

Main Trends in UNICEF's Policy: 1947-1980

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This review highlights the evolution of UNICEF's main policies in the years 1946 to the beginning of the decade of the 1980's. It is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented at a colloquium of UNICEF National Committees in Warsaw in September 1985. The views expressed here are solely those of the author.

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## I. Emergency phase--aid to war-affected children: 1946-1950

When one recalls the fundamental division amongst the allied powers that emerged so vehemently in the summer of 1946 about the continuation of the enormous post-war, life-saving, efforts of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, it seems a real miracle that agreement was reached to continue basic assistance to children and mothers in the war-stricken countries in Europe and in China. It resulted from a consensus amongst governments, largely influenced by the passionate and skillful interventions of highly committed personalities who were seriously concerned by the untimely end of UNRRA's operations. UNICEF represented a continuation, through the United Nations, of a large-scale international humanitarian effort to reach children and mothers.

The terms laid down by the United Nations for UNICEF stipulated that all children victims of aggression and those whose health had been imperiled were eligible for aid. They were to be reached "on the basis of need without discrimination because of race, creed, nationality status, or political belief." These basic principles laid the basis for UNICEF to aid children regardless of existing political divisions. It entitled UNICEF to offer its collaboration in countries torn by civil war as in China, or separated by different occupation zones as in Germany.

A novel feature was the agreements which UNICEF negotiated with all participating governments which placed the responsibility for executing agreed programme plans squarely into the hands of the governments. The programmes represented a joint effort which, while giving priority to post-war relief, was aimed at helping to strengthen the permanent child health and welfare services of the countries. This was reflected in the famous matching formula which UNICEF refined further in later years. The right of UNICEF to station missions in the receiving countries helped to develop a constructive relationship not only with receiving but also donor governments.

This promising phase of providing essential aid to children as well as helping in the rehabilitation and strengthening of national services was terminated prematurely in a number of Eastern European countries largely because of serious political divisions which had begun to arise between East and West.

During this period the Fund acquired considerable experience in supply operations. Large quantities of milk powder and fats were provided for supplementary feeding of up to 7 million children, raw materials for the manufacture of clothing and shoes for 6 million children, and medical supplies to cope with epidemics and social diseases.

It is a tribute to the farsightedness of UNICEF's early leaders that the composition of the aid programme reflected a recognition of the interrelated needs of the child for improved nutrition and protection against major contagious diseases, combining the more immediate first aid with rehabilitation efforts aimed at reactivating the countries' own resources. For example, the large-scale distribution of milk powder from overseas was early on complemented by strenuous endeavours to rehabilitate the local milk industry in European countries and thus continue the distribution to children of free or subsidized milk produced locally. The provision of raw materials

for clothing and shoes created opportunities to put factories and artisans back to work. UNICEF joined in a partnership with the Scandinavian Red Cross Societies in mass testing and vaccination campaigns against tuberculosis using BCG vaccine. This initiative and experience laid the foundation for modern TB control in Europe, helping to introduce a fundamental new concept of public health by strengthening the preventive aspects of medical services.

Early on UNICEF began aiding efforts to reorient and train health workers. In Europe, through various group-training courses and through the International Children's Centre in Paris and the Child Health Institute in London, efforts were made to win over paediatricians and public health specialists to support the introduction of the fundamentals of preventive and social medicine in hitherto largely clinically-oriented curricula. In China the first successful experiments were initiated in areas controlled by the Communist Government through the training of large numbers of paraprofessional health staff and village people for the delivery of simple health care. The refusal of the United Nations to seat Communist China was a major factor in the government's decision to bring this collaboration to a premature end, and with it a first pioneering effort in primary health care.

UNICEF had to raise the bulk of its funds from voluntary contributions by governments every year. This contributed to establishing a constructive relationship between participating donor and receiving countries. It worked in both directions; receiving governments learned to understand the interests and concerns of donors, and donor countries increasingly came to appreciate the difficulties participating countries were facing in their development endeavours.

A world-wide voluntary fund-raising effort of the postwar period, the United Nations Appeal for Children, promulgated indefatigably by its originator, Aake Ording of Norway, became the first major source of contributions to UNICEF from individuals.

This unique, one-time initiative was later to receive added dimensions as a result of the "thank you" painting of the little Czech girl, Djitka, which was chosen as the first greeting card of UNICEF in 1949. The sale of greeting cards became a major fund-raising device exploited intelligently by the UNICEF National Committees, many of which were established in the 50's. They helped to make the name and humanitarian work of UNICEF well-known in the industrialized countries.

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Although these early years seem far removed from UNICEF's present preoccupations, they do show how the architects and dreamers that helped to create UNICEF laid a solid foundation of basic principles and experience which have continued to influence UNICEF throughout the years.

