by the applicant on 3 September 1985.

The designations employed in this document are those which have been used by the nongovernmental organization itself in its application and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
5. How do the objectives and activities of the organization relate to the General Programme of Work of WHO?

As expressed in its Constitution, the World Blind Union shall work for the prevention of blindness which in its broader context also includes the cure of eye diseases, correction of reduced eyesight, the provision of optical aids, and rehabilitation.

Almost all World Blind Union members are active in the field of prevention. Some of the International Members, such as the Christoffel-Blindenmission and Helen Keller International, have specialized programmes for the prevention of blindness. The Union's profound interest in the prevention of blindness and the community-based approach to vocational rehabilitation and employment is demonstrated by the fact that resolutions dealing with these aspects were adopted at the Founding Assembly of the World Blind Union held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

6. Specific interest with reference to the work of the World Health Organization

(a) Activities which the organization has carried out jointly with WHO during the preceding period of working relations

As the World Blind Union is a new organization, it does not have any activities to report. However, recent joint collaboration with the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind had included collection, dissemination and exchange of information and participation in each other's meetings, both at the international and regional levels; stimulation by the World Council of its affiliates to urge governments to set up national programmes for the prevention of blindness, take active part in them, carry out prevalence studies and support information campaigns; participation in WHO's programme on disability prevention and rehabilitation through the Council of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped.

(b) Programmes and activities of WHO with which the organization will wish to be associated in future

- The Prevention of Blindness Programme
- The Community-based Rehabilitation Programme

The recommendations for collaborative activities with WHO are expressed in the resolutions, mentioned under question 5 referring to the right to see and the right to work and embracing a number of different aspects important to the blind in developing and developed countries. These resolutions will as far as possible be implemented during the Quadrennium 1985-1988.

7. (a) Does the organization advocate any special health measures or procedures?

Yes, the supply and intake of Vitamin A, vaccination against childhood diseases, the importance of good hygiene, etc.

(b) Has the organization any special reservations as to treatment or health procedures?

No.

8. History

The World Council for Welfare of the Blind had official relations with WHO from 1973. The International Federation of the Blind (not in official relations with WHO) was composed of associations of blind people established in many countries. These two bodies dissolved their separate organizations in 1984 and formed a united world body, the World Blind Union.

The World Blind Union is an international nongovernmental organization composed of representatives of national associations of the blind and agencies serving the blind. It was formed in October 1984 upon the initiative of the International Federation of the Blind and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. It was registered on 20 December 1984 in Paris.
9. Membership

National (Full) Membership of the World Blind Union is granted to national members and not to organizations. A national member has two, four or six delegates depending on the size of the general population of the country concerned. The delegates shall be chosen by a national coordinating organization or mechanism or, if such a body does not exist, by consultation between recognized national organizations of blind people and agencies providing services to blind people.

10. Relations with other organizations

Consultative status with ECOSOC (at present Category II), UNICEF and UNESCO. ILO has recommended to its governing body to grant official relations. Observer status with Intergovernmental Committee on Copyrights and with WIPO. Relations with ISO.

NGO relations: Member of Council of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped (CWOIH). Elects five members to Executive Board of International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). Consultative status with International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

At least one half of the delegates on each National Member's delegation must represent organizations of the blind. All delegates shall hold responsible positions in organizations or agencies of or for the blind. Up to now, the following 36 countries/territories have been admitted as National Members: Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Mali, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, USSR, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Zaire, and Zambia. However, 71 countries attended the Founding Assembly of the Union in October 1984 and are thereby regarded as Founding Members. Several of them have not yet been able to ratify the agreement to join the Union.

11. Branch or regional offices

There are Regional Committees as noted hereunder:

Africa
Mr Ismaila Konaté
B.P. 377
Bamako, Mali

Asia
Mr Lal Advani
F 14/61 Model Town II
New Delhi 110 009, India

Europe
Dr Roberto Kervin
38 via Borgognona
I-00187 Rome, Italy

Latin America
Mr Hernando Pradilla-Cobos
Calle 119 A No 56-20
Bogota, Colombia

North America
Mr William F. Gallagher
AFB
15 West 16th Street
New York, N.Y. 11011, USA
Middle East
Mr Ajlan Ali Al-Ajlan
PO Box 3465
Riyadh 11471, Saudi Arabia

East Asia Pacific
Mr David Blyth
45 Waverly Road
East Malvern, Victoria 3145, Australia

12. Structure

General Assembly (every four years) elects Executive Committee and Officers.
Open to all members and governmental observers.
Regional Committees: 7
Standing Technical Committees: 10
Staff: 2 paid
Official Language: English
Finance: Membership fees, subventions from UNESCO, occasionally grants from philanthropic foundations.
Membership: 72 Founding member countries. 20 Associate members, 1 Sponsoring member. 4 International members and 19 Honorary life members. (The figures relate to the situation on 1 June 1985, when registration of membership had not yet been completed.)
Frequency of meetings: General Assembly every fourth year, ordinary Executive Committee meetings every two years, Honorary Officers' meetings usually twice a year, meetings of the Regional and Standing Committees as decided by their chairmen. Founding Assembly in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 26 October 1984.

