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**Chapter VII - The Rise of Planning and the Fall of Protein**

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# Chapter VII
# The Rise of Planning and the Fall of Protein

> Time is short. Urgent and sustained action is vital. The Conference, therefore, calls upon all peoples expressing their will as individuals, and through their Governments and non-governmental organizations, to work together to bring about the end of the age-old scourge of hunger.
>
> From the World Food Conference's *Universal Declaration on The Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition*, Rome, 16 November 1974[1]

## A Different Story

The first years of the 1970s mark a fascinating point in the history of nutrition policy. Interest in protein, the issue that had dominated substantial UN agency resources and expertise, reached its peak before beginning a rapid fall from grace. In protein's place, policy makers lifted nutrition in national planning and other horizontal strategies to gilded positions. In a sense, nutrition policy in the 1970s was the battleground for a fierce ideological competition between nutritionists subscribing to vertical and horizontal schools of thought. The vertical nutritionists continued to pursue straightforward, "magic bullet" solutions to nutritional problems, especially in the area of protein. The horizontal nutritionists, however, continued to shift away from simple supply-side solutions to the problem -- such as expanded supplementary feeding programmes -- and looked toward developing countries to fix their own problems in the context of national development policy.

In general, the orthodox application of many nutritional concepts had resulted in substantial accomplishments which bolstered the field. Aykroyd, the former director of FAO's Nutrition Division, charted the mutating character of nutrition deficiency disease in *The Conquest of Deficiency Diseases*, written for FAO and WHO in 1970. In the study, he highlighted the remarkable progress that had been made since the century began against previously prevalent diseases such as pellagra, beriberi, rickets, and scurvy. On the topic of PCM, however, Aykroyd commented that it was "a different story".[2] It was this "different story" that was driving a spike between the

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[1] *Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5-16 November 1974*, New York, United Nations, 1975, p. 3.

[2] W. R. Aykroyd, *Conquest of Deficiency Diseases: Achievements and Prospects*, Geneva, WHO, FFHC Basic Study no. 24, 1970, p. 96.

vertical and horizontal nutritionists, and between the nutritionists and the policy makers. Decades of efforts against PCM had shown little progress. Nevertheless, a vertical view of PCM, rooted in the role of protein, had continued to be a magnet for attention. While the PAG and other forces had worked to elicit greater attention to protein, the results backfired. The policy makers began to scrutinize their failed marriage to protein issues and found that hunger and malnutrition could rarely be addressed by a surgically precise project or programme. As a result, consensus began to build among public health leaders that nutrition itself could not be disentangled from the complex interactions of social, cultural, agricultural, and economic issues which influenced it.

**Protein Interest Wanes**

During his last years at FAO in 1970 and 1971, Autret, the director of the FAO Nutrition Division, pragmatically emphasized that, while one could wait for socio-economic improvements to reach the needs of the malnourished child, in the meantime something had to be done to meet their pressing requirements. His perspectives on FAO's work reflected the transformation that had occurred since the days of Orr. Whereas Orr had pushed simply for increased global production of food, Autret acknowledged that the assumption of a positive correlation between increased food production and improved nutrition in the homes of the poor was bunk. Autret wrote, "Even if national agriculture development plans meet the average national requirements in twenty years' time, the distribution between regions or socio-economic groups will remain such that large groups of the population will be underfed and malnourished."[3] In the hope of balancing long- and short-term goals, he embraced a number of vertical approaches to the horizontally-based problems he perceived.[4] In line with his belief that protein deficiency continued to be the greatest problem facing global nutrition, he broadcast that the Nutrition Division could provide plant protein formulae "suitable for any country" that could treat the problem in the short-term.[5] According to Autret, the world's ongoing nutrition problems were not the fault of scientists, nutritionists, or policy makers devoted to nutritional issues: "The bottleneck [in making progress in nutrition] is mainly the insufficient appreciation of

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[3]M. Autret, 'Philosophy and main lines of orientation of the programme of work of the Nutrition Division', *Nutrition Newsletter*, 1970, 8(2), 50-56, on pp. 51-2.

[4]Importantly, however, Autret recognized the shortcomings of vertical nutrition programmes to date. In the case of food distribution programmes for example, he lamented that they perhaps reached 2-3% of the world's needy pre-school aged children. Ibid., p. 52.

[5]Ibid., p. 51.

the problem and information on solutions by governments and population."[6] In addition to industrial feeding and applied nutrition, FAO's platform called for governments to sponsor massive feeding programmes in order to reduce morbidity and mortality in the short-run and in the long-run to build a "new generation [of] physically and mentally alert [citizens]".[7]

Since the publication of the ACST report, the protein gap and crisis had continued to be among the UN's most pressing concerns and commanded considerable energy from the UN General Assembly. From the creation of the specialized UN agencies to the present day, the UN had generally allowed FAO, WHO, and Unicef the autonomy and space to engage in the issues they wished to address. While the independence of these agencies was not thwarted, the UN took an interest in protein which effectively influenced WHO, FAO, and Unicef operations. In 1970, the Economic and Social Council of the UN requested FAO to direct efforts toward the realization of high-protein marine foods and asked all three agencies to "intensify action and research on the health aspects of malnutrition".[8] Although the UN did not consistently define malnutrition as being synonymous with protein-malnutrition, there was no doubt that protein was a central inspiration for these recommendations.

Ironically, at the same time the UN was calling for intensified protein action, the sentiment spoken by McLaren years earlier about the importance of examining the whole spectrum of PCM was becoming mainstream. Aykroyd, who by 1970 was a revered nutritional figure, summed up the state of PCM:

> In any country where protein-calorie malnutrition exists, the whole spectrum will be found. Certain forms may, however, predominate. In tropical Africa, for example, kwashiorkor as described above is particularly common and has attracted the special attention of doctors in that region. **In the developing countries generally, however,**

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 52. Although the PAG generally applauded supplementary protein feeding programmes, its secretariat noted that "because of the highly complex inter-relations between protein and other nutritional and environmental factors and because we are dealing with biological problems of man, one cannot expect results except as a result of years of well-organized effort." The PAG, however, could only cite examples of such time-intensive success stories in developed countries. 'Commentary on the world protein situation', New York, 17th PAG Meeting, Agenda item 8.13, PAG Document 1.2.3/5, LSHTM Archives, PAG file, 27 March 1970.

[8]'Draft resolutions recommended by the commission for social development for adoption by the economic and social council at its 21st session concerning Unicef', 16 April 1970, New York, E/ICEF/CRP/70-1/Add.2, p. 3.

**forms in which marasmus is the most prominent clinical feature occur more frequently than kwashiorkor.** (emphasis mine)[9]

Parroting McLaren, Aykroyd continued, "There seems to be a tendency toward a proportionate increase in marasmus, which is probably connected with the growth of urbanization under wretched conditions. In general, marasmus is the form of protein-calorie malnutrition characteristic of the congested shanty-town, and kwashiorkor the form characteristic of the village."[10] Considering Aykroyd's piece was published jointly by FAO and WHO, his views should be considered as representative of, or at least condoned by, the nutrition divisions at both agencies. His comments provide evidence of a clear shift in the mode of thinking about nutritional disease, precisely at the time when the clamour over protein was reaching its height. Bengoa at WHO described the transformation in the following terms: "Since the period when acute specific deficiency diseases, particularly vitamin deficiency diseases, were easily identifiable there has been a clear trend toward forms of malnutrition that are less defined, more moderate and therefore more difficult to quantify."[11] By opening their concerns to the less obvious symptoms of malnutrition, the nutritionists found the scope of their knowledge seriously handicapped.[12]

FAO partly responded to the protein gap concerns of the UN with the Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development (IWP), a study which utilized figures on population growth and food production to provide a blueprint for future agricultural endeavours and production goals for 1975 and 1985. Reflected in the IWP was the popularity of the protein-related policies. The plan called for agricultural schemes centred around protein needs, such as increased fish harvesting as well as poultry and pig production. Although the majority of recommendations were more

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[9]Aykroyd, op. cit., note 2 above, p. 51. Adding substantial credibility to McLaren's arguments, Aykroyd cited McLaren and a handful of other nutritionists who had hypothesized or observed the growing prevalence of marasmus in developing countries. (pp. 56-7)

[10]Ibid., p. 51.

[11]J. M. Bengoa, 'The state of world nutrition', 1973, WHO Nutr/73.1, Bengoa personal collection, p. 1. As early as 1971, Bengoa had suggested that the point prevalence of kwashiorkor in developing countries was in the range of .2%-1.6% whereas marasmus was 1.2%-6.8%. His data helped propel scientists toward a more reasonable conception of world protein problems. J. M. Bengoa, 'Significance of malnutrition and priorities for its prevention', paper presented at International Conference on Nutrition, National Development, and Planning, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 19-21 October 1971, Bengoa personal collection, p. 4.

[12]Bengoa reported the findings of new data which indicated that in Latin America, malnutrition was either the underlying or associated cause of death in 53% of childhood deaths under the age of five. Of the cases of malnutrition, the vast majority were characterized as being an intermediate form of malnutrition -- neither marasmus nor kwashiorkor per se. Bengoa, 'The state of world nutrition', op. cit., note 11 above, pp. 2, 3, 9.

concerned with simply boosting staple food supplies, especially cereals, than with addressing specific nutritional deficiencies, the document was fundamentally a guideline for agriculture, not for health. Of the five key recommendations, one was linked to diet while the others called for economic devices such as "earning and saving foreign exchange that is crucial to financing overall development".[13] Increasingly, socio-economic jargon was replacing nutritional rhetoric, a literal reflection of the changing landscape for nutrition.

**Strategy Statement to Avert The Protein Crisis**

The last great push for protein came in May 1971 when the UN published a reincarnation of the 1968 ACST report on the impending protein crisis. According to U. Thant, then the UN Secretary-General, the experts' report included "substantive, institutional and financial steps that must be undertaken if effective action on this critical problem is to materialize."[14] The panel that unanimously approved the report, entitled *Strategy statement on action to avert the protein crisis in the developing countries*, included C. Subramaniam, the minister of planning for India, Teply and Milner from Unicef, Autret, and Scrimshaw. As its name suggested, the report dealt almost entirely with protein issues with no discussion of a de-emphasis of protein issues or increased emphasis of calories. According to the document, the protein crisis was then not **impending**, but rather was **"real"**.[15] Among the key actions to be undertaken, the report recommended that governments in developing countries make weighty statements about their commitment and plan to attack protein malnutrition; that developed countries' governments and the UN support these initiatives and create a special "fund for averting the protein crisis"; and that the PAG be expanded to include all UN agencies which work on related concerns.[16] As the report summed up the past efforts and planned for future actions, it stated that the complexity of the problem combined with failed simplistic solutions were at the root of the deteriorating situation.[17] In order to delegate responsibility, the committee carved out a large chunk

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[13]*Strategy for Plenty: The Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development*, Rome, FAO, 1970, p. 7.

[14]*Strategy statement on action to avert the protein crisis in the developing countries*, New York, United Nations, 1971, p. iv.

[15]Ibid., p. 14.

[16]Ibid., pp. 5-6. For an illustrious example of the ways in which this protein crisis seeped into popular culture, see: Frances Moore Lappé, *Diet for a Small Planet*, New York, Friends of the Earth and Ballantine Books, 1971.

[17]*Strategy statement on action to avert the protein crisis*, op. cit., note 14 above, p. 9.

of the responsibility for the PAG, including the provision of "guidelines" for all UN-funded protein-related programmes.[18] The recommendations themselves verged on drastic methods to collect funds for protein projects including a "'protein development tax'" to be levied on luxury items such as soft drinks, beer and wine.[19] Scrimshaw felt that while the title of the report -- *Strategy statement on action to avert the protein crisis in the developing countries* -- was ridiculed for its catastrophic intimation, the committee broadly agreed that the increases in cereal production through Green Revolution techniques and the accompanying declines in legume production meant that the traditional protein complements for poor peoples' diets were disappearing.[20] The committee therefore agreed that all possible sources for protein had to be investigated and countries had to be discouraged from applying advanced agricultural strategies blindly.[21] In the midst of the debate, Scrimshaw was seen by some colleagues as over-enthusiastically promoting the notion of the protein gap and crisis. Béhar, Scrimshaw's colleague and friend of decades, believed that during the late-1960s and early-1970s Scrimshaw had become so "obsessed" with protein that he had trouble accepting other points of view. According to Béhar, Scrimshaw did not shoot down ideas contrary to his own out of egotism or pride, but rather because of the strength of his beliefs.[22] In journals and at conferences, Scrimshaw was seen as an orthodox nutritionist, clinging to a concept whose veracity was partially doubted.

**The 1973 Protein Recommendation**

From 1970 onward, it seemed that many aspects of protein enthusiasm were becoming increasingly contentious. The head of FAO's Statistics Division, P.V. Sukhatme, disturbed many protein enthusiasts when he collected data showing that

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[18]Ibid., p. 15.

[19]Ibid., p. 17.

[20]For an excellent overview of this issue, see: Alan Berg, *The Nutrition Factor: Its Role in National Development*, Washington, D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1973, pp. 50-73.