## II. Reaching out to developing regions: 1950-1959

In the summer of 1950 a critical discussion began in the United Nations regarding the future of UNICEF. The United States and many industrialized countries visualized UNICEF only as a temporary creation to prolong some of the emergency relief work of UNRRA. They believed that a continuous concern for children should be absorbed by the more permanent United Nations agencies which were starting their operations at that time and in which the supply element would play a minor roles.

However, number of delegates from developing countries had watched how UNICEF had applied itself with growing success to its task in war-affected countries in Europe, and had made small starts in Asia and Latin America with health and nutrition projects. They were all too familiar with the serious, and in many places appalling, conditions of their own children back home. Under the leadership of the Pakistani and Brazilian delegates and through vigorous advocacy and hard negotiations at the United Nations, they won a three-year extension of UNICEF with major emphasis on the long-term problems of child health and welfare in developing countries - the "silent" emergencies. In 1953, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously agreed on an indefinite continuation of UNICEF.

At the beginning UNICEF had little experience in third world countries. The postwar emergency programmes undertaken in Europe were obviously unsuited to meet the massive problems in developing countries. As a start, UNICEF in the late 1940's initiated broad-based surveys in both Asia and Latin America by eminent child and public health specialists who engaged in wide-ranging discussions with the governments of these regions, tried to assess the needs of children and formulated the first outlines of priority programmes for UNICEF. High infant and child mortality rates prevailed as a result of rampant infectious diseases, child-rearing practices and malnutrition. In addition, in many countries the administrative and technical structures inherited from a recent colonial past were in no way geared toward development objectives and the advancement of people. However, the limited range of UNICEF-aided programmes offered a possibility to begin to tackle endemic diseases and harmful child-bearing and rearing practices. No immediate adequate resources seemed to be available to meet other needs with the exception of limited milk distribution and some educational efforts amongst women.

In contrast to Asia and Latin America, UNICEF started its operations in the Middle East more accidentally by extending emergency aid to children of Palestine refugees in 1949 at the request of the United Nations representative, Count Folke Bernadotte. This led UNICEF to take an interest in the problems of the local population that were at the time probably in a worse condition. No initial survey or wide-ranging discussion with governments took place at the outset, which explains to some extent the pragmatic and modest beginnings in that area.

UNICEF's entry into Africa did not take place until 1952. It was considered the responsibility of the Colonial Powers to look after the interest of the local populations. The responsible powers in Africa had created their own technical cooperative agencies and, only as a concession to the United Nations invited UNICEF, WHO and FAO - the more humanitarian and technical agencies of the United Nations - to work in African territories on a limited basis.

Thanks to the advocacy of Ralph Bunche at United Nations headquarters and some spirited Board members, a start was made with some programmes in the field of malaria control in West Africa and child nutrition in Central Africa. Led by Dr. Roland Marti, its first representative in Africa, UNICEF participated in pioneering work for the benefit of African children and mothers. In English-speaking territories it helped expand more advanced health delivery systems, combining health and medical services with the beginning of a more active participation of village communities. The

potential of womens' movements for improved child care and nutrition began to be recognized. The organization and further development of mass campaigns set up originally to cope with sleeping sickness and gradually adapted later to deal with other mass diseases such as yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis and malaria was more typical for the French-speaking territories and presented another extraordinary field of learning for UNICEF.

Newly discovered drugs seemed to lend themselves to easy application in developing countries in mass campaigns adapted from existing systems of mobile services. The discovery of penicillin and its miracle effects on yaws, the experience in Europe with BGG to prevent tuberculosis, the hope for leprosy patients through the use of dapsone tablets, and the application of modern insecticides to fight malaria were the most striking example of such modern warfare against endemic diseases largely affecting children. Experience with the new mass campaigns was relatively quick to yield the lesson that most of the technical interventions could relatively easily be applied. But the organizational and logistic problems were far more difficult to overcome, as were also the problems of assuring a willing participation of the community and obtaining political support at various governmental levels. Remarkable and committed specialists in communicable disease control from WHO and health agencies in the countries contributed a great deal to guide these early efforts:

In these years of wide coverage against communicable diseases which enriched the experience of the countries, UNICEF, and its main United Nations partner WHO, a major contribution was made by Sam Keeny, UNICEF Regional Director in Asia. The campaigns helped the countries lay the foundation for a more modern public health structure in these countries.

UNICEF also began to give emphasis to integrating often isolated MCH services with basic health systems, thus giving them a wider dimension. This required adaptations in aid policy to provide not only supplies and equipment but also local funds for the training of large numbers of health auxiliaries and paraprofessionals. There was also need to establish a link with other services like education, welfare and community development and win them as potential allies. This inevitably enhanced the role of governments in coordinating the multiple efforts and exploring ways to assure a modicum of community involvement.