13. Officers

President
Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim
PO Box 3465
Riyadh 11471, Saudi Arabia

Secretary General
Mr Anders ArnBr
World Blind Union
S-122 88 Enskede, Sweden

Treasurer
Mr Leonard de Wulf
2 Mastweg
B-2610 Wilrijk, Belgium

Assistant Secretary General: Registered Office and Secretariat
Mrs Hilary Gohier
World Blind Union
58 Avenue Bosquet
F-75007 Paris, France

14. Can officially designated representatives speak authoritatively for the membership on matters concerned with the stated purposes of the organization?

Yes.
15. **Finances**

The budget for the first year 1985 was approved as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and expense for the Headquarters</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter (The World Blind), 4 issues per year: print, Braille and cassette</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel grants for Honorary Officers and Executive Committee members</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposit for the General Assembly</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid to national organizations</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions towards President's costs</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Secretary General's office</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Treasurer's office</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subventions to Standing Committees</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>US$ 149,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>67,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees from Sponsoring Members</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO subvention</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deficit</td>
<td>44,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>US$ 149,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the organization is new there are no financial statements for the past three years as requested.

16 & 17. **Documentation and Publications**

The Membership List and Constitution, together with "The World Blind" bulletin (issued four times a year in English print, Braille and recorded on cassette and translated into French and Spanish) have been provided.
With reference to the application for admission into official relations with WHO from the World Blind Union contained in document EB77/NGO/8, the World Blind Union has now brought to our attention the attached supplementary information regarding its Plan of Action for 1986-1988, which the Executive Board may wish to take into consideration when examining the application.
Since the World Blind Union submitted its application for official relations with WHO in September 1985 the efforts to establish a long-term WBU Plan of Action have progressed. This Plan of Action is primarily based upon the activities carried out by the founders of the Union, i.e. the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind (WCWB) and the International Federation of the Blind (IFB). A main and very strong element in the Plan of Action is constituted by the resolutions passed at the WCWB General Assembly and the IFB/WCW B Joint World Conference held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in October 1984. These resolutions were also adopted by the Founding Assembly of the World Blind Union. Another most important contribution to the Plan of Action has been the recommendations of three regional workshops held in Asia (1983), Africa (1984), and Latin America (1984), respectively, and which are contained in the Report on the Project Progress through Joint Effort.1

The Plan of Action will contain recommendations for action at (a) the world level, (b) the regional level, and (c) the national level. Of the very many fields of interest covered by the World Blind Union, the prevention and cure of blindness and rehabilitation, especially at the community level, are of utmost importance in the collaboration with WHO.

On the basis of the aforementioned documents, the following activities will be included in the Union's Plan of Action for the years 1986-1988. They also form part of the implementation of the WHO resolutions WHA28.54 and WHA37.18 (prevention of blindness) as well as WHA29.68 (disability prevention and rehabilitation).

1. To urge the national members to enter into relations with existing bodies for the prevention of blindness and where such bodies do not exist to initiate the creation of suitable committees and the establishment of national programmes for the prevention and cure of blindness.

2. To launch public education programmes to increase awareness of the importance of prevention of blindness and visual impairment.

3. To work for eye health programmes, particularly in schools and in rural areas.

4. To support immunization programmes against communicable diseases, especially rubella and measles.

5. To collaborate with WHO in efforts to control blindness due to onchocerciasis.

6. To cooperate with national governments in the resettlement of blind victims and their families in previously onchocerciasis affected areas.

7. To contribute to the WHO/FAO campaign against Vitamin A deficiency, by spreading public information on the importance of intake of Vitamin A to prevent blindness.

8. To collaborate with countries in mass treatment programmes against infectious eye diseases and cataract.

9. To further the training of ophthalmic auxiliaries.

10. To encourage eye donations for eye banks.

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1 Held by the WHO Secretariat.