[21]Nevin Scrimshaw, interview, 26 July 1995. The strategy statement was, right up to the final years of the PAG's existence, considered a singularly important document. In the *PAG Compendium*, H. A. B. Parpia, the PAG chairman from 1968 to 1969, cited the PAG's assistance in formulating the statement as a key example of the PAG's contemporary role of providing advice on PCM as one component of development. H. A. B. Parpia, 'Notes on PAG priorities for averting protein-calorie malnutrition', in A. Sachs and P. Cormier (eds), *The PAG Compendium: The Collected Papers Issued by the Protein-Calorie Advisory Group of the United Nations System, 1956-1973*, New York, Worldmark Press, Ltd., E, 1975, xxix-xxvi, on p. xxix.

[22]Moisés Béhar, interview, 29 December 1995.

adequate caloric intake would usually take care of the protein.[23] In 1970, Sukhatme was feeling confident in his perspective and wrote to a colleague that he was happy to hear that "most of the big names in the field of nutrition welcome my views."[24] In closing, Sukhatme quoted heavily from a letter Autret had received from influential Professor D. M. Hegsted at Harvard School of Public Health. Hegsted reportedly had written:

> I think the whole field of protein-calorie malnutrition has been dominated by a very small group for the past 10 or 15 years. They pay lip service to everything but when the cards are down the only thing they push is protein. The PAG is a prime example and, as I have said elsewhere, I think their mission is wrong or they misinterpret their mission. The problem is to do something about malnutrition in infants and children and not necessarily raise protein intake unless it can be shown that this will do the job. The doubters of the usual position need a forum.[25]

Hegsted's comments were emblematic of the frustration many nutritionists were feeling about the state of nutritional affairs. However, his stance and Sukhatme's were diametrically opposed to Scrimshaw's. Scrimshaw felt that only harm could come from reporting protein requirements at a level lower than optimum. Irked by Sukhatme's findings, Scrimshaw reported to FAO's Deputy Director-General that he had an extensive experiment running which would support protein crisis plans.[26]

As Kenneth Carpenter has pointed out, Sukhatme's work was particularly worrisome for protein enthusiasts since they feared that the 1971 ad hoc expert committee on protein and energy requirements would be unduly influenced. In *Protein and Energy*, Carpenter provided a concise synopsis of the committee's periodic tasks and the methodologies used for the 1957, 1965, and 1973 published reports. Each committee used statistical analyses combined with empirical findings to make recommendations about the protein requirements for healthy children and adults. The recommendations were expressed in grams of protein per kilogram of body weight and reflected substantial variability report-to-report.[27] The importance of these reports was in part due to their use in calculating the size of the world protein deficit.

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[23]Kenneth J. Carpenter, *Protein and Energy: A Study of Changing Ideas in Nutrition*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 189-98.

[24]P. V. Sukhatme, letter to C. B. Coulson, 20 August 1970, LSHTM Archives, Payne papers, expert committee on protein box.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Carpenter, op. cit., note 23 above, pp. 189-93.

If the requirements espoused were low, then the global protein situation, as calculated by FAO and other expert committees, would be correspondingly better. The 1973 protein recommendations -- in part under Sukhatme's influence -- were the lowest ever proposed by an FAO/WHO committee.[28]

At the meetings to formulate the 1973 recommendations, caloric issues had, for the first time in decades, been a cause of greater concern than protein. R. Passmore from Scotland noted that the 1965 FAO/WHO Expert Committee recommendations on protein were "difficult reading for experienced nutritionists and nearly impossible for others." Further he noted that due to this confusion, "persons responsible for food planning both at national and international levels" were miffed about what action to take.[29] Hegsted continued to rally for increased attention to calories, especially in terms of calorie-protein relationships. In sum, he found that "calorie needs eventually dominate all other needs. The addition of protein to the diet is not useful in overcoming caloric deficits except as an expensive source of calories."[30] It was Hegsted's basic contention, grounded in empirical field observations and reports, that "'calories spare body protein'" and should therefore be prioritized (or at least not overlooked) in the formulation of nutritional requirements.[31]

Although Scrimshaw served on the committee for the 1973 report, he came to believe that the protein levels recommended were too low. During a trial of the recommended levels by Cutberto Garza, a young paediatrician, Garza approached Scrimshaw and mysteriously asked him whether it was an ethical study. He then revealed that in spite of giving the mean recommended protein dose plus two standard deviations, signs of liver damage were appearing as was a loss of lean body mass.[32] More importantly, Garza pondered how one could conduct such a test on healthy students who had no parasites or infection when the findings were to be applied to

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[28]*Energy and Protein Requirements, Report of a Joint FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Committee, Rome, 22 March - 2 April 1971*, Rome and Geneva, FAO and WHO, FAO Nutrition Meetings Report Series no. 52, WHO Technical Report Series no. 522, 1973.

[29]R. Passmore, 'Recommended intakes of protein for growth', paper presented at FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Energy and Protein: Requirements and Recommended Intakes, LSHTM Archives, Payne papers, FAO/WHO expert committee on protein box, 28 January 1971, p. 1.

[30]D. M. Hegsted, 'Protein and Calories', paper presented at FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Energy and Protein: Requirements and Recommended Intakes, LSHTM Archives, Payne papers, expert committee on protein box, 8 February 1971, p. 3.

[31]Ibid., p. 1.

[32]For the paper which emerged from this work, see: C. Garza, N. S. Scrimshaw, and V. R. Young, 'Human protein requirements: evaluation of the 1973 FAO/WHO safe level of protein intake for young men at high energy intakes', *British Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 1977, 37, pp. 403-20.

people who were physiologically compromised.[33] This incident fortified Scrimshaw's resolve to have the 1973 recommendations altered.

In a PAG statement entitled "The 'Protein Problem'", the PAG clashed with the protein views of the FAO/WHO ad hoc Expert Committee on Protein and Calorie Requirements. Given Scrimshaw's membership in the committee and his chairmanship of the PAG, the conflict highlighted the deep rifts in the nutritional community. The PAG asserted that the protein levels recommended by the committee were sufficient for healthy children living in a healthy environment but were inadequate for many sick or frequently ill children living in developing countries, a comment not at all contrary to statements in the committee's report.[34] Among the WHO committee members who took public offence were A. E. Harper, P. R. Payne, and J. C. Waterlow. In a letter to the *Lancet* they protested what they termed the PAG's "cavalier rejection" of their findings.[35] The authors agreed that sick children needed more protein but doubted that children in developing countries "would be less at risk from malnutrition if provided with a different kind of diet with a protein content higher by some unspecified amount than the 'safe level' of protein currently recommended."[36]

To the authors, protein simply was not the central problem, and the PAG statement served only to sustain "the myth of the 'protein problem' and hence to lend support to the assumption that there are simple and effective interim expedients to alleviate 'protein-energy' malnutrition."[37] The authors further lambasted the PAG for taking issue with a recommended protein level since such hype could only "distract

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[33]Nevin Scrimshaw, interview, 18 July 1995. For a highly critical and detailed analysis of protein requirements and related experiments, see: Nevin S. Scrimshaw, 'Shattuck lecture-strengths and weaknesses of the committee approach, an analysis of past and present recommended dietary allowances for protein in health and disease', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 15 and 22 January 1976, 294, pp. 136-42 and 198-203. See also: Nevin S. Scrimshaw, '1977 W. O. Atwater Memorial Lecture; through a glass darkly: discerning the practical implications of human dietary protein-energy interrelationships', in Philip L. White and Nancy Selvey (eds), *Nutrition in Transition, Proceedings of Western Hemisphere Nutrition Congress V*, Monroe, Wisconsin, American Medical Association, 1978, 14-28, on p. 27. See also: Nevin S. Scrimshaw, 'Through a glass darkly: discerning the practical implications of human dietary protein-energy interrelationships', *Nutrition Reviews*, December 1977, 35(12), pp. 321-337.

[34]'The "Protein Problem"', PAG Statement No. 20, 1 March 1973, in A. Sachs and P. Cormier (eds), *The PAG Compendium: The Collected Papers Issued by the Protein-Calorie Advisory Group of the United Nations System, 1956-1973*, New York, Worldmark Press, Ltd., F, 1975, F785-94, on p. F791. See: *Energy and Protein Requirements*, op. cit., note 28 above, p. 9. For a more readable summary of these recommendations as well as proposed levels for other nutrients see: R. Passmore, B. M. Nicol, M. Narayana Rao, G. H. Beaton, and E. M. DeMayer, *Handbook on Human Nutritional Requirements*, Geneva and Rome, WHO and FAO, WHO Monograph Series no. 61, FAO Nutrition Series no. 28, 1974.

[35]A. E. Harper, P. R. Payne, J. C. Waterlow, 'Human Protein Needs', *Lancet*, 30 June 1973, p. 1518.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

attention from the need for a broad-based attack on the social and economic deprivation of which ill-health and malnutrition are but symptoms."[38] These words were among the strongest ever written against the PAG in a public forum, and responses rippled through the editorial pages well into the following year.[39] Joaquín Cravioto, the new PAG chairman in 1974 and an accomplished nutritionist from the Mexican Institute for Child Welfare, defensively replied that the PAG had drawn as much attention to the socio-economic aetiology of malnutrition as to the role of protein.[40] While the public debates paint a cloudy picture of these events, they clearly display the underlying truth that Waterlow, Payne, and Harper had more an ideological grudge against the PAG's raison d'être than with the criticism of their protein level statement.

## The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition: Eighth Report

The increasingly stark advocacy for a caloric or hunger-based focus on nutrition quickly spread from the ad hoc protein requirements committee to the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition. At their eighth meeting the members focused recommendations solely on food fortification and PCM. Food fortification as a means for improving national nutrition status had been increasingly discussed in nutrition circles.[41] Since the protein crisis had been announced, some nutritionists had optimistically viewed amino acid fortification of cereals, especially with lysine. However, the committee adopted a pragmatic tone in its discussion of such possibilities as well as in its broader discussion of PCM. Whereas two or three years earlier, nutritionists were discussing ways to increase protein intake (regardless of

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Among others mentioned here, see: M. J. Stock and J. P. W. Rivers, 'Human protein and energy requirements?', *Lancet*, 29 September 1973, pp. 732-33.

[40] Joaquín Cravioto, 'Human protein needs', *Lancet*, 12 January 1974, p. 67. The PAG chairmanship rotated frequently and was the reason for this change of command. One thoughtful follow-up suggested that there was really no difference between the PAG's stand and the expert committee's since both agreed on the need for more protein for many children. A. E. Bender, 'Human protein needs', *Lancet*, 8 September 1973, p. 563.

[41] For a complete report on amino acid fortification at this time, see: Nevin S. Scrimshaw and Aaron M. Altschul (eds), *Amino Acid Fortification of Protein Foods, Report of an international conference held at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology 16-18 September 1969*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, The MIT Press, 1971. McLaren expressed his disgust at the funds spent on expert committees such as this one and declared that it was "high time for the UN agencies to drop their cavalier attitude towards their responsibility of acting as spokesmen for the world on matters of practical scientific importance." Further, he criticized the format of the meetings since they pushed most writing responsibility onto the chairman and perhaps another person and were therefore not adequately thoughtful or thorough. Donald S. McLaren, letter to the editor, *Nature*, 12 May 1972, 237, p. 119.

caloric intake), now they were suggesting that in populations with low caloric intake "it is uncertain whether there is any benefit to be gained from providing only additional protein or amino acids."[42] Thus, the committee felt that while most vitamins and minerals could be considered individually, without consideration of the other components of the diet, "protein supply must be judged in relationship to other aspects of the diet, notably, the calorie intake."[43] This tone reflected in part the voices of the protein-moderates represented at this meeting by D. M. Hegsted and C. Gopalan among others.

In the committee's discussion of PCM, the advances in protein thought were pronounced. Based on recent work by Bengoa of WHO, the committee members emphasized that "The terms kwashiorkor and nutritional marasmus are of little relevance in field studies, as the number of frank cases of either condition is always small compared with the total number of children who are malnourished by any acceptable criteria."[44] Further, they noted that there had been "a tendency to over-emphasize the importance of either protein or calorie deficiency alone, whereas in fact the two almost always occur together."[45] These were remarkable comments because they encouraged a breakdown of the dogmatic nomenclature that had transfixed nutritionists and the hunger-fighting establishment for more than two decades. Historically, in meeting after meeting, experts had sought to clarify and distinguish between kwashiorkor and marasmus. Now, however, their new macro-view focused on malnutrition and frank hunger in the community.

From a field perspective, the committee's decision to emphasize the prevalence of moderate PCM cases was landmark. After decades of concentration on the clinical recognition of PCM, the nutrition establishment was moving back into the field from whence it had come several decades earlier. The committee commented: "Both from the public health and socio-economic points of view, the prevalence of moderate cases of PCM is even more important than is that of severe cases."[46] Since moderate cases were generally not seen in hospitals and clinics, the committee was demedicalizing the

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[42] *Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition, Eighth Report*, Geneva and Rome, WHO and FAO, WHO Technical Report Series no. 477, FAO Nutrition Meetings Report Series no. 49, 1971, p. 29.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 37. The Committee noted, however, that for clinical purposes it was still important to have categories of PCM, namely kwashiorkor, marasmic kwashiorkor, and nutritional marasmus. (p. 38)

[45] Ibid., p. 51.

[46] Ibid., p. 41.

problem by increasingly enlisting the support of community health workers and other field staff.