In the early fifties, the availability of skim milk at concessional prices from surplus-producing countries led suddenly to a considerable expansion of supplementary feeding. While this had some positive effects on child nutrition, it presented enormous problems of organization and required considerable local financing: Local administrators and UNICEF staff began to think of more suitable indigenous solutions to meet nutritional deficiencies. UNICEF aid was given to encourage village communities to grow more protective

food, vegetables and legumes, as well as build fish ponds and raise poultry in their back gardens. A combined approach of education involving demonstration and nutrition education was devised to convince local authorities, parents and community leaders of the advantages of applied forms of nutrition activities.

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Thus UNICEF gradually began to move from being mainly a humanitarian aid-providing organization to being a development agency with special emphasis on children. Resourceful national and local administrators, leading child health specialists and nutritionists, as well as responsive UNICEF staff in the field all contributed to this metamorphosis. Projects could no longer be examined at a central point in the organization on the basis of somewhat rigid criteria; they had to reflect the influence of local forces and conditions. A basically healthy dialogue between national staff and UNICEF field personnel, supported by technical advisors from the various United Nations agencies, particularly in the field of communicable disease control and nutrition, ensured that UNICEF staff in the field acquired valuable knowledge of the countries and conditions of children. They also accumulated more practical experience in the operation of programmes. Changes in programme policies and new endeavours were much enriched by the initiatives taken by field staff and through healthy exchanges within the UNICEF structure. The Executive Board went along with the changes, with some reservations on occasion by representatives of some of the contributing industrialized countries which continued to exercise the more dominant role in the Board. By the mid-fifties, UNICEF was definitely setting its eyes on a development approach.

### III. Introduction of the country approach: 1960-1969

While countries in Asia matured and a whole range of new independent countries from Africa joined the world community, the experience UNICEF acquired in the fifties brought about a fundamental change in the principles of its collaboration with participating countries. UNICEF was prepared to enter into a new form of partnership with countries, working with them to assess the needs of their children and to set the priorities on which to concentrate. It was in line with, and helped encourage, the growing sense of confidence countries were gaining in their ability and determination to influence their own development.

The introduction of the country approach was closely associated with the name of two UNICEF senior staff members, Dr. Georges Sicault who conceived the idea, and E.J.R. Heyward, who helped to get it across. They came up with a bold initiative in launching a world-wide survey of the needs of children with the close collaboration of developing countries and the technical agencies of the UN. The far-reaching results were not foreseen by many. A concept emerged of supporting countries in efforts to take into account the whole child whose growing needs - intellectual, affective and vocational - had to be met as well as its physical demands. It recognized that one could not concentrate on children in isolation but had to consider their needs in an interrelated way within the framework of the family, the community and the society, each exercising its particular influence on the growth of children and through which children could be reached.

It also brought out the realization that whereas UNICEF-assisted programmes had been able to reach about 55 million children, by the end of the fifties there were in the world some 550 million underprivileged children. All of this influenced the conclusion that children had to be seen as an important element in development which required a far more systematic approach encompassing identification of policy objectives in national planning, priorities in allocation of resources, and more adequate preparation of manpower. Much greater mobilization of public opinion was also needed.

This approach also broadened of UNICEF's views about fund-raising. UNICEF no longer concentrated exclusively on raising its own resources but also lent its weight to encourage other aid agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, to increase total resources for the strengthening of programmes benefiting children in developing countries.

UNICEF wanted to be considered a serious partner in overall development, but the economists and planners were not yet prepared to accept this. UNICEF took the initiative to advocate these ideas in special gatherings, starting with the ground-breaking meeting in Bellagio, Italy, in the spring of 1964, where for the first time eminent child specialists and paediatricians, like Professor Robert Debré of France, and welfare administrators such as Ludovico Montini of Italy came together with economists, planners and researchers such as V.K.R.V. Rao of India, Jan Tinbergen of the Netherlands and Ahmed Ben Salah of Tunisia, to analyse and discuss this new dimension of a better preparation and protection of children in planning, teaching and research. Such exchanges were repeated later in UNICEF-supported inter-governmental regional conferences in Bangkok, Addis Ababa, Santiago, Lomé and Guatemala. These appraisals, focussing on how to plan for young human resources in the context of national development, contributed greatly to awaken the conscience and interest of key decision makers, planners and others to the importance of the hitherto neglected resource. The name of Dr. Edward Iwaskiewicz who was in charge of UNICEF's efforts for planning for children in national development, will always be associated with this activity.

In retrospect, it appears that UNICEF may not have been sufficiently adroit in fully exploiting this unprecedented entry, using improved methods to help countries analyse their basic children's problems and interpret their results, and to develop alternative models that could have provided more practical answers to the problems and difficulties which countries had identified in the process of examination.

