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Background on UNICEF for Stories on Nobel Peace Prize Award

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<i>Primary Contact</i>	Adhiratha Keefe (Records Management Officer)
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25 October 1965

BACKGROUND ON UNICEF FOR STORIES ON NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARD

UNICEF was created by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1946 to provide emergency relief for children and mothers in war ravaged countries. Its creation was something of a historical accident. The great powers had failed to agree on extending the life of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA), and about \$30 million was left over in unexpended UNRRA assets. A number of UN delegates proposed the establishment of a children's relief agency to keep these assets from going to waste; and Maurice Pate, an American who had been closely associated with Herbert Hoover in war-relief work, was chosen to head the new agency.

With the cooperation of UN member governments, UNICEF mounted one of the largest relief operations in history. Maurice Pate managed to obtain additional emergency aid contributions of about \$100 million over the period 1946-1950. The relief effort was concentrated in Italy, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and elsewhere. At the peak of this phase of its work, UNICEF was providing food -- and in many cases clothing, vaccines, and drugs -- to more than 6 million mothers and children.

By 1950 the postwar emergency, proper, was over. In the normal course of events UNICEF (then officially the UN International Children's Emergency Fund) would have terminated operations or put them on a stand-by basis. Pate, his associates in the organization, and UNICEF's supporters in the General Assembly saw the end of the emergency period as an opportunity to engage humanity's concern with the welfare of children on a broader front. In the so-called "underdeveloped" countries (accounting for about two-thirds of the world's population) the great majority of children lived under what

might be described as "permanent emergency" conditions. Could an international effort, comparable to the operation which UNICEF had just carried out in the war-ravaged countries, be mounted to help these children?

UNICEF had developed a strong administrative and supply organization during its emergency-relief period, and its staff was still intact. In 1950 the General Assembly extended UNICEF's life for a three-year trial period and directed it to turn its attention to long-range programs for the benefit of children in the less developed countries. In 1953 the Assembly extended the organization's life indefinitely and changed its name to "United Nations Children's Fund." The old abbreviation UNICEF was retained since the agency had acquired world-wide acclaim for the work it had carried out under that symbol.

When UNICEF embarked on its long-range phase in 1950, its income was down to about \$10.5 million a year. About \$1.5 million was accounted for by private contributions; the rest by voluntary contributions from 31 governments. The first long-range problems UNICEF tackled were in the field of health and disease control, where relatively modest expenditures on supplies and equipment could often have a decisive impact.

In cooperation with the World Health Organization, UNICEF set out to fight yaws, malaria, trachoma, tuberculosis, leprosy and other diseases with a high incidence among children. It was found that ten cents would buy enough penicillin to cure four children of yaws; fifty cents would buy enough DDT to protect seven children from malaria for a year; twenty-five cents would buy enough antibiotics to cure two children of trachoma. UNICEF also embarked on a program to help build up permanent health services for mothers and children. Hundreds of thousands of UNICEF midwife kits -- costing approximately twenty two dollars each -- were shipped to all the continents of the world to make birth a less hazardous experience for mother and child alike.

Under Maurice Pate's leadership, UNICEF's resources steadily grew. His goal, to make it a universal enterprise, was never quite realized -- but in January 1965, 121 countries were contributing to UNICEF and UNICEF-aided programs were underway in 118 countries and territories. UNICEF's income has now risen to about \$33 million a year: 80% from government contributions, and the rest from voluntary contributions, organized fund raising projects like "Trick or Treat", and the sale of UNICEF greeting cards.

As resources grew, UNICEF branched into new fields of aid, based on the outstanding needs of children in the developing countries: dairy plants, the development of new high protein foods, "backyard" nutrition programs, social services for slum children.

The formula, designed to obtain maximum results with a relatively modest budget, remained the same.

It helps the governments of the developing countries establish and expand their own services for children, supplying the kind of aid -- supplies, transport, training stipends -- that "make" the difference."

UNICEF is governed by a 30-nation Executive Board, which includes approximately equal representation by donor and recipient countries. Countries receiving UNICEF aid spend, on the average, \$2.50 for every dollar UNICEF spends on each UNICEF-aided project. Technical support is provided by the various specialized agencies of the UN -- WHO, FAO, UNESCO, ILO, and the UN Bureau of Social Affairs.

In 1961 the Executive Board conducted a general survey of the needs of children and came to the conclusion that "preparation for life" ranked with "protection" among the child's basic needs and rights. In recent years, UNICEF has been expanding its activities in the fields of education and vocational training. It also helps countries plan to meet the needs of the rising generation in line with their larger economic and social development programs.

Maurice Pate died in January 1965, having lived to see the organization he led for 18 years grow from a relief operation into a permanent agency to "speak for those who are too young to speak for themselves -- the world's children." He was succeeded by another American, Henry R. Labouisse, former head of the United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees and former U.S. ambassador to Greece.

UNICEF's practical accomplishments have been considerable. In UNICEF-aided projects, more than 100 million persons have been examined for yaws and 41 million treated, about half of them women and children. In 1964 alone, UNICEF insecticides protected 45 million persons in 28 countries from malaria. UNICEF has helped equip 8,610 health centers and 21,000 subcenters. It has helped equip almost 200 milk processing plants, and has helped to train thousands of nurses, midwives, nutritionists, teachers, and social workers.

One of the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter is that co-operative efforts to improve economic and social conditions help remove the causes of war and strife. In line with this principle, UNICEF's practical accomplishments constitute a significant contribution to peace. But UNICEF directly promoted the cause of international understanding through the fund-raising and educational campaigns conducted by the various national committees for UNICEF in the economically advanced countries. Under Maurice Pate's leadership, UNICEF became the world's leading advocate of the concept of "the universality of childhood": that a child in need, anywhere, is a child deserving help -- regardless of his or her's parent's race, creed, political persuasion, or nationality.

The largest sources of non-official contributions to UNICEF are the annual "Trick or Treat" campaign in the United States, the comparable Hallowe'en campaign in Canada, and the sale of UNICEF Greeting Cards.

"Trick or Treat" started fifteen years ago when a small group of Sunday school children in a Philadelphia suburb decided to celebrate Hallowe'en in a new way. Instead of collecting the usual treats like candy and apples for themselves, they set out to collect pennies, nickles, and dimes for children in other countries. This year an estimated three and one half million children will be ringing doorbells all over the country for UNICEF. "Trick or Treat" has raised more than \$15 million for UNICEF in the past 15 years, and collections are expected to go over the \$2 million mark this year. In Canada, youngsters ringing doorbells on Hallowe'en are expected to collect close to \$400,000 for UNICEF. This year's "Trick or Treat" campaign is

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being given its send-off by Danny Kaye, an old friend of UNICEF , who left La Guardia airport Monday morning on a eight-city promotional tour for UNICEF.

The first UNICEF greeting card appeared in 1949, when UNICEF and the UN were still out at Lake Success. It was drawn by a Czech schoolgirl, Jitka Samkova, to express her appreciation for the food, clothing and codliver oil UNICEF had sent the children of her village in the grim winter of 1946-7. Jitka's card was privately printed by the UNICEF staff at Lake Success for their own use. This year, it is expected that 45 million UNICEF greeting cards - 19 original designs by 15 artists from the United States, France, Denmark, Italy, Spain, the USSR, Israel, and Senegal -- will be sold in more than 100 countries. The net profit from the 1964 campaign was \$2,500,000. Among the artists who have contributed designs to the UNICEF greeting card series over the years to help the world's needy children are Raoul Dufy, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro, Hans Erni, Ben hahn, Rufino Tamayo, Andrew Wyeth, and Henry Moore.