Whereas the factors attributed to PCM in the past had strictly related to the quality of the food supply and to the ignorance of the population, this committee highlighted different forces. Accordingly, literacy, the level of change "from a subsistence to a cash economy and from rural to urban living", the chain of food distribution, and specific foods' acceptability were noted to be at the root of PCM.[47] The committee's commentary invariably had implications for the nutritional programmes that earlier committees had trumpeted. When ignorance had been cited as the central cause of PCM, it had been logical to promote applied nutrition as a means to solve the problem permanently. However, with increasing concern being given to socio-economic indices as a means for identifying malnutrition, new tactics would have to be offered that corresponded to the perceived nature of the problem.[48] Even in an area that continued to be emphasized -- supplementary feeding for instance -- it was acknowledged that "No good supplementary foods are available in most developing countries".[49] The campaign which the committee envisaged, at its heart, called for national development plans which accounted for nutrition, not an entirely new approach but certainly one that had not been experimented with to the degree of other projects such as ANPs.

More than any previous report had done, this one commented on the vast chasm between nutritional science and the problems people faced in the field. Further, it highlighted that the arsenal which had been promoted in the war against hunger and malnutrition was inept and ineffective.[50] This was not to say that it was altogether useless -- the nutritionists still encouraged the increased development and distribution of high-protein supplementary foods -- but rather that current efforts were insufficient and the process by which the enemy to health had been identified would have to change.[51] No longer was kwashiorkor in pre-school children the greatest villain, nor

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[47]Ibid., p. 47.

[48]In 1971 Autret was quoted in terms which showed ongoing support for the belief in ignorance being at the root of malnutrition: "Ignorance is the ally of hunger. Together with poverty, which it often accompanies, it is basically responsible for virtually every case of malnutrition." *Food and Nutrition Education in the Primary School, A guide for its introduction*, Rome, FAO, FAO Nutritional Studies no. 25, 1971, p. 9.

[49]*Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition*, op. cit., note 42 above, p. 55.

[50]The committee noted, "PCM can ultimately be controlled only by general economic and social development and a co-ordinated approach in the fields of agriculture, education, the social services, and public health." Ibid., p. 61.

[51]For an excellent analysis of the development and application of protein-rich foods up to this time period see: Elizabeth Orr, *The use of protein-rich foods for the relief of malnutrition in developing countries: an analysis of experience*, London, Tropical Products Institute, August 1972.

was it marasmus. It was the hunger and malnutrition cases that were never seen in the hospitals because the symptoms were not adequately pronounced. The experts called for newer surveys to determine the prevalence of subtler forms of PCM which were often hard to evaluate based on traditional anthropometric techniques. Simple weight-for-age charts might reveal current malnutrition or stunting that resulted from prior malnutrition. Thus, stunted height could be interpreted as evidence for past malnutrition while a low weight-for-height would reflect current malnutrition.[52]

The journal *Nature* published a negative editorial about the quality of the conclusions presented by the eighth committee's report, calling it a "disappointment" for which the "complexity of the subject is only partially an excuse."[53] The author's central argument was that the committee had focused its efforts mainly on short-term measures such as fish protein concentrates which were essentially "stop-gap solutions".[54] In the fortification arena, the author called plans for cereal food fortification "less effective than they might be because of difficulties of distribution."[55] Thus, in the minds of some, this committee had not achieved a sufficiently desirable distance from vertical nutrition solutions.

**The Decline of Nutrition at FAO**

Since FAO's first days, there had been only two directors of the Nutrition Division: Aykroyd and Autret. Each had served as director for over a decade and had been potent, though at times controversial, forces for nutritional programming. Autret, exhausted from his two decades at the agency, eventually retired in October 1971, a few months after the death of John Boyd Orr.[56] Gopalan had been Autret's choice for successor, but Gopalan felt that he could be far more effective at his current post as the Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research. FAO left the post unfilled for a year while engaging in efforts to persuade Gopalan. In the end, Gopalan declined the offer because he "felt that the Division had been truncated to a

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52 *Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition*, op. cit., note 42 above, pp. 37-8.

53 'How to help with protein', *Nature*, 3 March 1972, **236**, 1-2, on p. 1.

54 Ibid., p. 2.

55 Ibid., p. 1.

56 It is an apt, though possibly unintended, reflection of nutrition's decline at FAO that none of Ganzin's or the division's files were preserved during his tenure. I obtained the important meeting summary cited in this section from the WHO Archives. 'John Boyd Orr 1880-1971' in *Biographical Memoirs of the Fellows of the Royal Society*, London, The Royal Society, **18**, 1972, pp. 43-81.

point of being ineffective."[57] Eventually, FAO appointed Marcel Ganzin, a long-time FAO nutrition worker.

Ganzin rapidly became frustrated with the ever-decreasing prestige afforded him and his co-workers by their FAO peers. After his first year, he reported to the Director-General and other FAO luminaries that "many of his colleagues still had a tendency to smile at [i.e. do nothing about] or lose interest in the subject of nutrition."[58] Ganzin believed that staff were unaware of the potential impact nutrition could have in the agency and that nutritionists had failed in "selling 'nutrition'" by providing only an unfavourable portrayal of it and its role.[59] He listed the failures of the Nutrition Division within the organization and in its inter-agency role. His criticisms were lengthy and included statements that the division had not demonstrated the value of its programmes with concrete evidence and that the solutions offered had been poorly defined and were only partially applicable to the problems they addressed.[60] In spite of Ganzin's earnest presentation and interests in macro-level problems, the Director-General gave only a lukewarm response to the division's future plans.[61] While the Nutrition Division received a broader mandate, as represented by its name shift to the Food Policy and Nutrition Division, financially there were no alterations. Furthermore, Ganzin would rapidly prove to have less influence and wherewithal than his prominent predecessors.

### WHO and Nutrition

Although WHO's relationship with Unicef was generally better than that of FAO with Unicef, Unicef's continuous augmentation of its autonomy and expertise irked and at times enraged WHO administrators during the early-1970s. When one of the Unicef directors from India suggested that Unicef bypass the laborious task of obtaining technical approval from the specialized agencies, WHO staff became incensed. For P. L. Fazzi, WHO's chief medical adviser to Unicef, Unicef was disengaging its modus operandi of serving as a support for the technical agencies and was, rather outrageously, continuing joint activities "only of free choice and as an equal partner".[62] Fazzi found Unicef's moves to be misguided and insupportable due

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[57] C. Gopalan, personal correspondence, 2 May 1996.

[58] 'Programme and policy advisory board', summary record from meeting on 5 December 1972, 20 December 1972, WHO Archives, box A.0917, p. 1.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[61] Ibid., pp. 2, 8.

[62] P. L. Fazzi, letter to A. Bellerive, 13 July 1972, WHO Archives, box 1065, folder 12.

to its "traditional" methods and the lack of officers in the field familiar with planning issues.[63] Back at WHO headquarters, staff felt that the change would "create an even greater divorce between Unicef and WHO's activities".[64]

WHO's major nutrition work was then being undertaken through its provision of advice to maternal and child health centres, nutrition rehabilitation centres, research, and training.[65] In WHO's view, the four most significant nutritional diseases as of 1972 were: protein-calorie malnutrition, xerophthalmia, nutritional anaemias, and endemic goitre.[66] WHO had conducted substantive surveys of PCM prevalence and had found that world-wide, severe PCM could be found in up to 7.6% of children under five and that moderate PCM could be detected in up to 43.1%.[67] Based on these figures, Bengoa conservatively estimated that 11 million children suffered from severe PCM and 76 million from moderate PCM. WHO believed that the severe cases could well be treated during the decade since they were easily identified and were frequently reached by medical aid. The children suffering from moderate and chronic malnutrition could only be served by general improvements in socio-economic status and national food and nutrition policies.[68]

**Finances**

Unicef and FAO were hardly alone in their relatively small expenditures for nutrition-related activities. In 1972 evaluators highlighted a substantial decline in WHO nutrition operations. Their report noted that between 1956 and 1970, although net nutrition expenditures had increased, the percentage of WHO's budget dedicated to nutrition had declined substantially. Whereas in 1956 overall nutrition operations commanded 3.4% of the total WHO budget, in 1970 that figure had declined to

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[63]Fazzi believed that WHO could preserve its "leadership over Unicef" by maintaining close ties at a country level. Ibid.

[64]Chief CPD, letter to Director, LEG, 24 August 1972 WHO Archives, box 1065, folder 12.

[65]For a thorough discussion of the WHO nutrition research programme, see 'Nutrition: a review of the WHO programme-2', *WHO Chronicle*, May 1972, 26(5), 195-206, on pp. 198-202.

[66]'Nutrition: a review of the WHO programme-1', *WHO Chronicle*, April 1972, 26(4), 160-179, on p. 160.

[67]Ibid., p. 161. Although these figures were commonly cited, they were not necessarily reasonable indicators for calculating global PCM prevalence. The figures presented were culled from several surveys and reflected astronomical ranges. The lower estimates of prevalence given for severe and moderate PCM were .5% and 4.4% respectively. FAO noted in the same year that there was no mechanism to accurately report the number of hungry or malnourished people on the planet. 'Programme and policy advisory board', op. cit., note 58 above, p. 5.

[68]J. M. Bengoa, 'Statement to the Unicef Executive Board', 1972, Unicef Archives, CFNYHQ-05ANS-001.

1.8%.[69] In the field, however, when INCAP support was included in the calculation, nutrition spending as a percentage of the budget had increased from 2.0% to 4.0%.[70] Thus, WHO was spending roughly 6% of its total budget on nutrition activities in 1970.[71] For its plans in 1974, WHO intended to fund five professional full-time positions in the Nutrition Unit, including two programme development specialists, one liaison to country programmes, and other liaisons to WHO units and other agencies.[72] As mentioned in the introduction to the dissertation, determination of nutrition expenditures is a naturally imprecise task. Estimates of agency spending conducted by other agencies can be enlightening since in-house estimates naturally are biased. The World Bank estimated that WHO's specific nutrition activities in 1973 were $1.4 million or 1.5% of WHO expenditures.[73] According to the Bank, roughly fifty staff people were working in this area.[74] PAHO devoted $3.3 million of its budget to nutrition which represented 7.5% of its budgetary expenditures in 1973.[75] According to the Bank, PAHO had ninety staff members at work in nutrition.[76] Evidently, no one envisaged WHO programmes to have global impact when the central staff consisted of so few personnel. The evaluators criticized WHO for its low financial support for nutrition and noted with disappointment that the Unit had the same number of professionals as it had in 1958.[77]

While enthusiasm for nutrition had dipped in the 1970s, it is surprising to note that the World Food Programme (WFP) in 1971 intended to give aid in the form of food and services worth $130 million. This figure contrasts starkly with the roughly $4 million WHO allocated annually to nutrition, $7 million from Unicef, and $3 million

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[69]G. H. Beaton, V. Ramalingaswami, N. S. Scrimshaw, 'Report of a meeting of consultants on the nutrition programme of WHO', Geneva, 2-8 July 1972, document number R73-247, Bengoa personal collection, p. 20.

[70]Ibid.

[71]These figures are not simply estimates of spending for the Nutrition Unit itself, but rather, reportedly encompass total funds spent on nutrition activities. After 1967, the WHO Nutrition Section was referred to as the WHO Nutrition Unit. Ibid.

[72]Ibid., p. 15.

[73]The World Bank's full name is the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). I will use the terminology in common usage today by referring to it simply as the World Bank or the Bank.

[74]'Sector program paper: nutrition policy', 31 October 1973, document number R73-247, for Executive Directors' Meeting of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, LSHTM Archives, World Bank box, p. 8.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid.

[77]The consultants believed that "modest" budgetary increases would result in major accomplishments. G. H. Beaton et. al., op. cit., note 69 above, p. 17.

from FAO.[78] This comparison is not meant to imply that WFP was funding more nutrition programmes than these other agencies since its primary goal was general development through food incentives. The juxtaposition simply illustrates that a programme started in 1963 could generate more interest and goods for distribution than nutrition could at WHO, FAO, and Unicef. Overall interest in the 1970s in nutrition was remarkably low when contrasted with other activities. The World Bank, while considering its role in nutritional issues, estimated that the total spent annually on nutrition by UN and bilateral agencies amounted to $20 million and was mostly in the form of research projects and technical assistance.[79]

**Applied Nutrition: Just Have Faith**

In the 1970s, ANPs were seen at best as the bedrock of national nutrition plans, and at worst as utter failures.[80] For Unicef, ANPs had, except in the rare cases of Colombia and perhaps India, never borne the fruit that had been anxiously awaited since the programmes were initiated during the end of the 1950s. In 1971, Unicef concluded that based on evaluations of its ANPs, "the basic concept was correct but the strategy and tactics need to be improved."[81] In particular, Unicef urged the incorporation of ANPs into rural development projects which utilized well-trained personnel and had appropriate goals for the local population.[82] After conducting assessments during 1971 and 1972, Unicef's Executive Board determined that all aspects of the projects required improvements which necessitated "Perseverance and some degree of patience" on everyone's part.[83] Among the plethora of problems which plagued the projects, the chief concern was the ineffectiveness of the programmes to elicit community support and participation.[84] A year later, in meetings with FAO, the two agencies expressed a "general feeling that many ANP[s] have failed

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[78]See Burhan Ilercil, 'Unicef Program Statistics, 1947-1979', November 1985, New York, Unicef Archives, CF/HIST/IC-85-3; 'Nutrition: a review of the WHO programme-1', op. cit., note 66 above, pp. 175, 178; and 'Sector program paper', op. cit., note 74 above, p. 8.

