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GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
PART V: PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

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INTRODUCTION

1. The year 1959 was one of measured progress in the government projects in the thirteen countries assisted by UNICEF in the Eastern Mediterranean area. Basic maternal and child welfare services improved moderately during the year. The chief limiting factor is the lack of trained personnel. Due to the generally low level of remuneration and the lack of prestige attached to most public health auxiliary posts, it is difficult to recruit new personnel and to hold qualified personnel in the services. A further limiting factor is the financial inability of some Governments to establish permanent posts.
2. Malaria eradication continued to advance in spite of difficult problems in the six countries receiving this aid from UNICEF. In anti-tuberculosis work the remaining "conventional" BCG campaigns continued with renewed vigour, and progress was also made towards determining the prevalence of the disease in various parts of the Area. Trachoma pilot work continued in three countries, and administrative and technical methods were tested which, it is hoped, will have wide application within these countries as well as in the whole region. Progress was satisfactory - from the point of view of numbers of patients treated - in the field of venereal disease and leprosy control.
3. It has not been possible as yet fully to engage the interest of most of the Governments in the Area in expanded aid to nutrition. The drastic reduction in the supply of cost-free surplus skim milk, however, may well result in Governments looking for local substitutes, and generally becoming more actively concerned with the question of protein-rich foods for mothers and children.
4. Table 1, page 3 shows allocations for programmes in the Eastern Mediterranean by type of programme for the periods 1957, 1958, and 1959.

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TABLE 1

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Programme Allocations, by Type, 1957-1959
(in US Dollars)

	<u>1957</u>		<u>1958</u>		<u>1959</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Basic Maternal and Child Welfare Services	<u>460,000</u>	<u>17.4</u>	<u>541,000</u>	<u>15.2</u>	<u>17,000</u>	<u>0.4</u>
Disease Control	<u>1,107,954</u>	<u>42.0</u>	<u>2,553,000</u>	<u>71.6</u>	<u>2,531,188</u>	<u>61.8</u>
Malaria campaigns	<u>1,045,000^{a/}</u>	<u>39.6^{a/}</u>	<u>2,350,000</u>	<u>65.9</u>	<u>2,167,500</u>	<u>52.9</u>
BCG vaccination	<u>954</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>115,688</u>	<u>2.8</u>
Other TB control	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>152,000</u>	<u>4.3</u>	<u>36,800</u>	<u>0.9</u>
Trachoma and related eye disease control	<u>44,000</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>51,000</u>	<u>1.4</u>	<u>211,200</u>	<u>5.2</u>
Leprosy control	<u>18,000</u>	<u>0.7</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Nutrition	<u>684,000</u>	<u>25.9</u>	<u>202,000</u>	<u>5.6</u>	<u>842,000</u>	<u>20.5</u>
Child Feeding	<u>457,000</u>	<u>17.3</u>	<u>173,000</u>	<u>4.8</u>	<u>484,200</u>	<u>11.8</u>
Milk processing	<u>227,000</u>	<u>8.6</u>	<u>29,000</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>276,000</u>	<u>6.7</u>
Nutrition Education and Activities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>81,800</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Total Long-Range Aid	<u>2,251,954</u>	<u>85.3</u>	<u>3,296,000</u>	<u>92.4</u>	<u>3,390,188</u>	<u>82.7</u>
Emergency Aid	<u>386,404</u>	<u>14.7</u>	<u>270,000</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>709,000</u>	<u>17.3</u>
Grand Total, Programme Allocations	<u>2,638,358</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>3,566,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>4,099,188</u>	<u>100.0</u>

a/ Includes aid for DDT production to the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic totalling \$64,000

