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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND  
Programme Committee

RECOMMENDATION BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR AN APPORTIONMENT TO  
MOROCCO FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRACHOMA AND  
SEASONAL CONJUNCTIVITIS

1. The Administration recommends that the sum of \$110,000 be allocated to Morocco to strengthen and extend the campaign against trachoma and seasonal conjunctivitis in the period from July 1955 to June 1956. The Government would spend the equivalent of \$227,000 on the joint programme in the same period. This would be the third allocation to a long-term programme in which UNICEF may expect to participate for four or five years more after June 1956. UNICEF would supply 2,300 kg. of antibiotic ointment for the treatment of 287,000 people, and sixteen vehicles, which would also be used in the later stages of the campaign. The assistance UNICEF would thus be asked to provide would be in addition to the total apportionment of \$161,000 for supplies for this programme from the beginning of 1953 to June 1955, which includes \$23,000 for the reimbursement to WHO of the costs of expert staff.

Nature of the campaign

2. A mass campaign against conjunctivitis is conducted during the epidemic season, from June to November. Then the staff are assigned to a campaign against trachoma in schools, covering the first six months of the year.

### Mass campaign

3. The campaign against seasonal conjunctivitis is prophylactic, the aim being to reduce the incidence of trachoma while preventing the spread of conjunctivitis. In this respect encouraging results have already been achieved in a pilot sector in Skoura. The prophylactic treatment has to be repeated for several years. So far the successive treatments in a particular region have been carried out on the following basis:

(a) First year - "Operation Day". Fifteen teams, consisting altogether of eighty persons, tour a region with a population of 100,000, each of whom receives an instillation with antibiotic ointment twice a day, on three days a month for six months, as a preventive or curative measure.

(b) Second year - Supervised self-treatment. The people, who have learned through "Operation Day" the value and method of use of the ointment, are given ointment free and treat themselves regularly under the supervision of three teams. (Meanwhile "Operation Day" is continued in a second region.)

(c) Third year - Supervised self-treatment. The operation of the second year is repeated, except that this time the ointment is sold cheaply in the village shops. ("Operation Day" is continued in a third region, while supervised self-treatment is begun in the second region.)

(d) Fourth and succeeding years - Self-treatment is carried on under the control of the regular health services alone. It is hoped that the tube of ointment will become the first item in the home medical kit.

In view of the high cost of "Operation Day" various methods are at present under consideration to enable the self-treatment stage to be reached more rapidly (see below).

### Trachoma in schools

4. Actual trachoma requires much more intensive treatment. Each school child suffering from the disease must receive an instillation with ointment two or three times a day for a period of sixty days. The instillation is given by the specialist campaign staff, who plan to treat 30,000 schoolchildren in the first six months of 1955.

5. The conjunctivitis campaign is carried on in the foothills to the south of the Atlas and in the pre-Sahara region, where the climate is very severe during the epidemic season. The schools treated for trachoma are in certain towns to the north of the Atlas.

A report (E/ICEF/L.571) has already been made on the work done in 1953. Briefly, "Operation Day" was carried on in the Ouarzazate territory which has a population of 114,000.

#### Work done in 1954

6. During the first six months of 1954 the anti-trachoma campaign at Marrakesh covered 10,000 children suffering from trachoma instead of the planned 20,000. A diagnosis campaign was conducted at Casablanca in preparation for the 1955 school campaign.

Between July and November 1954 "Operation Day" was carried on in the Tafilalet territory, to the east of the Ouarzazate territory covered in 1953. Difficulty was encountered at the start of the campaign owing to delay in delivery of the vehicles supplied by UNICEF, and in November the late harvest made it difficult to get the villagers together for the fifth and sixth cycles of instillations. Seventeen teams were assigned to this campaign, in which some 100,000 people were treated instead of the planned 138,000.

7. Meanwhile supervised self-treatment, with free distribution of ointment, was under way in the Ouarzazate territory. Three teams were assigned to the control of the experiment, which covered 114,000 people.

The planned tests were carried out in a pilot sector: prophylaxis by sulfamides and control by environmental sanitation of the flies which carry the infection. These tests affected about 10,000 people. Thus 224,000 people in all received protection during the 1954 season, in addition to 10,000 schoolchildren treated for trachoma.

WHO supplied two visiting advisory experts, an ophthalmologist and a statistician, and three resident experts - an ophthalmologist, a statistician and a sanitary engineer - whose expenses were paid by UNICEF. WHO also granted fellowships.

8. The Department of Health assigned 105 persons to these campaigns in 1954. The cost to all the partners in the campaigns amounted to 110 million francs in all, or 475 francs (US \$1.35) per person treated, the Government paying 82 million francs or 350 francs (US \$1) per person and UNICEF US \$0.35 per person. The Government spent a further 14 million francs on treatment outside the joint programme.

As the WHO statistician and his local colleagues have not yet analysed all the records, the technical results of this campaign are not yet available. As soon as all the information has been collected, a complete report will be drawn up covering the work carried out in 1953 and 1954 and giving comparative analyses of the various methods.

9. Beginning in January 1955 the second stage of the school campaign will take effect at Casablanca and Meknès, thus reaching 30,000 children. Relapses, new cases and those not responding to treatment found at Marrakesh will be treated again. The expenditure on antibiotics for which UNICEF is responsible in this campaign has been met from the appropriation made in March 1954.