[79]This figure did not include the value of food aid. 'Sector program paper', op. cit., note 74 above, p. i.

[80]See, for example: Roberto Rueda-Williamson, 'The applied nutrition program, the basis of the national nutrition plan', translation from *Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana*, March 1970, Unicef Archives, CF-NYHQ-05ANS-005. See also: Michael C. Latham, *Planning and Evaluation of Applied Nutrition Programmes*, Rome, FAO, FAO Nutritional Studies no. 26, 1972.

[81]'Unicef assistance in foods and nutrition', 26 April 1971, Unicef Archives, 88R025, box T-006, Teply files, annexure II, p. 5.

[82]Ibid.

[83]'Report of the Executive Board', April-May 1972, E/ICEF/624, paragraph 38.

[84]Ibid. See also: 'Report of the Executive Board', April-May 1973, E/ICEF/629, paragraph 62.

to achieve the expected results, although the number that have actually been evaluated in depth is small."[85] The agencies agreed to conduct broader assessments of the projects and to determine the "minimal amount of information" required for conducting an ANP.[86]

In South East Asia, Dr. Ken Bailey had been working on applied nutrition for WHO for several years. As Bailey watched the rise of food and nutrition planning, he noticed that ANPs had a difficult time commanding top governmental attention. Bailey stated: "I think the ANP approach had a hard time to reach a policy level, because it was counted so squarely in the education sector, so that didn't bring it out as a national development issue".[87] In 1974, Labouisse weakly suggested to the Executive Board that in spite of past deficiencies, Unicef should continue its support to ANPs with special attention given to means for expanding home production of protective foods for children.[88] That same year, Scrimshaw published one of his more philosophical and reasoned treatises on public health issues entitled, 'Myths and Realities in International Health Planning'. Among the projects he attacked, ANPs were high on the list since they conformed to the myth that "a program is justified by good intentions."[89] ANPs, in his mind, were well-intentioned programmes meant to reach most people but which in most cases had amounted to only pilot projects. Scrimshaw cursed ANPs as all the worse since, although they rarely advanced and expanded to reach ever greater numbers of people, they gave "the false impression that the problem is being solved."[90] Although such astute negativity could not be found in the statements of FAO, WHO, and Unicef administrators, the notion that ANPs were failing was leading to a gradual recession of ANP funds.

In spite of the abundance of derogatory remarks made during this time about ANPs, a few well-positioned administrators continued to believe that they were the best long-term solution to many hunger and malnutrition concerns. Peter Greaves, then a FAO officer working for Unicef in New Delhi, was closely involved in Unicef's ANP in India.[91] The programme there fell under heavy criticism during the early-

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[85]Charles A. Egger, 'Minutes of FAO/Unicef inter-secretariat meeting held at FAO headquarters, Rome, 8-10 November 1972', 5 April 1973, WHO Archives, box 1066, p. 6.

[86]Ibid..

[87]Ken Bailey, interview, 1 April 1996.

[88]Henry R. Labouisse, 'General Progress Report of the Executive Director, child malnutrition in the developing countries', 17 March 1969, E/ICEF/586/Add.9, p. 18.

[89]Nevin S. Scrimshaw, 'Myths and realities in international health planning', *American Journal of Public Health*, 1974, 64(8), pp. 792-98, on p. 796.

[90]Ibid., p. 797.

[91]J. Peter Greaves, 'Curriculum Vitae', 1994, Greaves personal collection.

1970s, and in 1973 and 1974 Greaves fought for a well-funded renewal of a broad-based ANP there. Although he found most of the Unicef staff to be supportive and enthusiastic, he was anxious to see "people with their fingers dirty and not writing reams of paper."[92] The proposed ANP, to be co-ordinated with the Government of India's fifth five-year plan for development, sought to link child health services, nutrition education, and community and family gardening in order to produce long-term tangible results.[93] Gopalan, who was then the Director of India's National Institute of Nutrition in Hyderabad, was impressed with the proposal. While past ANPs had failed due to low participation of health services and the use of imported supplementary foods, this project, Gopalan believed, was substantively better planned.[94] Greaves and his colleagues explained to Unicef headquarters that the project should be funded only if it were financed fully; any funds short of the ideal could be put to better use on other projects. The ANP team presented the issue in the following manner to Unicef:

> There are two major needs of this country that we are going some way to meet, and on which we could easily spend substantially more money: on the one hand, the provision of potable water and, on the other, the training of basic health workers...To the extent that the satisfaction of these needs is held back by lack of resources, of buildings, of stipends, of equipment, Unicef might direct more of its funds to meeting them -- something specific, something that can be readily measured -- rather than chasing the seeming will-o'-wisp that is ANP, which aims at something far more fundamental, of far greater long term significance: namely, changes in the way that people respond to their environment in relation to the foods that they grow and prepare and consume and feed to their young children.[95]

In their final, passionate call for ANP support, the team waxed philosophical:

> If we want to go in that direction [ANP support], and we strongly feel we should, then we must be bold and flexible and...have faith. If we want to go in that direction, we cannot insist on straitjacketing the enterprise by defining precisely in advance exactly what is done, where,

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[92]J. P. Greaves, interview, 8 December 1995.

[93]The planning commission of the Government of India designed the fifth five-year plan. J. P. Greaves, interview, 9 May 1996.

[94]'Excerpts from letter from Dr. C. Gopalan', 18 September 1973, in 'Explanatory memorandum to the recommendation: Applied Nutrition Programme (ANP)', 1973/1974, Greaves personal collection, annex 3.

[95]'Explanatory memorandum to the recommendation: Applied Nutrition Programme (ANP)', 1973/1974, Greaves personal collection, pp. 9-10.

> and when: were we to do so we should stifle initiative; we should fail in our objective; we should achieve nothing.[96]

In the final analysis, faith alone was enough to drive financial support for India's ANP initiative, but not for future projects. Although this ANP received full funding, devastating problems with implementation rapidly led to its failure.[97] The lesson learned for the agencies was that tangible impact was a far more desirable objective for the donors whose funds were constrained and had to demonstrate progress annually. Nevertheless, for Greaves this period marked a shift for the nature of Unicef's assistance; Unicef was moving away from the "supply side" of assistance which had called for food, medication, and equipment, and toward the "idea side" which involved planning, working with governments, and crafting solutions.[98] Paul Lunven, later a director of FAO's Food Policy and Nutrition Division, worked for FAO in Central America when ANPs were popular. He believes that ANPs were a great idea and that the problem was that too few were planned, and they were commercially unviable. In his view, they were not a failure, because when administrators realized that ANP stopped functioning when the aid agency pulled out its resources, they were inspired to consider nutrition planning and to head to the top of the political hierarchies.[99]

**National Nutrition Planning: An Idea Whose Time Had Come**

Looking back in 1969 on the previous 20 years of child nutrition work, the Unicef Board recapitulated its activities from milk distribution to high-protein food mixtures. Still resonating with words from Bellagio, it suggested that its latest realization was that "the complex problem of child malnutrition is best approached from a broad base and within national development plans."[100] The level of discussion on national child nutrition policies moved up considerably during the first years of the decade. MIT hosted a conference on 'Nutrition, National Development, and Planning' in 1971 to promote further the notion of making nutrition a key factor in the planning of developing economies.[101] Unicef was following such proceedings closely and

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[96]Ibid., p. 10.

[97]J. P. Greaves, interview, 9 May 1996.

[98]J. P. Greaves, interview, 8 December 1995.

[99]Paul Lunven, interview, 27 March 1996.

[100]Labouisse, 'General Progress Report of the Executive Director', op. cit., note 88 above, p. 23.

[101]For the papers presented at this conference, see: Alan Berg, Nevin S. Scrimshaw, David L. Call (eds), *Nutrition, National Development, and Planning*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, The MIT Press, 1973.

spearheading efforts for national nutrition plans. The Unicef Board had lamented that it spent only about 13.5% of its programme assistance on childhood nutrition projects in spite of consensus that nutrition should rank higher.[102] The central question from the perspective of administrators was no longer whether national planning had to incorporate nutrition, for this had been shown, but rather how nutrition could be prioritized in national planning to take a more prominent role.[103] The Board noted that there was no single solution which could be used in all countries; each nation had to design a national policy and programme of work for itself. Taking a substantially less pro-active approach, the Board suggested that "Unicef should be ready to assist in more limited measures to combat child malnutrition, beginning where the countries are ready to act [with a national programme and policy]."[104] Unicef had concluded that national nutrition planning was a far more effective approach to nutritional improvement than past endeavours in supplementary feeding and milk conservation.[105] There were few examples of successful national nutrition planning though India had recently strived to include human nutrition improvements in its framework for food and agricultural policies.[106] Nevertheless, Unicef felt that historically, policy makers had concerned themselves with nutrition only during catastrophes and had otherwise disregarded it.

FAO, too, became very interested in national planning approaches to nutritional problems. Along with Unicef and to a lesser degree WHO, it promoted government plans to integrate nutrition planning into every government department -- health, agriculture, economics and labour included. In retrospect, Béhar, who was becoming increasingly connected to WHO, believed that these attempts were absurd manifestations of the inflated sense of self-importance the nutritionists had. Béhar mocked their efforts, which included his own:

> We were expecting that each government, all the different departments...would sit around and discuss how to solve nutrition problems of the country. It was absolutely ridiculous; we were expecting high officials to plan for the nutrition of the people and it was done with good intentions and that was the time when FAO was the

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[102]'Improvement of child nutrition, note prepared by Unicef secretariat for session of the protein panel', New York, 3-7 May 1971, Unicef Archives, CF-NYHQ-05ANS-005. According to a report by the World Bank, as of 1972 Unicef nutrition expenditures totalled $5 million or 10% of total budgetary expenditures. 'Sector program paper', op. cit., note 74 above, p. 8.

[103]'Improvement of child nutrition', op. cit., note 102 above.

[104]Labouisse, 'General Progress Report of the Executive Director', op. cit., note 88 above, p. 23.

[105]'General Progress Report', March 1970, E/ICEF/602, p. 32.

[106]Ibid.

> main mover but WHO and everyone...went along and we were trying to centre the development on nutritional goals...I remember sessions with officials of the governments discussing...the goals of nutrition [they pointed to] 1st food production, 2nd education...[and then to] health.[107]

Thus, broad analyses of data only illuminated that developing nations had to develop in every respect, not necessarily through nutritional means. Béhar continued, "We felt that governments have to have more interest in nutrition. We were too close-minded without understanding the politics...I mean the political nature and the limitations and the possibilities of the governments...I always had some doubts because it was obvious that **everything** has to be done to improve nutrition." (emphasis his)[108]

Although some suggest that national nutrition plans were built on ANPs, the record insinuates that a less positive linear route led to the emergence of national nutrition policies. When Unicef and other agencies saw ANPs floundering, they began to conclude that national nutrition planning was their only hope for nutritional progress. The Unicef Executive Board documentation supports this interpretation. Through the early-1970s, the Board annually lamented the low (and declining) support afforded nutrition programmes. Having noted the ineffectiveness of many nutrition ventures, the Board increasingly spoke of the need for national nutrition policies as the essential backdrop for all nutrition undertakings.[109] Within FAO, Greaves was a visible proponent for nutrition planning and frequently vocalized structural arrangements for implementation. In his view, a national policy as well as some type of national nutrition committee was needed in each country to co-ordinate all departments of the government in their nutrition efforts. He envisaged a nutritionist or a person versed in nutrition issues working within the ministries and advising on the technical expertise requirements. He asserted that unfortunately, the nutritionist was frequently "A man occupying a room at the end of a corridor, who is never consulted or whose advice is ignored".[110] Greaves articulated the new role of nutrition in the 1970s as more a "point of view" than as an academic discipline.[111] To him, "'nutrition'

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[107]Moisés Béhar, interview, 29 December 1995.

[108]Ibid.

[109]Annual reports from the Executive Board reflect this perspective clearly and consistently. See, for example: 'Report of the Unicef Executive Board', New York, April 1971, E/ICEF/612, paragraphs 85-89; 'Report of the Unicef Executive Board', op. cit., note 83 above, paragraphs 31, 39; 'Report of the Unicef Executive Board', op. cit., note 84 above, paragraphs 55, 56, 60.

[110]J. P. Greaves, 'Organizational structures for the improvement of nutrition', *FAO Nutrition Newsletter*, 8(4), 1970, pp. 6-9, on p. 7.

[111]J. P. Greaves, 'The need for trained personnel', *FAO Nutrition Newsletter*, 1970, 8(3), 22-26, on p. 22.

may be thought of as a particular torch, which illuminates in a special way the subjects on which it is shone", and the nutritionist maintained a priority position in planning and nutrition in general.[112] If the linkages of nutrition to other fields such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology were viewed as a "spider's web", then, according to Greaves, "maybe the 'nutritionist' is the spider."[113] These comments shed considerable light on the self-created new view nutritionists had of themselves. They believed that they were the focal point of developments in several disciplines -- a view illustrated by the expansion of expertise within the PAG. This high opinion of self was, however, to catalyse serious repercussions since it had been the policy makers who had seen themselves at the centre of nutrition-related disciplines. In the making was an identity crisis which would ultimately demonstrate to the nutritionists that they were not at the centre of the world's development activities. In the following chapter, the ramifications of this shift will become apparent.