5. The low allocation for basic maternal and child welfare services in 1959 reflects the fact that anticipated progress was not achieved in three major countries in the area because of political and economic difficulties. 1960 should see a partial return to the preceding level of allocations in this field of aid. As can be seen from Table 1, tuberculosis and trachoma control projects are receiving greater emphasis; it is expected that they will expand as pilot control measures in the area prove satisfactory. Malaria eradication allocations will expand considerably, with the probable inclusion of the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic during 1960. An interruption of several school feeding projects is foreseen as the result of the anticipated decrease in free powdered skim milk, but there is evidence of deep appreciation on the part of all affected governments of the value of such projects, and several are searching for means to continue. Further developments are anticipated in milk processing, and it is expected that the reduced supply of skim milk powder will increase interest in these projects and in the nutrition education field in general. The larger figure for emergency aid in 1959 reflects the aid approved for Scmaliland under Italian Administration to meet a drought situation early in the year.

BASIC MATERNAL AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

6. Progress was rather slow in 1959 in developing basic maternal and child welfare services. Budgetary and administrative difficulties account for this lack of progress in some countries, and the traditional exclusion of women from a role outside the home hampers developments in some others. In some countries a preference was sometimes given to expenditures for tangible items such as new buildings rather than for less tangible activities such as training. In common with developing countries in other regions, those of the Eastern Mediterranean Area find their treasuries hard pressed by requests for funds for all types of development activities, and the urgent need for public health developments is sometimes crowded out by other more insistent demands.

An example of this is to be found in the Sudan where the Government faces the expense of resettling 50,000 people from the Halfa district which will be flooded following the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

7. Recognition is now being given to the need for a wider and more flexible policy than concentration largely on maternal and child health centres. This new attitude is calling forth greater effort, jointly by UNICEF and WHO, to see where the most effective help can be directed to strengthening the overall basic public health services of assisted countries of which maternal and child health services are a part.

8. The difficulties are manifold. Many of the countries of the Area have restricted budgets and some others with greater means make limited provision for their health services. In the case of Iraq, the new Government has been in power only slightly more than a year and a half and the budget for health must compete with the needs of other government departments as budgetary emphases have necessarily been re-evaluated since the events of July 1958. In the case of Iran the basic MCW services are sponsored both by the Government and by voluntary organizations, presenting a problem of co-ordination. In Turkey experience is proving that the key problem is staffing, particularly by more persons with a public health and social orientation.

9. In general, while the area has suffered from the pressure of conservative public opinion against posts for women in public life, there are distinct signs of increasing feminine participation resulting from the public's growing acceptance of the need for services concerned directly with the health and well-being of children. It is encouraging, for example, to note a greater ease in recruiting women as health trainees in Aden, Libya and the Sudan. In Turkey women readily accept a nursing career but are not eager to work outside cities and hospitals. However the difficulties of recruiting health auxiliaries are not limited to these factors alone. With the small amount of money available for salaries, and with the trying conditions which often prevail in the countryside, it is still difficult to persuade trained workers to return to the villages after they have completed their training and have had a taste of urban life. This has been a problem in the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic where, of 50

new collective rural centres which were to have opened during 1959, it was possible to recruit only enough doctors to open eight. The remaining 42 are scheduled to be staffed and commence operations during 1960. While this problem is not peculiar to this part of the world, it is quite clear that, if basic services are to be developed and maintained for the benefit of the village and rural populations, both the prestige and remuneration of personnel serving these sectors will have to be enhanced.

Special aspects

10. The environmental sanitation project in Ethiopia has been progressing toward the goals set forth in the plan of operations, and training of sanitarians in practical field work has continued. The development of both safe water supply and excreta disposal schemes is basic to the public health of most countries in this area, and requires such a vast investment in money and personnel that the growth of such facilities will of necessity be slow.

11. There are two projects dealing with premature infant care in the Area; both have had difficulty in finding adequate premises for their activities. Of three units provided to Israel, two are fully operative and the third came into limited operation during the year. In the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic one of two units was inaugurated in April 1959 and the second is expected to start in March 1960.

