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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

Programme Committee

Recommendation of the Executive Director for an Allocation
LIBYA
School Feeding

1. The Executive Director recommends an allocation to Libya of \$33,000 to provide 11.9 million fish-liver-oil capsules and certain items of cooking and serving equipment not available in Libya, the lack of which has hampered the progress of the UNICEF-assisted school feeding programme. The Board has previously approved a total of \$118,200 for this programme (exclusive of freight). The plan was first approved by the Board in September 1954; further funds were voted in April 1957 (E/ICEF/L.1023) to assist in continuing school feeding to the end of the 1958/59 school year, providing milk and fish-liver-oil rations to children through 300 schools: 70,000 children were reached in 1956/57; 80,000 are to be reached in 1957/58 and 90,000 in 1958/59.
2. The Government's matching commitment for the two school years, 1957/58 and 1958/59, will be equivalent to US\$840,000, these funds being raised from a surtax on imports established specifically to finance this programme.
3. The programme was initiated by the Government to combat widespread malnutrition which had serious effects on the health and on the educational attainments of school children. The present recommendation is based on the need for additional fish-liver-oil capsules to raise the ration from 30 capsules per child per year to 100 capsules per child per year to meet grave deficiencies of vitamin A which have been emphasized repeatedly in reports of FAO nutritionists. Under

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the allocation approved in September 1954 (E/ICEF/L.611), the Fund provided pots for heating and mixing milk and pitchers, ladles and cups for distributing it, since in most rural areas in Libya, provision of such items could not be made locally and no governmental funds could be foreseen to meet these needs. The allocation recommended in this paper includes \$4,000 to provide cooking and serving equipment for additional schools to which the programme is to be extended in the next two years.

Success of the programme

4. The nutritionist assigned to this programme by FAO completed his assignment in December 1956. His reports indicate that, during the initial two-year period of the programme, there was remarkable development of the school feeding programme despite the obstacles encountered including inadequate facilities and difficulties of access to many of the rural communities. A good administrative organization has been established. The programme was well accepted by the people generally. The number of children attending schools has increased; there has been a significant decline in the number of sick days; and teachers have observed a steadily increasing alertness among the children. The school feeding programme has also given a stimulus to the development of the date industry in which FAO has been assisting the Government since dates form part of the Government's contribution to the feeding programme.

Nutrition education, dietary surveys and development of local foods

5. During the initial period of this feeding programme, information on food supplies and food customs in Libya has been collected by the FAO nutrition expert, which will serve as a basis for developing a sound programme of nutrition education in the schools with the expectation that such a programme could gradually be developed more broadly to improve nutrition conditions generally. A number of possibilities have been revealed for developing local foods and food products which would make an important contribution to long-range improvements in nutrition and in the economic development of the country. Some of these food development

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possibilities will be studied in detail by the food technologist being provided by FAO in the course of 1958.

6. FAO is also expected to provide a nutrition expert for the second half of 1957. This expert would be concerned with a more detailed study of nutrition conditions, including the initiation of dietary surveys and the development of a programme of education in nutrition. Subject to a formal request from the Government for his services, this expert will be continued in 1958.

The need for vitamin A

7. UNICEF aid for the first two years of this programme included the provision of fish-liver-oil capsules at the rate of 100 per child per year. This ration was subsequently reduced to 30 capsules per child per year (E/ICEF/L.1023), pending reports of nutrition experts which are now on file. These reports, from FAO and WHO, indicate that while "there were no signs of unilateral deficiency of proteins, minerals or vitamins giving rise to a classical syndrome of mal-nutrition (oedema, scorbut, rickets, pellagra etc.)...", nevertheless "many school children presented definite signs of vitamin A and riboflavin deficiencies". The report concluded with a recommendation that 100 fish-liver-oil capsules should be provided per child per year, distribution to be made on alternate days during the period October to April.

UNICEF commitments

8. UNICEF would provide the following supplies to meet supplementary requirements of the programme to the end of the school year 1958/59:

	<u>US\$</u>
a) <u>Fish-liver-oil capsules</u> , 11,900,000	26,775
to increase the ration from 30 to 100 capsules per child per year (para.7 above)	
b) <u>Cooking and serving equipment</u> (para.3 above)	<u>4,000</u>
Total supplies and equipment	30,775
c) <u>Freight</u>	<u>2,225</u>
Total recommended allocation	33,000

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FAO participation

9. As indicated above, FAO will provide the services of a nutrition expert for the second half of 1957, and dependent upon a formal request from the Government, will continue this assignment in 1958. The assignment of an FAO food technologist in 1958 will contribute to the development of the overall nutrition programme, particularly to the improved production of local foods.

Government commitments and matching

10. Government commitments and matching will continue as outlined in previous documents to the Board, specifically E/ICEF/L.1023, paragraphs 17 and 18. The Government will provide daily rations to school children of dates, sugar and bread. The matching cost to the Government, as indicated above, will total approximately the equivalent of US\$840,000 for the next two school years, 1957/58 and 1958/59. These funds are raised by the Government from a surtax on imported goods established exclusively for the purpose of financing this programme.