Plan for the period July 1955 to June 1956

10. Encouraged by the results obtained in the campaign against eye diseases, the Government hopes to intensify its efforts during 1955. This campaign would include the following stages:

(a) "Operation Day" would be carried out in two territories: the palm-grove region to the south of Agadir, with a population of 80,000, and the Saharan region of Figuig on the Algerian frontier, with a population of 15,000. As these regions respectively adjoin the Ouarzazate and Tafilalet territories, where the campaign has already been carried out, it would be possible to extend treatment to all the people of Morocco to the south of the Atlas. This campaign would be carried out by ten teams.

(b) In the Tafilalet territory, where an "Operation Day" was carried out in 1954, there would be supervised self-treatment, with free distribution of ointment. There would be three control teams and 100,000 people would be affected.

(c) In the Ouarzazate territory, where there was an "Operation Day" in 1953 and a first self-treatment campaign in 1954, there would be a second phase of self-treatment, this time through the sale of ointment half-price. Consequently UNICEF would provide only half the ointment required. There would be three control teams and 114,000 people would be affected.

(d) The school campaign would be intensified in the rural areas to the north of the Atlas. It could be undertaken in part by teachers, and should reach 50,000 school children.

These stages are provided for in the original plan. In addition, the Government intends to test methods which would make it possible to reach the people to the north of the Atlas more quickly. This would require a reduction in supervision to varying degrees.

(e) The Government and WHO are discussing an "Operation Bi-monthly Day" for the Ouezzane region to the north of the Atlas with a population of 100,000. Under this method, instillation would be done by the specialist staff every two months instead of every month as in "Operation Day". Six teams would be necessary.

(f) "Extensive self-treatment" would be given to the 100,000 people of the Beni-Mellal region. The "Operation Day" stage would be omitted completely, and three teams would initiate a self-treatment campaign by providing training in modern hygiene and would call on the doctors of circonscriptions and the Regional Preventive Medicine services for assistance.

The results of operations (e) and (f) would be carefully appraised. The Administration recommends that UNICEF should make its contribution of ointment and vehicles in accordance with the Government's request.

(g) Lastly, the Government proposes to organize an intensive self-treatment campaign in every region of Morocco with a view to reaching 1.4 million people. Special teams would not be assigned for this purpose and the campaign would be carried on by the doctors of the circonscriptions, with the aid of the Regional Preventive Medicine Services and the Central Department for the Prevention of Eye Diseases. The Government asks UNICEF to provide 200,000 tubes of ointment (at a cost of \$22,000) and would itself provide 360,000 tubes.

11. The great advantage of this method would be that many sick persons could be treated without the assistance of specialist staff, whom it is impossible either to recruit or pay at the present time. However, the general feeling, which is shared by WHO, is that, if the disease is to be eradicated, all children should be treated, regardless of whether they show clinical symptoms of conjunctivitis, and the Administration therefore considers that method (g) is more curative than preventive and does not recommend that UNICEF should provide the ointment requested. This conclusion might be revised at a later date in the light of the testing of extensive self-treatment methods (stage (f) above).

12. The Government has asked for similar assistance in respect of items (a) to (g) for the year July 1956 to June 1957. As an important evaluation of the results of the campaign up to the end of 1954 is to be made during the course of this year (see paragraph 8 above), the Administration considers that it would be better to consider appropriation for the subsequent stage in the light of this report, in September 1955 or in March 1956.

#### UNICEF Commitments

13. If this recommendation is approved, UNICEF will provide the following supplies for the period July 1955 to June 1956:

(a) Antibiotic ointment

346,000 tubes of 5 grammes	\$38,000
293,000 tubes of 2 grammes	\$22,000

(b) Vehicles	
16 light lorries, of which 8 would be used as part replacement of the vehicles in use in the South since 1953	\$29,000
(c) Miscellaneous	\$ 2,000
(d) Freight	\$ 9,000
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	\$110,000

WHO Commitments

14. WHO has given its technical approval to this plan. It has given technical assistance priority I to the following posts in its budget:

- 1 sanitary engineer for twelve months
- 1 ophthalmologist for six months
- 1 statistician for six months
- 1 ophthalmological advisory expert for six months
- 1 statistical advisory expert for six months
- 2 fellowships of two weeks

The total cost of these posts would be \$23,759.

Government Commitments

15. In undertaking to carry out the programme described in this document, the Government stated that it would bear the following financial charges: -

Joint programme (Government, UNICEF and WHO) for one year

The Campaign Chief Medical Officer and five sector ophthalmologists	11,200,000 francs
Specialized male nurses (not attached to teams), 4	4,000,000
Team staff (22 teams of three persons: total 66)	33,000,000
Laboratory workers and assistant laboratory workers, 6	2,880,000
Maternal and child welfare nurses, 3	2,260,000
Mobile ophthalmological and surgical group, 15	10,800,000
Administrative staff: car park etc., 17	10,680,000
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	Total staff 64,720,000
Maintenance and operation of vehicles	8,800,000
Supplies	3,000,000
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	<u>76,520,000</u> (US \$227,000)

In addition to the joint programme, the Government proposes to spend 19,000,000 francs on its extensive self-treatment programme.

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