DISEASE CONTROL

Malaria eradication and control

12. Malaria has been the most important single disease attacked on a mass scale by Governments in this area with WHO/UNICEF help. Ten Governments have been assisted, four in a limited way with pilot studies to ascertain whether eradication is feasible, while six contiguous territories are fully engaged in eradication campaigns. One more eradication campaign in the area is considered for possible UNICEF assistance during the next several years. This will be in the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic, where a WHO-assisted pre-eradication survey

is now in process. Should a government request for UNICEF aid materialize, it is expected that the greater part of the insecticide requirement will come from the UNICEF-equipped DDT plant in this country, where production has increased during 1959 to the point where 246 tons of technical DDT were produced during the first nine months of the year. Since this does not approach the 700 tons per annum capacity of the plant, steps are being taken by the Government to improve output. The Government is expected to provide 600 tons of technical DDT annually from the plant for the malaria eradication project, the balance of 100 tons to be made available for other health projects, including typhus control.

13. The grave problems of mosquito resistance to insecticides, nomadism, and administrative shortcomings, continue to be dominant factors in malaria eradication projects. Resistance to DDT had appeared in Iran and Iraq in 1957 and in Turkey in 1958 and was dealt with by a switch to the more expensive insecticide dieldrin during 1958. The past summer has brought to light sporadic resistance to dieldrin in limited areas of Iran. An entire change of strategy may well prove necessary in that country.

14. The problem of nomadism and of seasonal migrations of livestock herders seems no nearer solution this year than last. While nomads are negligible in numbers in many countries of the Area (although they constitute a substantial body in others), their roaming way of life makes even a few of them a persistent threat to complete eradication of malaria, as well as the control of other infectious diseases, among the settled populations through whose lands they may pass.

15. A serious set-back has taken place in the Iraq eradication campaign. It had been expected that a considerable reduction in spraying operations could take place in 1960, but because the administrative and technical machinery necessary to determine whether or not transmission had been continuously interrupted had not been established, and because the recruitment and training of surveillance personnel had not been effected as planned, the full spraying operations of 1959 will have to be repeated in 1960. Faced with this serious and expensive set-back, the Government has now undertaken to establish a special Board, with increased executive powers, to direct malaria eradication. The Government will also strengthen the administrative and technical aspects of the project, and is recruiting additional surveillance agents.

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16. The Board was appraised in September of the major reorganization of the eradication plan in Turkey which aims at overcoming many shortcomings (E/ICEF/R.800). This reorganization is now nearly complete and with the posting of a complete WHO Advisory team to the project - which will remain in Turkey about three years - a new and determined approach to eradication will take place in 1960. This will mean a prolongation of the attack phase by three to four years and greater investments by the Government, WHO and UNICEF than were originally envisaged.

17. A distinctive and welcome feature of the anti-malaria programme in the area during 1959 has been the appointment by WHO of administrative officers to the eradication projects in Iraq and Iran. It will be recalled that a similar officer was appointed in the United Arab Republic (Syrian Region) in 1958. UNICEF, on request of the Government and the WHO Administrative Officer, has provided a transport officer to assist in the organization of a transport and maintenance service.

18. In November a WHO-sponsored regional technical conference on malaria was held at Addis Ababa and the technical, strategic and administrative implications of control and eradication in this region were carefully reviewed.

Tuberculosis control

19. On the whole, progress in the tuberculosis control projects aided by UNICEF in the Area has been encouraging during 1959. There has been a general re-thinking of the strategy to be used in combatting tuberculosis in line with the recommendations of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy. The continuing BCG campaigns, in Ethiopia, Iran and the Sudan, have improved markedly in 1959, with 1958 targets equalled or bettered. As has been true in several other countries in the region, the Sudan plans to continue its BCG activities without UNICEF assistance when current UNICEF supplies have been exhausted. In Turkey the previous west-to-east sweep is being replaced by a decentralized regional organization of the vaccination programme. The present policy in tuberculosis

control is to determine the dimensions of the problem within a country by means of a prevalence survey prior to further planning. UNICEF is helping finance a WHO Regional Survey Team. This Team has finished its work in Libya and is now in Tunisia. From there it is planned to send the team to Jordan, possibly Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Region of the United Arab Republic and then to Iraq; the later itinerary of the team has not yet been decided. A prevalence survey has also been planned for Turkey, using a WHO-advised national team.

