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APPENDIX IGENERAL OBSERVATIONS OFFERED AT THE
UNICEF WORKSHOP IN GENEVA

General observations offered at the UNICEF Workshop in Geneva on 30 April 1971, are summarised below with a view to assisting further discussion in the regional preview meetings around themes developed in the paper on UNICEF-assisted programmes: Lessons from the sixties. These observations may be conveniently grouped under five heads:

- I. Status of development services for children and youth
- II. Approaches to future development
- III. Consideration in choosing priorities for UNICEF
- IV. Role and objectives of UNICEF
- V. Organization of work within UNICEF.

I. Status of development services for children and youth

- (1) In many countries the basic national services are extremely weak. The statistics in use are often misleading.
- (2) With the growth of population, in many countries, conditions of living for large sections of people will be relatively worse at the end of the second development decade than they are at present.

II. Approaches to future development

- (1) The people in the villages were most concerned with tangible, basic services which could reach out to them. However, at national levels, on the part of governments, there often seemed to be a tendency to sweep some of the real problems under the mat and to put their main emphasis in seeking UNICEF support on innovations. Likewise they often tended to stress high standards in place of essential, minimum services for the population as a whole.
- (2) Economic development by itself was not sufficient to take account of the social needs of the bulk of the population.

- (3) Conditions and concepts of development differed from one country to another. Particular attention should be given to concepts of development as visualised by the countries themselves.
- (4) The priorities with which UNICEF field offices had to deal at the country level were essentially the priorities of the governments concerned. There was need for realistic planning. It is important to help strengthen planning units within governments, so that the latter were better able to develop realistic national plans.
- (5) Development meant big, structural changes, that is, changes in political, social, cultural and economic conditions. A basic issue thrown up by the decade of the sixties had been the importance of political commitment. Only where there was the necessary political commitment could the work of development really start. Structural changes were a necessary condition for national economic growth to filter through. An important question for UNICEF was how, through activities which it assisted, it might be possible to influence locations or situations in which structural changes were taking place.
- (6) Development had to be spelt out in more meaningful and in human terms. There had to be a better measure of the impact of development in relation to the realities of life as these were encountered by the people at large.
- (7) Local and recurring costs of programmes and projects undertaken by governments was an area deserving of careful reappraisal, "Revolutionary" changes were required in methods of delivery of services.

III. Considerations in choosing priorities for UNICEF

- (1) UNICEF had to be concerned with activities which reached the people and help provide them with the kinds of services they needed most. At the same time, it had to participate in "innovative" efforts.
- (2) There was no necessary contradiction between 'traditional' sectors and 'innovative' activities. Even in the former, there was need to find new innovations. There could be innovations which were less sophisticated and costly than methods in use in the past.

- (3) Besides choosing between innovational and traditional considerations, a choice had also to be made between 'investment' and 'pre-investment' activities. The latter approach would imply channelling of UNICEF's limited resources into the pre-investment phase of a programme/project, leaving other agencies to take on the bulk of the programme. Should the pre-investment concept be introduced, UNICEF's planning-programming exercises would come to be related much more to the prospective than to the current development plan of a country.
- (4) Another possible criterion in UNICEF support to development activities could be locational. This would imply a choice between situating UNICEF assistance preferably in 'growth points', or in areas where the population was relatively backward and more poorly served.
- (5) In many countries significant improvements had taken place in the conditions of children, and to an extent UNICEF had been able to contribute to them. However, there was no reason for complacency. In UNICEF operations there was some danger of extending too thinly, if this had not already happened. UNICEF assistance had tended to get extended to too many projects, and a conscious effort to correct this trend was now necessary.
- (7) If UNICEF wanted better programmes, it would have to define its general policies or approaches more clearly than before.

IV. Role and objectives of UNICEF

Special attention was drawn to the approach and objectives for UNICEF indicated in paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of the paper on UNICEF-assisted programmes: Lessons from the sixties. Agreeing with the proposed objectives, Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) pointed out that even in the sixties UNICEF had visualised not only projects but also much a wider approach. The question was whether UNICEF possessed means adequate in relation to the proposed objectives. There was the question of workload as well as

future approaches to planning, programming and implementation. An extraordinarily large effort would be needed over a much wider area of development as also an enormous amount of preparation. As he saw it, it was necessary for UNICEF to work in three dimensions, which might be described as (a) transcendental, (b) broad areas of priority and, within these areas, the catalysing role which UNICEF could play and the new methods and innovations which it could help evolve, and (c) areas of concentration. There was need to find levers of influence to work at the village level and to evolve more effective methods of implementation on the ground. A considerable gestation period would be necessary to be able to work to the "design" proposed for the future.

V. Organization of work within UNICEF

- (1) It was necessary, within UNICEF, to try and find ways of cutting down on paper work and to allow more time for field observation and for implementation. More stress was needed on supervision. At present there was not much time to look at the projects and to report on findings (instead only on assumptions).
- (2) While UNICEF field offices had the duty of implementing new ideas, they did not have adequate staff support and had not the time to think deeply about the projects they undertook. The number of deadlines should be reduced. The regional offices should be strengthened so that they could give greater help to the country offices.
- (3) The present "planning cycle" of UNICEF should be carefully reconsidered in terms of the goals to be achieved and the nature of the work which had to be done in relation to policy and programmes.
- (4) There was need for systematic interchange of experience and the study of innovative efforts with which UNICEF was associated. Attention was drawn in this connexion to the suggestions in paragraph 14 of the paper on UNICEF-assisted programmes: Lessons from the sixties.

Summing up the general discussion, the Executive Director observed that while, in the discussion, there had been a little tendency to underplay what UNICEF had done, it was important not to let continuing problems cloud the job that had been actually carried out by UNICEF. The idea of concentration had been stressed so as to make better use of available resources. We should consider in which particular areas to concentrate. As to types of aid given by UNICEF, we should consider whether material resources (as against local stipends etc.) were still the most important. It was also worth considering how the work and organization of UNICEF could be strengthened at the grassroots level, closer to the Governments.

The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the frank and open manner in which various issues had been presented. He emphasized that it was extremely important for UNICEF that the comments and suggestions which had been offered should not be allowed to "die". The process which had been begun in the Workshop had to remain a kind of living operation.

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