Unicef's foray into national nutrition policies was accompanied by substantial support for these measures from FAO. At his new post as director of the Food Policy and Nutrition Division, Ganzin refocused FAO's nutritional interest on nutrition and national planning. In 1972, Ganzin told Unicef that nutrition programmes had failed due to bad baseline data and because poor people did not reap the benefits of improved national food production.[114] Further, he stressed the need for more surveys (perhaps in part financed by Unicef) to aid in the design of nutritional interventions.[115] Discussions between FAO and Unicef during January 1973 revealed the canyon between the two agencies' views of frameworks for national planning. FAO presented Unicef with a flow chart which described two main policy approaches: one embedded in national development policy and the other located in nutrition intervention programmes. The fundamental problem Unicef had with the plans was that it could not conceive of the least developed countries having the funds or infrastructure for nutrition policy in their national development plans. Unicef estimated that the data collection alone would cost $300,000 - $1,000,000. Given its scarce resources, Unicef therefore could not hope to address FAO's sophisticated policy plans but nonetheless sought a role in the planning of nutrition policies for nutrition

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[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Charles A. Egger, op. cit., note 85 above, p. 4.

[115]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

interventions. The nuts and bolts of realizing national plans were beyond Unicef's reach.[116]

The FAO Conference meeting during the end of 1973 reflected the swing of nutrition interests toward planning. The Conference agreed that the most important nutrition venture for the Food Policy and Nutrition Division was to assist countries in their formulation of national food and nutrition policies and to follow-up these policies with appropriate technical expertise. With this in mind, the Conference agreed to a reorientation of FAO nutrition work with a primary concentration on building these national policies. Few other nutrition issues of import were discussed.[117] FAO believed that such changes were necessary since staff had realized that applied nutrition and food production alone would not solve malnutrition and that an integrated approach was required. For those whose optimism was unaffected by the scope of the problem, the Conference had the following advice: "The problem [of malnutrition] is too vast and complex to permit a solution within a 10-year period. It would therefore give rise to unwarranted expectations if FAO were to launch a 10-year 'plan'".[118] The days of dreaming about a rapid solution to hunger and malnutrition, at least at FAO, had passed. The nutritional language of kwashiorkor, marasmus, protein, and calories was widely foregone for the language of politics and policy planning.[119]

Like FAO, Unicef believed that the delay in making massive nutritional breakthroughs rose from the failure of nations to prioritize nutrition. In 1971, however, Unicef was encouraged by "signs of increasing receptivity" from governments which suggested that "there may be better payoffs for efforts along this line in the future."[120] In order to facilitate governmental interest in nutrition plans, Unicef along with FAO and WHO were organizing seminars to inform Ministers from Africa and Latin America about general food and nutrition issues.[121] Underlining the failure of so many past nutrition programmes, Unicef recommended that in the

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[116]Charles Egger, 'Note for the record: discussion with Dr. Ganzin on proposals for the development of national food and nutrition policies', 16-19 January 1973, WHO Archives, box A.0917.

[117]*Report of the Conference of FAO, Seventeenth Session*, Rome, FAO, 10-29 November 1973, pp. 51-53.

[118]'Toward a new strategy for improving nutrition', in *Report of the Conference of FAO, Seventeenth Session*, Rome, FAO, 10-29 November 1973, November 1973, item 12 (b), p. 1. Ironically, the World Food Council in 1975 would launch a ten-year goal for ending hunger and malnutrition.

[119]Even in the United States, interest in domestic nutrition policies were receiving serious attention, as shown in *U. S. Nutrition Policies in the Seventies*, by noted nutritionist and Unicef consultant, Jean Mayer. Jean Mayer (ed), *U.S. Nutrition Policies in the Seventies*, San Francisco, W. H. Freeman and Company, 1973.

[120]'Unicef assistance in foods and nutrition', op. cit., note 81 above, p. 3.

[121]Ibid.

promotion of national nutrition activities, it might behoove facilitators to insert nutrition into existing activities without giving nutrition a "high profile" since this could discourage administrators who have "in mind previous ill-conceived and ill-fated attempts to mount special nutrition projects" and who might "shy away from anything associated with the word 'nutrition'."[122] At least in the mind of Unicef administrators, "nutrition" had gotten a bad reputation during the previous decades of unsuccessful nutrition projects. These attitudes coloured an important part of the matrix of national nutrition planning: nutrition was to be a part of development, not an end in itself. By constantly pointing out the economic and educational gains that could be made through nutrition efforts, administrators at the agencies hoped to defuse fears that nutrition projects would require already scarce funds and personnel and then go on to accomplish nothing substantive.

The promotion of nutrition planning was exceedingly difficult during the decade following Bellagio. John Grun, a native of the Netherlands, was in India working as the Deputy Director for Unicef in South-Central Asia during the early-1970s. He initially found the business of planning to be beyond the reach of most Unicef personnel: "to a majority of people at Unicef, the idea of planning, and the whole concept of the skill, or the art of planning...came as something new. Very few of us were familiar with it, and only a few of us were trained to it academically and therefore very few of us were confident in it. I suffered from that very much."[123] For Grun and his counterparts in developing countries, the act of "selling" the role of nutrition in national development was often awkward and unsuccessful. Many of these developing countries already had planning ministries that were looking at numerous indicators to track socio-economic progress and enable future growth. When Unicef and FAO began their attempts to integrate nutrition into the planners' work, the planners initially greeted these overtures sceptically. In India progress was especially difficult since, according to Grun, the planners had justifiably "very high opinions of themselves" and asked people like Grun, "'What have you got to bring [to planning endeavours]?'"[124]

In spite of the inexperience of staff, there was a flurry of programmes designed to train economists and economic-agriculturists from developing countries in nutritional issues. The tangible difference between these activities and their predecessors was that Unicef, FAO, and WHO were striving to target higher level

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[122]Ibid., p. 4.

[123]John Grun, interview conducted by Herman Stein, 12 December 1983, Unicef Archives, interview file, p. 28.

[124]Ibid., p. 29.

government officials who wielded greater influence in policy. A typical food and nutrition policy training programme designed for a few dozen personnel cost the agencies $170,000.[125] The diminutive stature of the initial food and nutrition policy projects contributed to their tarnished image among governments. In India, Grun cultivated an important relationship with the Minister of Finance who was even more powerful in national planning than the planners. When Grun eventually met with him one-on-one, the Minister did not embrace his ideas because they were not sufficiently grand. The Minister reportedly told Grun: "if you're talking about anything less that $20 million, I'm not interested...I love children just as much as you do...but those are the facts. Anything less makes no real difference.'"[126] This prejudice characterised the interactions between nutrition planners and the politicians; UN agency staff did not yet have the tools to promote the massive programmes that might have been accepted by the politicians. To many, this was the area where Unicef was weakest: garnering superlative political support. Grun remarked that their first planning lessons demonstrated that "if you have the planners on your side, you still won't get very far without the politicians."[127]

Since the Bellagio Conference of 1964, Unicef had been working avidly to spearhead efforts on food and nutrition policy. Although FAO relations with Unicef had been generally good since then, WHO was not pleased with Unicef's assertive behaviour. During preliminary work on a multi-agency UNDP-proposed regional food and nutrition policy project for the American region, Unicef put itself forward as the executing agency as well as project manager. Although FAO expressed no reservations, WHO administrators were extremely concerned since Unicef did not officially have the appropriate technical expertise and the move would mark a departure from UN policy. In the past, only technical agencies served as project executors for UNDP projects.[128] At WHO's Nutrition Unit, Bengoa suggested that WHO/PAHO step up and take control of the project and leave Unicef with responsibility for "administrative co-ordination, or any other term which would be acceptable to UNDP and Unicef."[129] In this case, WHO successfully asserted that FAO and WHO had the responsibility for formulating food and nutrition policies on a

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[125]Henry R. Labouisse, 'Recommendation of the Executive Director for assistance: Interregional food and nutrition training', 2 March 1971, E/ICEF/P/L.1462, p. 1.

[126]Grun, op. cit., note 123 above, pp. 29-30.

[127]Ibid., p. 35.

[128]P. L . Fazzi, letter to A. Bellerive on American region, food and nutrition policy, 26 March 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0921.

[129]J. M. Bengoa, letter to A. Bellerive on American region, food and nutrition policy, 4 April 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0921.

country level.[130] The precise shape of these policies remained elusive and inspired publications and discussions seeking to flesh out action.

Alan Berg, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, published an influential book on the subject in 1973. He asserted that the days of looking at nutritional problems in a medicalized context were gone, as these approaches had been too limited in their scope. Further, he lamented that although the UN agencies had lured attention to hunger issues, "they have not been able to mobilize a serious attack on malnutrition."[131] Berg suggested a "macronutritional" bearing that would inform governments and motivate them to take sweeping action that would reach more people in need.[132] By integrating nutrition into national development schemes with solid commitment, Berg felt progress could be made. At the very least, he asserted that it was "no longer sufficient to think of nutrition in terms of projects that are doing something good or useful; they must be aimed at doing something of consequence."[133] In spite of the interest in producing results, few could point to tangible examples of success or formulae for achieving it. Béhar, in retrospect, believes that the original ideas about national nutrition planning were "pretentious" and that the nutritionists were overly influenced by the "great minds" such as Berg. In basic terms, Béhar feels that the plans for nutrition planning in development implied that many problems in a country were going to be solved "just by improving nutrition". In the end, the nutrition planners "overestimated their own voice" as they tried to convince agriculturists, economists, and politicians to focus on nutrition.[134] Margaret Gaan, Unicef's deputy regional director in Bangkok between 1970 and 1974, would concur with Béhar. While she thought that national planning was a smart idea, she believed that ultimately the results were "a lot of words and piety, a lot of good intentions, and very, very little actual money budgeted into national plans for children."[135] In the next

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[130]Director, COR, letter to P. L. Fazzi (WHO chief medical adviser to Unicef) on American region food and nutrition policy, 12 June 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0921.

[131]Berg, op. cit., note 20 above, p. 3.

[132]Ibid., p. 8.

[133]Ibid., p. 210. For a particularly critical examination of Berg's central ideology, see: Peter Hakim and Giorgio Solimano, 'Nutrition and national development: establishing the connection', Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Center for International Studies, MIT International Nutrition Planning Program discussion paper no. 5, C/75-18, July 1975. Hakim and Solimano essentially argued that national nutrition planning was "based on the faulty presumption that increasing a person's capacity or potential will necessarily result in a growth in both his and his country's productivity." (p. 4)

[134]Moisés Béhar interview, 29 December 1995.

[135]Margaret Gaan, interview conducted by John Charnow, 21 November 1983, Unicef Archives, interview file, p. 13.

chapter, we will see the complex, and ultimately unsuccessful, course one school of nutritional planners took during the mid-1970s.

**The World Food Conference**

Perhaps the greatest force which pushed administrators and scientists alike away from their protein myopia was the growing concern during the early-1970s that a world **food** crisis was approaching. In 1972, bad weather caused world food production to dip for the first time since the W.W.II. As a result, demand for imports from the major food exporters, especially in the developing countries, was elevated and food stocks consequently were depleted. Prices rose as the oil crisis of 1973 further exacerbated prospects for stability, and countries focused their efforts on boosting food production to compensate for the losses of 1972. During the next three years, world food supplies remained depleted and precariously dependent on each year's production.[136] In his 1974 progress report to the Board, Labouisse distressingly noted that Unicef "should be preparing not only for famines recognized as such, but for a widespread deterioration of nutrition among young children of lower income families."[137] Against this foreboding backdrop of a catastrophe-in-waiting, the UN called the World Food Conference to address the situation. In the preparation for the conference, various agencies and factions competed to have their methodologies adopted for dealing with the crisis. Unicef and FAO, among others, advocated national food and nutrition policies as **the** most effective long-term approach. According to a preparatory document for the conference written by UN agency representatives, a food and nutrition policy could be defined as follows:

> a complex of educational, economic, technical and legislative measures designed to reconcile at a level judged feasible by the planner, projected food demand, forecast food supply and nutritional requirements. These measures are not only of economic but also of social import. They are directed at remedying distortions detrimental to the public interest

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136*Report of the World Food Conference*, op. cit., note 1 above, p. 32. For an excellent description of the various forces at work in this food crisis see: N. S. Scrimshaw, 'The world-wide confrontation of population and food supply', *Technology Review*, 1974, 77(2), pp. 12-19. Reflecting the increasing interaction between nutrition and other disciplines which grew out of this crisis, Sol Chafkin of the Ford Foundation and Alan Berg of the World Bank, presented a paper entitled 'The influence of international financial problems on food and nutrition' at the Western Hemisphere Congress IV. Sol Chafkin and Alan Berg, 'The influence of international financial problems on food and nutrition' in Philip L. White and Nancy Selvey (eds), *Proceedings of Western Hemisphere Nutrition Congress IV*, Acton, Massachusetts, Publishing Sciences Group, Inc., 1975, pp. 10-15.