20. Another aspect of UNICEF assistance is the training of workers for domiciliary care of tuberculous patients. UNICEF-assisted projects of this type have been planned or are underway in Ethiopia, the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic, Somaliland under Italian administration, and Turkey. Work is actually in progress in the Ethiopian project, while the team for Somaliland will arrive in June 1960, by which time the buildings will have been completed and all supplies and equipment for the TB centre will be in position. In the United Arab Republic (Egyptian Region), the mobile X-ray unit supplied by UNICEF arrived in January 1960; the unit supplied by WHO is already in use. A prevalence survey in Jordan is being assisted by UNICEF partly through a specific allocation to that country and partly through the allocation for the Regional Survey Team.

Syphilis control

21. Of the two syphilis control projects assisted by UNICEF in the Eastern Mediterranean Area, the Ethiopian project has reached a turning point: during the middle of 1959 the beneficiary goals were attained, over 250,000 people being treated. This, however, has been an initial stage only, and the future plans of the project are before this session of the Board (E/ICER/R.862).

22. A small campaign against endemic syphilis (bejel) in Iran has also been assisted by UNICEF under an allocation approved by the Board in March 1956. It is not anticipated that further UNICEF assistance will be required, as the Government can complete its objectives with the penicillin and vehicles already supplied.

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Control of trachoma and related eye diseases

23. Trachoma is one of the most ubiquitous of the serious diseases afflicting the inhabitants of the Eastern Mediterranean Area, and UNICEF is currently assisting pilot projects in Ethiopia, Turkey, and the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic. From these it is hoped to develop treatment methods at moderate cost for dealing with this widespread affliction in a manner which can be fitted in with the local habits and public health services of other countries of the Area. WHO is currently planning other projects with several of the Governments of the Area, and it can be expected that UNICEF assistance will be requested for help in at least some of these. The first will perhaps be Jordan, where the Government and WHO are discussing plans for which UNICEF assistance will probably be requested.

24. Although the project in the Federated State of Eritrea has been under way since 1958, it has only been in the past year that a beginning could be made in Ethiopia proper. Reports from the prevalence survey just completed indicate that the disease appears to be of a low virulence, and perhaps even less prevalent than had been expected from random observations by earlier workers. The treatment phases of the project is now in its first year of operation.

25. The success of the anti-trachoma pilot project in the Governorate of Qalyub, to the north of Cairo, has encouraged the Egyptian Region Government to attempt further trials in two other Governorates where the inhabitants are less sophisticated in matters of public health than in Qalyub. (Qalyub has been the scene of several disease control projects undertaken by the Government, WHO and UNICEF, and the inhabitants are perhaps more health conscious than those of Minya and Sharqiya.) The operation has started on a limited scale in the Governorate of Sharqiya. A wider application of the experimental methods will be attempted in the Governorate of Minya in late 1960.

26. In Turkey the project in 1960 will broaden out from its initial pilot phase into an intensified control programme reaching into seven provinces.

Leprosy control

27. The Ethiopia leprosy control project, the only one in the Area, has improved considerably over 1958, which was a year of consolidation and re-assessment. Approach to the problem of leprosy is presently under review by WHO, and a further recommendation for assistance, embodying WHO's recommendations, will very probably be presented to the autumn session of the Board. It should be noted that during the past year the number of special rural leprosy clinics has increased from 15 to 20. The number of patients registered is now about 50,000, without benefit of active case-finding. In one province leprosy control efforts were integrated into the new provincial public health service.

