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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Programme Committee

Recommendation of the Executive Director for an Allocation
IRAQ
School Feeding

1. The Executive Director recommends an allocation to Iraq of \$45,000 toward an expanded school feeding programme in Iraq to reach 305,000 primary school children in the 1957/58 school year. The Fund would cover freight costs on 3.5 million pounds of skim milk powder and would provide eight million fish-liver-oil capsules which would be required for the expanded programme at an estimated cost of \$99,000 for the year. Since a balance of \$54,000 is available from allocations approved for the purchase of milk for this programme prior to 1955, a further allocation of \$45,000 is requested at this time. The implementation of this extended programme would be dependent upon the availability of United States surplus dried skim milk free of charge at shipside at the time shipment by UNICEF is required. Previous allocations approved by the Board for this programme total \$195,000 and have included allocation of 7,300,000 pounds of skim milk powder.

2. The plan for 1957/58 would be to provide milk and fish-liver-oil capsules for 90,000 children with a daily mid-morning school meal and to 215,000 children who would not be included in the school meal scheme. The total of 305,000 children to be reached is the entire enrolment in the 1,747 primary schools in the country. It is the intention of the Government to continue the school feeding service on a permanent basis relying on its own resources after the completion of the 1957/58 school year.

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3. Because of lack of school facilities and certain local administrative and financial difficulties, the milk distribution programme which has been assisted by UNICEF since 1953 has not reached its targets over the past two years. Approximately 220,000 were reached in 1956/57 against a target plan to reach 340,000. The Government is now undertaking a survey in fourteen provinces to determine the pattern for the programme in future and is also undertaking to strengthen the supervision and inspection of schools and to centralize the responsibility of the entire school feeding programme.
4. The Government will undertake a thorough field survey during the forthcoming school year to assess the technical and administrative aspects of the feeding service in order to determine the operational pattern for future years. FAO will be requested to participate in this survey and in the evaluation of the findings. The Government's total expenditures for the school feeding programmes during the 1957/58 school year are estimated at the equivalent of \$875,000, including the cost of locally available food supplies and two thirds of the cost of imported fish-liver oil capsules. Approximately \$150,000 is taken as the Government's direct matching expenditure in relation to the aid required from UNICEF.

Child nutrition

5. As previously reported to the Board, the school feeding service in Iraq was initiated to meet the need for better nutrition among primary school children. A second and equally important objective is to demonstrate to the public, through the school children and their parents, how to achieve a well balanced diet with foods which are available locally. In the four years during which the service has developed, nutrition conditions among the participating school children have demonstrably improved. Distribution is gradually approaching full coverage of primary schools. In some schools milk is distributed with a daily school lunch (the basic phase of the service) and in others the

children receive simply the milk and fish-liver-oil capsules. The Government now feel the necessity of country-wide assessment of the programme in order to establish the administrative and nutritional pattern for the future, and to determine to what extent the programme has encouraged improvement in local food habits, particularly in rural areas. Such a survey will be made during the 1957/58 school year by officials of the Nutrition Institute in Baghdad and of the School Health Services Directorate. The Government is also requesting FAO to make a school feeding expert available to participate in this survey and in the evaluation of its findings.

Progress to date

6. The administrative organization of the school feeding service has been outlined in the two previous documents presented to the Board. The programme continues to be under the general supervision of the School Health Service Directorate of the Ministry of Health, the staff of which has been strengthened by the appointment of a full-time medical officer in charge of school feeding. In the provinces (Liwas), operational and inspection responsibility is jointly shared between school health officers, education authorities and staff of the Liwa Governor. Funds to meet the cost of food supplies, school kitchen equipment and the cost of distribution are provided from the local administrative budget of each Liwa. Vehicles for use in the supervision of the service have now been made available by the Government in all of the fourteen Liwas.

7. When plans were made two years ago to expand the school feeding programme (E/ICEF/L.812), various development plans were taken into consideration as factors favouring rapid progress of the project. According to the most recent statistics there are 800,000 children in the country of primary school age, with an enrolment of 305,210 in the 1,747 primary schools. The Ministry of Education is now carrying out a plan to provide school facilities for all of the country and expects by the end of the present school year to have such facilities ready for 350,000 children. A re-organization of Iraq's school health services which

has been suggested by WHO would be of considerable value for the feeding service, since the implementation of this re-organization would relieve provincial school health medical officers of curative responsibilities which currently occupy a great portion of their time. However, this development has not yet gone beyond the planning stage.