137Henry R. Labouisse, 'Unicef General Progress Report of the Executive Director', New York, United Nations, 1974, E/ICEF/632, p. 14.

between what the consumer desires, what he can obtain and what he needs physiologically.[138]

In the authors' view, these food and nutrition policies would be co-ordinated with specific time-sensitive goals. As an example, they suggested that if the poorest 20% of the population had a daily caloric intake of 1,500 calories and the 20% just above them had an intake of 1,900 calories, then a plausible goal would be to have the poorest reach the 1,900 calorie benchmark within a specified number of years.[139] Thus, food and nutrition policies intended to produce real changes in nutritional status were based in part on broad measures of nutritional status.

Protein, marasmus, and kwashiorkor were terms conspicuously neglected in the proceedings. This may in part have been a reflection of the late opportunities afforded the PAG for conference input and representation. By June 1974, PAG members were astonished to learn they had not been consulted in preparation for the upcoming World Food Conference.[140] After a few high level contacts between the PAG and UN agencies, the PAG was included in conference proceedings. By August 1974, PAG ideas had been solicited, and by October they received an invitation.[141] Although conference organizers had probably excluded the PAG for fear of changing the emphasis of the conference to protein, the eventual PAG conference statement scarcely mentioned protein problems and focused instead on policy and programmatic issues.[142]

Although preparatory groups emphatically promoted food and nutrition policies, the participating experts also acknowledged the painfully slow progress made in this area during the previous decade. Substantial efforts on the part of FAO and Unicef in particular had yielded a handful of written policies, but practically none had been implemented. The conference participants therefore called for a more "dynamic" and polished diplomacy in the promotion of these policies which on a national level would be supported by an all-encompassing administrative structure to monitor progress.[143] The World Food Conference in the end emphasized food planning and

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[138]'National Food and Nutrition Policies', in *The World Food Problem: proposals for national and international action*, August 1974, item 9 of the provisional agenda, E/CONF. 65/4, paragraph 457.

[139]Ibid., paragraph 466.

[140]'Notes by the Chairman of the PAG on his meeting with the Director-General of FAO - 26 June 1974', June 1974, FAO Archives box I. Organizational PAG membership 1/4.

[141]Max Milner, letter to chairman and members of PAG, 14 October 1974, Scrimshaw personal collection.

[142]'Issues for the World Food Conference: the PAG view', November 1974, Scrimshaw personal collection.

[143]'National Food and Nutrition Policies', op. cit., note 138 above, paragraph 467.

the creation of a world food policy as the central goals. Among the tangible results were the successful calls for establishing two agencies, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Council (WFC), whose responsibilities included managing the implementation of the conference's resolutions. The World Food Council was slated to be a UN organ that would co-ordinate all UN agency policies related to nutrition, food trade, food aid, and other matters.[144] Given the focus on food at the conference, nutritional issues were not prominent in the proceedings. Resolutions calling for expanded nutrition education, food supplementation, breastfeeding, nutrition surveillance, and national nutrition policies were, however, presented in the final documentation.[145] The most important resolution related to nutrition, Resolution V, dealt solely with policies aimed at nutritional improvement and, among other demands, requested that the PAG, WHO, FAO, Unicef, WFP, World Bank, and UNESCO design a project for introducing multi-sectoral food and nutrition planning in developing countries. Other goals for the UN agencies included a global nutritional surveillance system and a co-ordinated programme in applied nutrition.[146]

The conference participants did not consider nutrition to be unimportant, but they believed first and foremost in boosting global food production. Solving hunger problems in the most idealistic sense drove them to ever-greater statements of commitment which affirmed the importance of hunger and malnutrition. The participants concluded that their vow "that 'within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition' was a solemn pledge of the entire international community."[147] Believing this conference to be a milestone in the history of hunger, they further stated that "History would take that pledge as a yardstick for judging the adequacy of the policies framed and the action taken."[148]

For FAO, WHO, and Unicef, the conference ramifications did not shift their priorities or working methodology.[149] Nevertheless, in historical perspective, the seeds for future changes in nutritional focus and childhood health policy could be

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[144]*Report of the World Food Conference*, op. cit., note 1 above, pp. 12-13, 18-19. See also: Sayed A. Marei, 'The World Food Council', in Sartaj Aziz (ed), *Hunger Politics and Markets*, New York, New York University Press, 1975, pp. 91-3.

[145]*Report of the World Food Conference*, op. cit., note 1 above, pp. 9-11.

[146]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[147]Ibid., paragraph 394.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Henry R. Labouisse, letter to Boerma (FAO head) and Mahler (WHO head), 6 December 1974, FAO Archives, Registry files, NU 1/8 and NU 1/9.

found in the proceedings. In 1983, Teply noted that Labouisse's address at the World Food Conference had contained reference to "basic services", a term that came to encompass the aims of Unicef policy during the late-1970s and 1980s.[150] Specifically, Labouisse had called for a marriage of health and nutrition, which could be conducted by immunization, growth monitoring, and breastfeeding initiatives. In his conclusion, Labouisse had clearly identified the new trend for agency-wide policy: "one always comes back to the need for simple, basic services at the level of the village or the slum, supported by appropriate action at the national level through government planning and resource allocation. This concept is receiving increasing acceptance".[151] Indeed, ANPs, supplementary feeding, and other enterprises were losing momentum as this new ideology gained support and direction. For Unicef, these "basic services" were just beginning to figure into the calculus for future childhood health programming.

The events leading up to the World Food Conference and the conference itself did spur attempts at national planning in the field. From his post as regional WHO nutrition adviser for Africa, Ken Bailey worked furiously between 1972 and 1976 to inject African governments with interest in nutritional programming in development plans. Initially Bailey's tools consisted mainly of printing and distributing matter relevant to these programmes. He saw that printed matter could only do a limited amount of good and began organizing regional meetings to discuss the topics. The problems faced were insurmountable; it was difficult to even achieve a quorum at the meetings and since travel was not reimbursed, only twelve to fourteen countries usually had representation. Furthermore, the representatives who did attend were rarely good inter-sectoral leaders. Usually, according to Bailey, the countries simply sent someone from their local embassy, if they sent anyone at all. When Bailey adjusted his tactics and planned to visit the countries while working with his FAO counterpart, FAO often would not allow its experts to travel and thereby stifled the plans. Although FAO had relatively more staff in the countries than WHO, they were all working in super-specialized fields of agriculture and a staff member's expertise seldom rested squarely in nutrition.[152] The overarching problem was that WHO and FAO never had much more than "intermittent support" for nutrition plans. Although the goal was to develop the capacity within each country to conduct nutrition programming, Bailey felt that "the countries couldn't really manage unless we went

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[150]Les Teply, letter to J. Charnow, 18 May 1983, Unicef Archives, C242, Teply files.

[151]Henry R. Labouisse, 'Statement by Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, Executive Director of Unicef, to the World Food Conference, Rome, 11 November 1974', New York, 25 November 1974, E/ICEF/Misc.237, p. 6.

[152]Ken Bailey, interview, 1 April 1996.

and worked with them."[153] Bailey was working in one of the toughest, poorest regions, but his struggles were experienced by many other staff people in developing countries for whom the task of inducing excitement about national nutrition programming was profoundly difficult. Moreover, when countries simply did not have the indigenous expertise to design and implement the programmes desired by FAO, WHO, and Unicef, the programmes usually failed to get off the ground.

**PAG Problems**

In the view of top administrators and policy makers at FAO, WHO, and Unicef, it was no secret in the development community that the PAG had achieved few practical successes during its nearly 20-year tenure. Aykroyd noted in 1970 that in terms of the PAG's original purpose -- the development of high-protein weaning foods -- the PAG had "laboured on this problem for 10 years or more, and a number of nutritious mixtures have been evolved and subjected to trial. But practical success has been achieved with only a few of these."[154] Thus, although implementation had never been the PAG's prerogative, the entire focus on this type of food development was being called into question. Two of the inherent problems in these mixtures were their high price and the complexity of the equipment required. Unicef wished for simple equipment that could be used on a community level to produce high-protein foods at a low cost.[155] Although the goal was elusive, even Aykroyd did not rule out the possibility that these mixtures might be useful some time in the future. Generally, however, high-protein, technologically-driven foods had fallen from a state of grace.

In 1971, the PAG continued to reinvent itself, this time by altering its name. Scrimshaw, then the PAG Chairman, in a letter to the Director-General of FAO, A. H. Boerma, as well as to the heads of Unicef and WHO, explained that although the PAG had been increasingly working on protein and caloric concerns, its name continued to give the impression that the group "does not take calorie needs into sufficient consideration in dealing with protein matters."[156] Scrimshaw expressed the group's suggestion that the name be changed to the "Protein-calorie Advisory Group of the United Nations" rather than the broader heading, "Food and Nutrition Advisory

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[153]Ibid.

[154]Aykroyd, op. cit., note 2 above, p. 69.

[155]'Report of the Executive Board', April-May 1973, E/ICEF/629, paragraph 57.

[156]Nevin S. Scrimshaw, letter to Boerma, 21 February 1971, FAO Archives, I. PAG Membership box 2/4.

Group".[157] Later in the year, the actual name merely shifted from the FAO/WHO/Unicef Protein Advisory Group to the Protein Advisory Group of the United Nations.[158] Scrimshaw also conveyed serious concern that the PAG was not being called on to act in the broader role that it had adopted during the previous years. At the most recent PAG meeting, Scrimshaw had noted that "there was no request for advice from any UN Agency".[159] Clearly, support for the PAG was flagging. In Scrimshaw's opinion, UN agencies which were working on projects in PAG territory were not calling on it for advice, a move which was increasing "the danger that support may develop...for a separate advisory body within the UN itself."[160] In an unintentional move symbolic of the continued emphasis given protein, Scrimshaw closed the letter with his hope that the PAG would continue to provide advice for "UN activities which contribute to meeting present and future world protein needs."[161] Even with a suggested name change and its expanded scope, the PAG was evidently much the same group it had always been.

Scrimshaw's concerns about how the PAG was being treated by the UN agencies reflected the decline in the PAG's leverage. Internally as well, the group was deteriorating. During the summer of 1971, Max Milner, the PAG's secretary and a long-time Unicef worker, discovered that he had not been receiving important inter-agency correspondence regarding PAG affairs. Ignition of this issue had occurred when a Unicef colleague had passed on a significant letter Boerma had written to the heads of UN agencies about possible co-sponsorship of the PAG.[162] At the time, the PAG was considered a UN advisory body sponsored by WHO, FAO, and Unicef. Boerma had apparently autonomously sought to branch out the PAG's financial base without clearing the terms with the other sponsors.[163] While this incident could be interpreted as a bureaucratic oversight, when examined in light of future breakdowns, it is an important indicator of the confused manner in which the group was conducting

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[157]The initial call for changing the name to the Protein-Calorie Advisory Group was rejected "because a special effort was needed in programs of the United Nations system to ensure adequate dietary protein relative to calories." Further, as of March 1973, the PAG secretariat believed that calories were receiving the extra attention they required and did not need a further boost from the PAG. 'The "Protein Problem"', op. cit., note 34 above, p. 787.

[158]G. H. Beaton et. al., op. cit., note 69 above, p. 7.

[159]Nevin S. Scrimshaw, op. cit., note 156 above.

[160]Ibid.

[161]Ibid.

[162]Max Milner, letter to E. M. DeMaeyer --WHO medical officer in nutrition division, 16 August 1971, FAO Archives, PAG membership, box 1/4.

[163]Max Milner, letter to E. J. R. Heyward, 13 August 1971, FAO Archives, PAG membership, box 1/4.

its activities. Some good did, however, come of Boerma's request. Robert McNamara, then the head of the World Bank, agreed to sponsorship of the PAG with a first-year contribution of $25,000. This move sealed the significant addition of a new, exceptionally wealthy, player in nutritional activities. On behalf of the Bank, McNamara stated that his agency was "interested in measures to close the protein gap in developing countries" and hoped to further this goal through association with the PAG.[164]

Misunderstandings and hostility were commonplace in the PAG correspondence of the early-1970s. In one typical outburst, Ganzin at FAO castigated Milner for apparently overstepping the boundaries of the scientific secretary and suggesting "orders" to Berg at the World Bank. Further, Ganzin was concerned about Milner's ability to keep PAG secretariat documents confidential.[165] In response, Milner characteristically finessed the situation by expressing his regrets that his letter to Berg had been viewed as an order "since this was farthest from my mind when writing it."[166] These interactions reflect the communication breakdown and general deterioration of contact within the PAG. As word of such conflicts spread, esteem for the group apparently dropped.

While the PAG consistently attempted to expand its terms of reference, other UN agencies worried that the group would infringe on their autonomy and in-house expertise. The PAG circulation of a document on its future direction alarmed at least one agency head. In the document, written in October 1973, the PAG called for a vast expansion of its responsibilities including advisory roles in nutrition policy and planning. Further, the document recommended again that the name of the PAG be changed to the "Protein-calorie Advisory Group of the United Nations System".[167] A high-level letter written by Boerma to McNamara and Labouisse, summed up FAO's leading fears. Boerma was concerned that the PAG would publish advice that "may diverge from the instructions and guidance which we receive from our governing

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[164]Robert S. McNamara, letter to A . H. Boerma, 16 July 1971, FAO Archives, PAG membership, box 1/4.