28. Leprosy is reportedly a public health problem in parts of the Sudan, and the Government estimates an incidence as high as 4 per thousand in the southern provinces. The Government has indicated its intention of developing domiciliary services for the treatment of leprosy and WHO intends to assign an expert in 1961 to help the Government plan and organize its leprosy control services.

NUTRITION

Supplementary feeding

29. During 1959 UNICEF has provided skim milk powder as follows:

<u>Outlet</u>	<u>lbs. of milk</u>	<u>Beneficiaries</u>
Schools (7 countries)	11,592,000	1,004,000
MCW centres and pre-school groups (10 countries)	2,351,000	82,000
Jordan villages	1,090,000	41,000
Somaliland under Italian Administration (famine areas)	1,322,000	250,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	16,355,000	1,377,000

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30. It is too early to judge how successful the pre-school feeding project to 10,000 children through schools and other available distribution points in Ethiopia and Eritrea will be, since distribution has only just commenced. This experiment will be watched with interest, and appears to have made an auspicious start.

31. The projects on which the most detailed reports are received for those operating in the smaller territories in which distribution takes place through an administratively manageable number of MCW centres such as in the Syrian Region of the United Arab Republic, Sudan, Aden Colony and Aden Protectorate. In larger countries the projects are more difficult to organize and administer. Nonetheless in Turkey the Ministry of Education has achieved a remarkable measure of organization in its programme, including a good start in nutrition education in the schools.

32. The powdered skim milk has served a very real purpose in the Area in that the importance of and necessity for a school meal have been established in many countries where successful school feeding projects have taken place. With the likelihood of cost-free surplus milk being drastically reduced, Governments are now reviewing local food resources for possible alternatives.

33. A small quantity of vitamin-enriched skim milk powder has been sent to Iran for distribution in that country in order to determine how long such milk will keep its vitamin potency under field conditions.

34. Owing to the expected decrease in availability of free skim milk, certain diversions have taken place within the Area in order to tide over all school projects until the close of the school year in 1960 and to complete MCW and pre-school distribution until UNICEF-purchased milk can arrive at the end of August 1960.

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Milk conservation projects

35. Progress in the milk conservation projects in the Eastern Mediterranean Area was good during 1959. UNICEF is currently assisting six countries in the Area. Unfortunately, administrative and financial delays were encountered in the plant at Sakha in the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic, and the opening has been delayed to early 1960. The Teheran (Iran) pasteurizing plant continues to process about 40,000 litres per day. Because there is a possibility that private enterprise may soon establish a small plant at Damascus, in the Syrian Region of the United Arab Republic, the Government, FAO and UNICEF are reviewing the situation most carefully as to whether the larger UNICEF-assisted dairy will also be required. The Baghdad (Iraq) milk plant has shown more progress during the past twelve months than in any previous year, thanks to especially vigorous efforts on the part of the Government and UNICEF to complete the project. The plant is scheduled to go into production during the early part of 1960. The Ankara (Turkey) plant had an average throughput of 12,400 litres daily in 1959 - with seasonal peaks up to 16,000, and three concurrent developments taking place will further increase supplies, namely the building of new collecting centres, the planning and installation of a major yoghurt processing unit and better organization of the plant's retail market in the Ankara area. The pasteurization plant in Jerusalem (Israel) is proceeding according to plan: ground has been broken for plant erection and UNICEF supplies are under procurement. In Ethiopia, a traditional milk-drinking country with large numbers of cattle and extensive grazing potential, a request is before the present Board session (E/ICEF/R.859) to assist the Government, in cooperation with the United States International Co-operation Administration and FAO, in setting up milk collecting centres, laboratory control facilities, facilities for training of dairy technicians, and dairy extension work to improve the hygienic production and handling of milk.

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Expanded aid to nutrition

36. There is to date only one project in the Area, in Israel, which comes under the relatively new heading of expanded aid to nutrition. A nutrition survey, training activities in nutrition for workers in the school-feeding service and school gardens have begun to receive UNICEF transport and other supplies previously approved by the Board.