8. According to reports now available, distribution through the school feeding service reached the following beneficiaries during the first four years:

<u>School year</u>	<u>Full meal</u>	<u>Milk and capsules only</u>	<u>Total</u>
1953/54	32,852	-	32,852
1954/55	62,262	-	62,262
1955/56	88,336	1,517	89,853
1956/57 (estimated)	64,650	156,710	221,360

While there has been an encouraging expansion of the service over the first years of its implementation, it is clear that targets for the 1955/56 and 1956/57 school year were originally set too high (200,000 and 340,000 respectively). In addition to the lack of school facilities, local administrative difficulties hampered the Government in meeting its targets, particularly dependence on budgetary agreement of the local Liwa administration. The Government plans to take corrective measures during the field survey in the next school year.

9. Distribution of milk powder and fish-liver-oil capsules was extended in 1956 to 7,700 children in schools and centres operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. These centres, which include primary school facilities, are part of a country-wide community development plan extended to rural areas. Two UNTAA social welfare experts are assisting the Government in the implementation of this plan.

Proposed distribution plan 1957/58

10. The school feeding service would continue in 1957/58 along the same lines as in previous years and will reach the majority of Government primary schools. An estimated 90,000 children would receive a daily mid-morning school meal (including skim milk and fish-liver-oil capsules,) for 150 days. Under an expanded programme a further 215,000 school children would be given skim milk for 150 days and a fish-liver-oil capsule each day for eighty days. The Government would provide two thirds of the fish-liver-oil capsules required for this year.

11. Responsibility for procurement of local food supplies for the school lunch programme, which in the past has largely been carried out by the individual school principals is to be centralized in the provincial school feeding boards on a bulk purchase and distribution basis. These Liwa boards, comprising representatives of the school health service, education authorities and the Liwa governor's office, will continue to carry the responsibility for the local implementation of the entire service. Supervision and inspection of the schools is made by education inspectors and by school health medical officers.

12. As indicated above, a survey will be carried out in the 1957/58 school year in all fourteen Liwas by a team made up of a nutritionist from the Nutrition Institute of the Ministry of Health, the school feeding officer of the School Health Directorate and subject to FAO approval by an international nutrition expert as requested by the Government. Local health and education officials will also participate in the assessment, and the findings will be discussed with the Liwa Governor. The Government wishes on the basis of this survey to consolidate its future policy for the continuation of this service.

UNICEF commitments

13. UNICEF would provide the following to cover requirements for one year:

	<u>US\$</u>
a) <u>Skim milk</u> (para.10)	No cost
- for school lunch programme	1,040,288 pounds
- for expanded milk distribution	<u>2,486,112 "</u>
	3,526,400 pounds
b) <u>Fish-liver-oil</u> (para. 10)	18,000
(one third of total requirements)	<u>Capsules</u>
- for the school lunch programme	2.4 million
- for the expanded phase	<u>5.7 million</u>
	Total 8.1 million
c) <u>Freight</u>	81,000
i) on skim milk	\$79,200
ii) on other items	<u>1,800</u>
Total a) to c)	99,000
Available from balance of previous allocations (para.1)	<u>54,000</u>
Total recommended allocation	145,000

FAO participation

14. FAO is actively interested in the continual implementation of the school feeding service in Iraq. At the request of the Government, it is anticipated that FAO will make available the services of a school feeding expert to take part in the survey of this programme during the next school year, and to assist the Government in the evaluation of the results of this survey.

Government commitments

15. The Government's expenditures during the 1957/58 school year are estimated at the equivalent of \$875,000 of which \$150,000 is taken as Government matching. The total costs cover: local food supplies for the school lunch programme, provided from provincial administration budgets at the cost of \$756,000, two thirds of the imported fish-liver oil requirements at a cost of \$41,000; and administrative costs and charges for internal distribution and storage.