[165]Marcel Ganzin, letter to Max Milner, 2 February 1973, FAO Archives, I. PAG membership 2/4. Ganzin appears to have been easily shaken by apparent breaches of confidentiality. In a letter to WHO, he expressed his "surprise" that WHO had learned the nature of his discussions with Unicef two months earlier. In Ganzin's mind, the discussions had been purely internal, and Egger, Unicef's director of programming, had assured him of this. Marcel Ganzin, letter (in French) to A. Raba (WHO medical officer in nutrition), 22 March 1973, WHO Archives, box A.0917.

[166]Max Milner, letter to Marcel Ganzin, 21 February 1973, FAO Archives, I. PAG membership 2/4.

[167]'The future direction of PAG', New York, 24 October 1973, FAO Archives, PAG membership 1/4, p. 3.

bodies."[168] Further, he feared the creation of a scenario in which it "would be embarrassing to have to explain to governments the existence of uncoordinated advice."[169] More than being concerned for a lack of co-ordination, Boerma, supported by Ganzin, saw new opportunities to provide technical advice on national nutrition policies as germane to FAO and did not wish to see another organization infringe on this work. Boerma thought that if the PAG extended its role, other UN agencies might begin going to the PAG for national nutrition advice before requesting such information from the technical agency (namely FAO) with competence in the field. Boerma had condescendingly noted that there was no PAG historical precedent that could forecast "success in a broader policy-related role."[170] In his mind, the PAG would do best to keep its focus on protein and veer away from a dilution of its expertise. At Unicef, Heyward was less concerned with the expertise and more concerned that their very sound technical meetings produced reports that had no impact on policy or programmes. As a result the supporting agencies sent more and more junior people to the PAG meetings.[171] Only complicating matters was the ongoing showdown between the PAG and the 1973 joint FAO/WHO protein recommendations mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Toward the end of Scrimshaw's chairmanship of the PAG in 1972 and 1973, fundamental policy questions began to break out at the general meetings. For Scrimshaw, the developments centred around the decreased attention protein was receiving from PAG-advised agencies and even PAG members. FAO in 1972 communicated to the PAG its wavering support for the continued use of the term "protein gap" since FAO surveys were showing that per capita, there was 70% more protein available than was required to meet basic human demands. Like its peers, FAO saw the problem as emerging from the maldistribution of the protein available rather than from a lack of protein in general.[172] In spite of calls for clarification of what was becoming a protein dilemma, Scrimshaw consistently asserted that the majority of experts backed the positions of the 1968 ACST report and of the PAG.[173] Thus, Scrimshaw's departure from the chairmanship of the PAG held the faint promise of improved PAG status.

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[168]A. H. Boerma, letter to McNamara (cc. to Labouisse), November 1973, FAO Archives, I. PAG membership.

[169]Ibid.

[170]Ibid.

[171]E. J. R. Heyward, interview, 14 September 1995.

[172]For example, see: 'Protein Advisory Group Report on the Twentieth Meeting', Paris, PAG Meeting report document 3.14/17, 19-23 June 1972, Unicef Archives, CF-NYHQ-05ANS-002, p. 9.

[173]Ibid.

From the beginning of his tenure as chairman in 1974, Joaquín Cravioto found himself constantly defending the integrity and authority of the PAG. The PAG's near exclusion from the World Food Conference served as Cravioto's welcome to the harsh political realities facing the group. In a follow-up discussion of this issue between Cravioto and Boerma, Cravioto suggested additional guidelines for the nature of PAG work. The main role of the PAG, according to Cravioto, was "to assess the philosophy, policy, programmes and action in the field of nutrition carried out by the UN agencies".[174] Further, Cravioto noted that the primary concern of the PAG was to be concerned with policy matters though it would still continue to examine new and emerging scientific topics. Ironically, at the same time the PAG was disappointed by the lack of advice being asked of it, the supporting agencies allowed for the PAG to expand its scope and change its name. After some prodding from the other agency heads, Boerma conceded to the PAG revisions sought by its membership.[175]

The PAG finally became, in the summer of 1974, the Protein-calorie Advisory Group of the United Nations System, and expanded its advisory realm to include socio-economic issues, trends in global food supply and consumption, and policy formulation.[176] At the same time, McLaren published his most stinging condemnation to date of protein policies, published in the *Lancet* and entitled 'The Great Protein Fiasco'. For the most part, McLaren rehashed his arguments that there was no "protein gap" and that the PAG was the culprit for perpetuating this myth. As in past pieces, he asserted that a focus on protein malnutrition was an inaccurate oversimplification of the actual nutritional problems facing children (and adults) in developing countries. As for the ramifications of the protein crisis and the decades of protein obsession, McLaren ominously declared, "The price that has had to be paid for these mistakes is only beginning to be realised."[177] Through his citations and quotations, he further made it clear that among those guilty of misleading the flock were Autret and Scrimshaw.[178] Because of this article's attractive name and the timing of its publication, it has received considerable historical attention, especially as some have adopted the term "the great protein fiasco" to describe the protein culture of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.[179] As this chapter has highlighted, McLaren's piece was the

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[174]Notes by the Chairman of the PAG, op. cit., note 140 above.

[175]Henry R. Labouisse, letter to Boerma, 18 July 1974, FAO Archives, NU 13/3-13/4.

[176]'PAG's name changed, scope widened', Rome, press release, 26 June 1974, FAO Archives, NU 13/3-13/4. This piece also appeared in the *PAG Bulletin*, September 1974, 4(3), pp. 1-2.

[177]Donald S. McLaren, 'The great protein fiasco', *Lancet*, 13 July 1974, 93-96, on p. 93.

[178]Ibid., p. 95.

[179]In *Protein and Energy*, Carpenter referred to this article on two occasions noting that after its publication, "it then became impossible to shrug the matter [of a protein crisis] off as a technical

culmination of years of attacks on protein policies and therefore symbolized the turning of the tide against protein.[180]

**The World Bank**

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to map out the political and scientific machinations which led the World Bank to begin taking a role in international nutrition nor to identify the route that it took in nutrition programming. Alan Berg, one of the principal advocates for nutrition at the Bank, has elaborated on this history.[181] I wish to keep my historical lens focused on FAO, WHO, and Unicef since through the time period covered by this dissertation, they were the undisputed leaders in nutrition policy, research, and programming. Nevertheless, as far as the history of FAO, WHO, and Unicef is concerned, the Bank's entrance into the nutritional field is nothing less than a landmark. For more than two decades, these three UN agencies had basically dominated nutritional issues in the UN theatre. Certainly, there had been substantial co-operation among agencies such as the United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other bodies. One might also consider the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) nutrition activities as well as those of WFP. In these two latter cases, both agencies were integrally linked to FAO, WHO, and Unicef. PAHO is, at its heart, a partner with WHO, while WFP is an aid programme sponsored by FAO and the UN.

The World Bank's decision to pursue nutrition issues represented an unprecedented change in institutional attitude toward nutrition issues from within the Bank. One high ranking Bank associate described the shift to WHO in the following understated terms: "the Bank has been taking a more direct interest than formerly in the subject of nutrition...we have joined WHO, FAO and Unicef as a sponsoring agency of the Protein Advisory Group...we have retained a consulting firm [to advise us] on ways in which the Bank might possibly act to help its member governments

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detail relating to a slight difference in emphasis." I would argue that McLaren's article along with previous published criticisms and the growing resentment for the PAG documented herein induced the change. Carpenter, op. cit., note 23 above, pp. 198-99, 228-29, quote on 228.

[180]It is a point of historical interest that Cicely Williams generally found McLaren's article to be "excellent". See: Cicely Williams, 'On that fiasco', *Lancet*, 5 April 1975, 793-4, on p. 794. Williams herself was furious with the scientific establishment's exploits in protein malnutrition. She submitted that "it was not the clinicians with their modest observations and their non-existent research grants, but the scientists, who made the lamentable errors and wasted so much time, money, and personnel." (p. 794)

[181]Alan Berg, *Malnutrition: What Can Be Done? Lessons from World Bank Experience*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

improve levels of nutrition."[182] Early in 1974, FAO, WHO, Unicef, and the World Bank had a meeting in Rome to discuss joint nutritional work, and they also began to schedule periodic meetings among the agencies. Although it would take years before the Bank would engage in multiple nutrition projects, within a decade the nutritional triumvirate would be a triumvirate no more.

Charles Egger, Unicef's director of programming, summed up the practical reason for enlisting the Bank in nutrition efforts (as well as other undertakings): "The international institution which has by far the greatest resources is the World Bank and its related agencies".[183] In spite of the mutual interests between the World Bank and WHO, FAO, and Unicef, only FAO had formal relations with the Bank during the early-1970s. Further, it was not until 1973 that broad inter-agency nutrition discussion between the Bank and WHO, FAO, and Unicef began.[184] Before then, Unicef had conducted some ad hoc collaborative operations in the field but did not have a systematic means for collaboration.[185] Unicef was impressed by the Bank's decision to group its nutrition division with population but sceptically noted in 1973 that "the Bank has as yet no clearer ideas than Unicef about how to tackle the problems of malnutrition in developing countries."[186] According to Unicef meetings with Bank staff, the Bank's first plan was to introduce nutrition into its family planning programme in two districts in India.[187]

The World Bank's decision to engage in nutritional activities in part reflected the success of FAO, WHO, and Unicef in promoting nutritional issues. On the other hand, the relatively low funding levels accorded nutritional issues encouraged the Bank to provide funding for an area that its experts viewed was insufficiently financed and supported. Because of the Bank's close relationships with planners, economists, and leaders at top governmental levels in the developing world, its leadership understood the potential for it to make headway on nutrition in a manner that FAO, WHO, and Unicef had been unable to do. In addition to its political savvy, the Bank envisioned

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[182]Harold Graves, letter to M. R. Sacks, 13 October 1971, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

[183]Charles A. Egger, Memorandum to field offices on 'Relations between Unicef and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)', 6 June 1973, WHO Archives, box 1066, folder 13.

[184]Inter-agency discussion does not denote inter-agency cooperation. Early in 1974 a WHO programme co-ordinator wrote to his colleagues that opportunities for WHO to present potential projects to the Bank would not be possible until a "later stage." Michael R. Sacks (WHO Chief, Programme coordination), 'Note for the record', 8 March 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

[185]Egger, op. cit., note 183 above.

[186]Newton R. Bowles, 'Meeting with International Bank for Reconstruction and Development', 2 January 1973, WHO Archives, box A.1066. Charles Egger attended this meeting along with Bowles.

[187]Ibid.

making a contribution by incorporating nutrition components in many of its projects, though its leaders were cautious about undertaking strictly nutritional ventures.[188] Its tentative recommendations in 1973 called for two "experimental" nutrition undertakings in 1975,[189] two or three in 1976, and three or four in 1977 and 1978.[190] In fact, the Bank's nutrition projects did not really get under way until 1977.[191]

In spite of the general spirit of optimism regarding nutrition projects, Michael Hoffman, the director of the International Relations department at the Bank and a nutrition proponent, believed that the nutrition promoters "have a considerable job ahead of us to convince the Board [of the Bank] that there is such a think [sic] as a 'nutrition project' suitable for Bank Group financing".[192] The Bank's primary interest in nutrition did not stem simply from a perception that better nutrition levels fostered economic development: a Bank report noted before the start of activities that the case for nutritional intervention on economic grounds was conceptually new and still questionable.[193] There was a considerable lack of confidence on the part of the Bank toward FAO, WHO, and Unicef nutrition activities and vice-versa. The Bank identified several shortcomings that it felt characterized the efforts of WHO, FAO, and Unicef nutrition programmes to date: 1)institutional child-feeding programmes aside, nutrition activities "have been modest, limited mostly to experiments and pilot projects" 2)"nutrition investments have often not been directed specifically to the most vulnerable segments of the population" 3)"mass techniques have been insufficiently employed" 4)medical scientists and food technologists have dominated the nutritional field; "little attention has been directed to moving the field into broad-gauged operational activities" and 5)the bulk of projects had been financed and supported by external grants of food and money with help from experts.[194] Further, the Bank's survey of nutritional programmes since the 1950s revealed that except for the direct feeding programmes used after the war, "the amounts of assistance thus far applied specifically to nutrition problems have been too small to have a significant impact."[195] The Bank's evaluation provides an unusually broad and scathing view of the nutrition

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[188]Michael L. Hoffman, letter to A. Bellerive (director of WHO division of coordination), 30 November 1973, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

[189]'Supplement to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Directors of the Bank and IDA', December 1973, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

[190]'Sector program paper', op. cit., note 74 above, p. 18.

[191]See Chapters 1 and 2 of Berg, op. cit., note 181 above.

[192]Hoffman, op. cit., note 188 above.

[193]'Sector program paper', op. cit., note 74 above, p. 3.

