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Date 2003-Nov-28  
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CF-RAD-USAA-DB01-2000-09391

Ill Document Register Number [auto] **CF-RAD-USAA-DB01-2000-09391**

ExRef: Document Series / Year / Number **E/ICEF/1962/450 (PDF-Eng)**

Doc Item Record Title

**Recommendations of 13th Session of UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee of Health  
Policy - Note by the Executive Director (PDF Version)**

Date Created / On Doc  
1962-Apr-27

Date Registered  
1997-Jan-01

Date Closed / Superseeded

Primary Contact  
Owner Location **Office of the Secretary, Executive Bo = 3024**  
Home Location **Office of the Secretary, Executive Bo = 3024**  
Current Location **Record & Archive Manage Related Functions=80669443**

1: In Out Internal, Rec or Conv Copy?

Fd2: Language, Orig Pub Dist **English , L.Avail: E,F,S ; L.Orig: E-?**

Fd3: Doc Type or Format

Container File Folder Record  
Container Record (Title)

Nu1: Number of pages  
0

Nu2: Doc Year  
1962

Nu3: Doc Number  
450

Full GCG File Plan Code

Da1: Date Published  
1962-Apr-27

Da2: Date Received

Da3: Date Distributed

Priority

If Doc Series?: **CF/RA/DS/USAA/DB01/2001-0024**

Record Type **A04 Doc Item: E/ICEF 1946 to 1997 Ex Bd**

DOS File Name

Electronic Details

No Document

Alt Bar code = RAMP-TRIM Record Numb : **CF-RAD-USAA-DB01-2000-09391**

Notes

Document Format Series/Year/SubSeries/Number/Rev: E/ICEF/1962/450; Doc

Series/SubSeries/Year/Number/Rev: E/ICEF/1962/450

Doc Series: E/ICEF; Series Valid date on import: 01-Jan-1946; Doc Year: 1962; Doc Number: 0450; Doc

Print Name of Person Submit Images

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# UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



DISTR.  
GENERAL

E/ICEF/450  
27 April 1962

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND  
Executive Board

## UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY Recommendations of the thirteenth session

### Note by the Executive Director

1. The Executive Board has before it the report of the thirteenth session of the UNICEF/WHO Committee on Health Policy (JCHP), which was held at Geneva on 31 January and 1 February 1962 (E/ICEF/444). The report includes recommendations concerning UNICEF assistance in three types of activity (tuberculosis control, filarial infections and programmes for infants of low birth weight) in the light of the technical advice of WHO. The Executive Director offers the following comments on these recommendations.

#### Tuberculosis control

2. The recommendations of the JCHP, particularly the specific recommendation in paragraph 6.3(b) of the report (E/ICEF/444) would lead to a moderate expansion of UNICEF aid towards developing national control programmes. Whereas at present UNICEF aid is limited to national pilot areas, the JCHP is recommending that, under specified conditions, this aid be extended gradually beyond the initial pilot project area. The JCHP is also recommending maintenance of current UNICEF policies in support of BCG vaccination and the distribution of drugs through existing tuberculosis control centres.

3. During recent years, UNICEF has been receiving government requests for aid in tuberculosis control measures beyond the national pilot area. If the recommendations of the JCHP on this subject were adopted, UNICEF would be permitted to meet some of these requests. The programme forecast presented to the Board in the report of the Executive Director on "Programme Trends and Prospects" (E/ICEF/447/Add.1, para. 62), envisages a moderate increase in the volume of

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UNICEF aid to tuberculosis control, from \$1.4 million committed in 1962 to \$2 million in 1964. The Executive Director considers that this recommendation of the JCHP could be accommodated within the financial plans of UNICEF for the next triennium.

4. These financial estimates are based on the assumption that the current limitations on UNICEF's provision of drugs (in particular, drugs other than isoniazid) would be maintained. Specifically, it is assumed that for the time being "companion drugs" to isoniazid would be provided only to pilot projects and the extension of them, as indicated to the Board in December 1961 (E/ICEF/P/L.153).

5. The Executive Director also welcomes the statement of the JCHP (E/ICEF/444, para. 6.7) concerning the importance of associated socio-economic factors (nutrition, housing and so forth) in the ultimate elimination of tuberculosis as a public health problem. To the degree that Governments are able to plan more comprehensively for the child and his family, there will result a broader and more effective attack on tuberculosis and other diseases which reflect the social environment.

#### Filarial infections

6. The recommendations of the JCHP (E/ICEF/444, para. 7) would bring UNICEF, for the first time, into the control of filarial infections. There is no doubt that these infections are an extremely serious problem for children in many parts of the world. The JCHP is recommending that for the time being UNICEF assistance be offered only on a limited scale for pilot projects. The Executive Director considers that this extension of UNICEF assistance could be financed within the pattern of UNICEF aid envisaged in the programme forecast for disease control for the next triennium (E/ICEF/447/Add.1, para.62).

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Programmes for infants of low birth weight

7. The recommendations of the JCHP on programmes for infants of low birth weight (E/ICEF/444, para.8) represent a clarification and confirmation of current UNICEF practice. These recommendations will serve as a useful guide in planning measures for such infants in the future. They are unlikely to alter the financial plans of UNICEF as presented in the programme forecasts for the next triennium.

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