37. In Ethiopia the training of girls as home economists continues very successfully and additional bilateral aid from Sweden has been made available in this field.

38. In the Egyptian Region of the United Arab Republic active consideration is currently being given to a project in the field of expanded nutrition, and it is planned that in co-operation with FAO and WHO a survey will be launched covering the health and nutritional status and food habits of different population groups, to be followed by practical expanded nutritional activities to ameliorate the less desirable conditions which may be found. It is anticipated that UNICEF assistance will be requested, perhaps during 1960.

39. In Libya, where a very successful school-feeding programme has been in operation for some time, consideration has been given to ways and means of improving school garden projects and to finding other supplementary foods for the school feeding programme in view of the present situation regarding surplus skim milk. In connexion with the efforts to improve nutritional education in the schools, an FAO consultant has produced a booklet in Arabic for use in the schools and health centres. The booklet is principally concerned with the teaching of health and nutrition education, but also covers school gardening.

40. In Turkey it is hoped to broaden the school feeding programme into an expanded nutrition project starting with a small number of pilot schools and communities.

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SOCIAL SERVICES

41. A recommendation is being submitted to the present Board session for a social services project in Turkey (E/ICEF/R.861). Reorientation training is planned for personnel responsible for children under the age of fourteen primarily from residential institutions. The number of state and private organizations caring for young children in Turkey is such that training is a necessary first step to any progress in this field. A similar project (E/ICEF/R.879) is also submitted for the United Arab Republic (Egyptian Region).

EMERGENCY AID

42. The various aspects of the Jordan emergency project have been outlined in document E/ICEF/R.743 presented to the Board in September 1959 and requesting continued assistance through the first quarter of 1961 to some 50,000 beneficiaries living in the Jordanian villages along the demarcation line.

43. Voluntary agencies doing relief work or operating institutions such as boarding schools and orphanages in the border villages area are now taking a more active part in the implementation of this project by serving food commodities provided by UNICEF in the form of hot meals directly to children of the area. In addition to rice, sugar and fats, UNICEF also provides soap to this project. The bulk of these commodities are distributed in dry form with the assistance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which assumes responsibility for the warehousing, transportation and distribution of the goods.

44. The rice, powdered milk and lentils which were allocated by mail poll approved in April 1959 to meet a famine situation arising as a result of severe drought in some parts of the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration are credited with having saved many lives. The distribution is still continuing in one or two sections where drought conditions were most severe. Assistance was required principally for the inhabitants of settled towns and villages as, for the most part, the nomads can count on their camels for both milk and meat, and were thus less affected than the more settled population. The Trusteeship Council at its twenty-fourth session in August 1959 (A/ 4100, Part II, Chapter III, para.218) expressed appreciation to UNICEF for the assistance given to the Government of Somalia in this instance.

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Completed project: United Arab Republic (Syrian Region) - Mycosis

45. Transfer of title of the UNICEF-supplied equipment for the mycosis project in the Syrian Region of the United Arab Republic will shortly take place. Mycosis is a fungus disease of the scalp limited largely to children, and is fairly prevalent (in scattered foci) in the area. The Syrian Government, after having established four static x-ray centres for the treatment of the disease requested international aid in 1953 when it was determined that these centres were unable effectively to reach and treat all of the children involved. WHO provided a dermatologist and a radiologist during 1954 and 1955 to train Syrian personnel in the latest techniques of mycosis control and UNICEF supplied two stationary x-ray machines, a mobile x-ray unit, transport and miscellaneous supplies. Although it had been estimated that as many as 50,000 children would require x-ray treatment over a three-year period, it proved necessary to treat only about 18,000 out of a total of 126,000 examined. The rate of relapses and reinfections has not exceeded 7.2 per cent. In addition to continuing clinical examination of children everywhere in the Syrian Region, the Government has instituted a systematic check of all children entering schools. It is now in position to continue the project with its own resources.