[194]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[195]Ibid. p. 10.

programmes so far chronicled in this dissertation. The Bank's sharp responses to FAO and WHO suggestions often highlighted low opinions of agency protocols. After receiving word that FAO and WHO were interested in receiving Bank financial support for experts to help governments design nutrition policies, the Bank provided its frank appraisal of the idea. Hoffman wrote: "I must say that our reaction...is rather negative, partly because we have not been very favorably impressed with the results of 'teams of experts' responsible to several agencies for advisory work in other sectors."[196] Evidently, the Bank was not interested in approaching nutritional issues with the same tact pursued by FAO, WHO, and Unicef previously.

From the WHO/FAO perspective, the Bank's initial conception of a nutrition project was grounded only in food distribution and production and overlooked decades of research in relevant fields such as malnutrition and infection. Furthermore, WHO took offence to the Bank's critical tone of agency projects during the previous 25 years. On one occasion, E. M. DeMaeyer, a senior WHO nutrition officer, sharply criticized a Bank document on nutrition policy and stated that the author had failed "to realize that a massive effort has been going on during this time [the past two decades] to train people in the field of nutrition and to sell the concept of nutrition to politicians and administrators." DeMaeyer continued, further asserting the integrity of the agencies' nutrition work, "If the Bank is at present able to enter the field of nutrition, it is probably largely thanks to the efforts of other agencies which have given proper recognition to the importance of nutrition in economic development."[197]

**New Nutrition Horizons**

While national nutrition policy-making constituted a major part of dialogue during the 1970s, other areas for nutritional research and expenditures were coming to the fore. The Jelliffes, writing from their posts at the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute in Kingston, Jamaica, were continuing to emphasize the problem of breastfeeding cessation in expanding urban areas as mothers purchased expensive baby

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[196]Michael Hoffman, letter to A. Bellerive, 12 March 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2. Although on an inter-agency level, the correspondents were infrequently nutritional experts, the respective nutrition division had always originated the ideas. In this case, for example, Bengoa, the chief of the WHO Nutrition Unit, had communicated the idea for Bank-funded policy experts to Bellerive earlier. J. M. Bengoa, memorandum to A. Bellerive on cooperation with the IBRD, 1 February 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

[197]See for example: E. M. DeMaeyer, letter to department chiefs on policy guidelines for Bank nutrition activities, 10 January 1974, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

foods and used cow's milk as a proxy for breastmilk.[198] In 1971, Unicef, FAO, and WHO sponsored a conference on "New Urban Families" which specifically dealt with the emerging health problems of migrants to the cities in developing countries. The conference participants were particularly distressed about the use of advertising by commercial firms to push the sales of inadequately nutritious foods for young children.[199] Nevertheless, the international crusade against breastmilk substitutes would take years to come to fruition. Through maternal and child health programmes, Unicef and WHO had been discouraging early weaning and had been training mothers in the importance of nutritious weaning foods for their infants for years. However, the breastfeeding issue was not prioritized until the situation became much better publicized. A famous photograph of feeding bottles on top of babies' graves in Zambia appeared in a Unicef publication in 1973.[200] In 1974, the Unicef Executive Board was simply calling for "greater efforts" to address the problem of premature weaning.[201] In the rhetoric of the policy makers, breastfeeding problems posed a major problem but certainly not the sort of crisis that the protein gap had.

For all the attention given nutrition during previous years, Unicef's administrators feared that their nutrition programming lacked direction and purpose in many cases. By 1972, the ebb and flow of nutrition interests had made its way back to interest in supplementary feeding once again. Spurred in part by a positive report from WHO's Nutrition Unit, Unicef reasserted its commitment to supplementary nutrition programmes that were part of a broader plan for treating and preventing childhood malnutrition.[202] This move was a paradoxical step considering the past objections and the inconclusive findings by researchers on the benefits of such actions. Further, when improperly implemented, supplemental food programmes could actually encourage early weaning, thereby defeating their purpose and exacerbating many of the pervasive nutritional problems already present.[203] Nevertheless, WHO encouraged such programmes so long as they were implemented in the context of national food and nutrition policies and were sensitive to past problems with this type of nutritional involvement. Labouisse also guided the re-ignition of supplementary child feeding

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[198]Derrick B. Jelliffe and E. F. Patrice Jelliffe, 'The urban avalanche and child nutrition: II. Special problems in developing countries', *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, August 1970, 57(2), pp. 114-18.

[199]'New urban families: conclusions and recommendations of a workshop on nutrition', Vienna, 28 August 1971, Unicef Archives, 88R025, box T-006, Teply files.

[200]See: *Unicef News*, issue 74, December 1972-January 1973.

[201]'Report of the Executive Board', May 1974, E/ICEF/633, paragraph 30.

[202]'Supplementary feeding programmes for mothers and young children: paper prepared for Unicef by WHO Nutrition Unit', 14 March 1972, E/ICEF/CRP/72-11.

[203]Ibid., p.12.

programmes along the lines of his observations that "children in the weakest socio-economic groups in most countries derived little benefit from improvements in methods of commercial agriculture or increases in the market supply of processed foods."[204] Reflecting on the golden tenet laid down by Pate -- to help the most helpless -- Labouisse envisaged long-term supplementary feeding programmes and other nutritional interventions as the only means to improve the lot of those children living under the worst circumstances. Further, the Executive Board even discussed resuming school feeding -- a practice which had been slowly phased out during the previous two decades -- in an effort to improve student performance and to prevent drop-outs.[205]

As a result of their feelings of insecurity on nutritional priorities, in 1973 the Unicef Board enlisted Professor Jean Mayer of Harvard to conduct a major report on child nutrition in developing countries for presentation to the nutritionally-concerned Board in 1975. Unicef hoped that the study would provide concrete suggestions about which initiatives would more effectively and rapidly improve childhood nutrition than existing programmes.[206] Mayer had extensive experience working on U.S. nutritional policy through an array of prominent national posts, such as Special Consultant to the President from 1969-1970.[207] A few administrators at Unicef were concerned that the international background of Mayer and his team was profoundly insubstantial for the task at hand. From the start of the study, Charles Egger was concerned with its methodology and the lack of international experience of study team members. A baffled Egger wrote to Heyward that "There is - to the best of my knowledge - not one person on Professor Mayer's staff who has worked in a developing country and been actively involved in the development of a national policy or the formulation of guidelines."[208]

The inner-workings of the Unicef administration which backed Mayer's study shed much light on how little was known about nutrition and determining nutritional priorities. Further, it reveals that with the erosion of "solutions" to PCM through a loss of faith in the abilities of technological magic bullets, an avenue had been opened for identifying policy solutions. Although policy solutions were rarely vertical in

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[204]'Report of the Executive Board', April-May 1972, E/ICEF/624, paragraph 32.

[205]Ibid., paragraph 33.

[206]L. J. Teply, letter to A. J. Reynolds, 24 September 1973, Unicef Archives, 88R025, box T-006, Teply files.

[207]Jean Mayer (ed), *U.S. Nutrition Policies in the Seventies*, San Francisco, W. H. Freeman and Company, 1973, p. 5.

[208]Charles A. Egger, letter to E. J. R. Heyward, 10 December 1973, Unicef Archives, J88R025, box T-006, Teply files.

nature -- they always called for a constellation of projects as well as inter-ministerial co-operation -- facets of policy development did reflect a desire for a policy framework that would impact hunger and malnutrition. The arduous search for the steps that could be taken to substantially improve childhood nutrition had so far been unconstructive for Unicef's programmes. Unicef's deputy director of the programme division, Newton Bowles, was preoccupied with the Mayer study since he had "observed a good many global studies undertaken for Unicef which eventuated in illuminating analyses of problems without being very helpful as to what can be done about them."[209] In spite of past experiences, Bowles believed that the Mayer study would finally provide a solid base for replying to the pounding criticism of the Unicef Executive Board on Unicef's failure to do more about childhood hunger and malnutrition. Bowles and his colleagues entrusted Mayer to produce a blueprint "for clear policy guidance to Unicef and [its] partners in developing countries and in other international organizations about what to do" about malnutrition.[210]

While the Unicef administrators desired a plan that would be precise and clear, the initial feedback to Mayer's study from the country representatives further illuminated the pervasive confusion associated with nutrition projects. Paul Biron, a regional Unicef food and nutrition officer, remarked that the Western-trained nutritionists' universal view that children and pregnant and lactating women had "'unique nutrition needs'" might be erroneous. Noting that children frequently are given the lowest priority for feeding, he sarcastically proposed that "perhaps the special needs of the children are to have different parents."[211] The neglect to which Biron referred had been approached at nutrition seminars and by boisterous nutrition advocates like McLaren. Another Unicef representative, Poul Larsen, reported that he had not yet seen anything "striking" in the nutrition arena in Egypt. As far as applied nutrition programmes were concerned, for example, Larsen wrote Teply that "there is a lot of lip-service paid to nutrition demonstrations, but the audiences are 'thin' and the programme uninspiring."[212] Nutrition success stories were very hard to locate.

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[209]Newton R. Bowles, letter to Jean Mayer, 24 January 1974, Unicef Archives 88R025, box T-006, Teply files.

[210]Ibid.

[211]Paul J. Biron, letter to L. J. Teply, 21 February 1974, Unicef Archives, 88R025, box T-006, Teply files.

[212]Paol F. Larsen, letter to L. J. Teply, 19 March 1974, Unicef Archives, 88R025, box T-006, Teply files.

## Conclusion

During the early-1970s, a flood of new issues was entering the nutrition realm at precisely the time when support for nutrition projects and policies was waning. In particular, the relationship between high fertility rates and low levels of nutrition was beginning to add momentum to the family planning movement.[213] As far as nutritional science was concerned, clinical investigators were becoming increasingly interested in the relationship between malabsorption and nutrition, since it had been hypothesized that viral, bacterial, and parasitic infections could lower the ability to absorb vital nutrients and consequently would lead to a higher likelihood of malnutrition.[214] Small clinical investigations in metabolic wards with children suffering from disorders such as ascariasis (intestinal worm infestation) consistently demonstrated that protein absorption appeared to be impaired and could therefore be considered a potential cause of clinical and sub-clinical malnutrition.[215] If the causes of malabsorption were treated and cured, then the malnourished would need less food to maintain a healthy nutritional status. On the other hand, if one did not take account of the level of malabsorption in a given population, then recommendations for adequate food output and per capita consumption could be incorrect. This latter idea was at the root of Scrimshaw's protest about the 1973 protein requirements. According to Scrimshaw, although the figures presented for adequate protein intake might have been appropriate for a perfectly healthy person in a developed country, they did not consider the stresses, including malabsorption, that affected health in developing countries.

With the entrance of the World Bank into the complex tapestry of nutritional politics during the early-1970s, nutritionists began to rethink their roles in the public health arena.[216] A letter from the chief of the Maternal and Child Health Division at WHO to Bengoa, the head of nutrition, sums up the broader problems and concerns

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[213]Although there was a paucity of proof for the positive relationship between nutrition and family planning, it was nevertheless being emphasized as an important approach in the fight against malnutrition. See, for example: G. H. Beaton et. al., op. cit., note 69 above, p. 26.

[214]For an excellent perspective of the currents in this thinking, see the following special issue of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* guest edited by Irwin H. Rosenberg and Nevin S. Scrimshaw: 'Malabsorption and Nutrition', *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, October and November 1972, 25, pp. 1045-1289.

[215]Among the many articles on this topic which can be found in this volume is: Kshetrabasi Tripathy, Edgar Duque, Oscar Bolaños, Hernan Lotero, Luis Guillermo Mayoral, 'Malabsorption syndrome in ascariasis', *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, November 1972, 25, pp. 1276-81.

[216]For a good description of the programmatic mechanics of protein-calorie initiatives before the World Bank's entry, see: John R. K. Robson, *Malnutrition: Its causation and control*, New York, London and Paris, Gordon and Breach, 2, 1972.

that were shared by many. After meetings with consultants hired by the World Bank, he wrote,

> It is my impression that there is still only a vague awareness and understanding of the relationship between food availability, mortality rates, fertility and consequently population dynamics. There is even less awareness of the relationships by economic authorities than there is by a few of our health workers who have been able to work closely with families and observe the major underlying role that nutrition plays in mortality rates from illnesses that are labeled as infectious.[217]

Although it is anything but surprising that community health workers would have a better understanding of hunger and health issues in the field, it is important to highlight how the people most likely to understand these issues were those with field experience. The people being encouraged to address these issues in the 1970s, however, were the economists, planners, and politicians who did not have field experience and were therefore at a disadvantage for comprehending the breadth and constitution of these hunger issues.

In 1974, the World Food Crisis eclipsed the concerns over the protein gap, and propelled food production and hunger to the forefront of political discussions. Grain reserves fell to extraordinarily low levels while the price of wheat on the global market soared, setting off inflationary responses world-wide.[218] Thus, far from wishing to discuss specific nutritional deficiencies, policy makers shifted their attention to issues of food scarcity. The course of events paralleled the concerns which had dominated the political arena after W.W.II and had inspired Orr's World Food Plan. Once again, food, not nutrition, was on the world agenda. The effects, as we shall see in the following chapter, would prove disastrous for the PAG and would reshape the course and consistency of nutrition policy.

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[217]Letter from chief MCH to Chief Nutrition, 17 November 1971, WHO Archives, box A.0968, folder 2.

[218]For an extraordinarily vivid portrait of this crisis and its background, see: Lester R. Brown and Erik P. Eckholm, *By Bread Alone*, New York and Washington, Praeger Publishers, 1974.