The new country approach stimulated a considerable broadening and refinement of the traditional fields of UNICEF's collaboration. The concentration on the development of basic health services almost absorbed the earlier specific concern for mother and child health. At the same time it became increasingly clear that the rate of expansion of existing health services would still cover only a relatively small percentage of the population living in rural or urban fringe areas. There was, therefore, a growing recognition of the need for more innovative and economic methods to reach unserved population groups. This fuelled critical thinking in both WHO and UNICEF.

Encouraged by the early success in interrupting transmission of malaria through the application of insecticides, WHO/PAHO in the mid-1950's, with the enthusiastic support of Robert Daveé, UNICEF's Regional Director in the

Americas, devised a revolutionary strategy for the eradication of malaria. Through a carefully planned attack in the areas of transmission it was expected to eliminate the disease as a major public health problem within a period of a few years. Considerable resources were mobilized by UNICEF/WHO and bilateral agencies for eradication campaigns primarily in Latin America and the Middle East. Bilateral agencies, primarily USAID, provided broad support in Asia, rounding up the regional malaria eradication approaches.

After a number of years of continued and increasing support, it became apparent that the promised success had eluded the campaign. Technical and logistic problems were increasing, vector resistance appeared, and the financial burden could no longer be sustained. There were also searching questions as to whether UNICEF was justified in allocating a large percentage of its resources to this mass disease, therefore, leaving much less for other child needs. Reluctantly UNICEF and other organizations had to give up a regional approach towards eradication without achieving their original hopes. Nevertheless, by 1964, some 680 million persons from previously malarious areas were then living completely or nearly free of malaria, and some 2 million persons, most of them children, were being saved each year. Unfortunately, malaria has made a steady comeback since the mid-1970's. At this stage eradication cannot be achieved without a new scientific breakthrough, probably a vaccine.

The malaria campaigns, however, reached into communities never previously served by health services and showed the feasibility of large overall utilization of volunteers in health activities. They also made clear by the mid-1960's that disease control campaigns, after an intensive attack phase should be integrated into permanent health and welfare structures providing a range of measures for the protection of children.

Assistance to rural water supply and sanitation took an enormous step forward. From a limited approach to secure safe sources of water for small hospitals and schools, UNICEF moved to a much more ambitious phase for the provision of water in difficult rural areas. This included assistance through scientific means for the search of water, provision of sophisticated drilling equipment and the installation of pumps and reservoirs. Technical staff had to be trained in the handling of this machinery. Experience taught UNICEF to give far more attention to associating rural communities with all phases of these programmes and to start early with the education and demonstration of essential measures of improved sanitation and hygiene. Progress was marked by periods when the fascination with the engineering and public works aspects ran ahead of public health considerations, in particular the need to protect a safe source of water from reinfection - an inherent unbalance that has never been entirely overcome. This UNICEF activity has proved very popular with donor governments, which have provided substantial earmarked contributions for work in this field.

The concern for water supply also triggered an interest in applied rural technology for the preservation and preparation of food, improved sanitation, and economical use of domestic fuel. Although UNICEF's help was welcomed in many places, it was not sufficiently pursued in a systematic way.

With the increase in population and related attention to food and nutrition needs of populations in developing countries, child nutrition had to be conceived in a wider framework as part of national planning with more



adjustment to the economic aspects of agricultural production. Far greater emphasis had equally to be given to the education of community leaders, women's groups and local authorities. Isolated voices which had been warning about the neglect of breast-feeding began to be listened to more seriously. The provision of larger quantities of surplus food, e.g., powdered milk, was to be left to the responsibility of the World Food Programme.

Relatively early, UNICEF took the leadership amongst United Nations agencies and private agencies to promote both research and practical application of appropriate types of weaning food for young children. Research and experimentation was encouraged in various regions with a wide range of protein-calorie food mixtures based on available raw materials and technical know-how. In order to meet the obvious demand for a proper weaning food in urban areas, UNICEF at first gave preference to the erection of plants for the industrial production of different types of weaning foods, starting in the Eastern Mediterranean region. A number of problems had to be worked out, ranging from securing adequate use of locally available and cheap agricultural products to management and marketing.

An Advisory Group in which both United Nations and private agencies were represented became part of the United Nations dealing with the aspects of nutrition in developing countries that could benefit from an interdisciplinary approach. The work of this group had, on the whole, a positive effect on the development of coordinated policies in the field of nutrition, including the introduction of rational and methodical approaches to the identification of nutritional problems at both national and local levels.

UNICEF's new look ignited a much greater interest in primary education, spilling over to certain subjects such as a basic science and pre-vocational preparation for early school leavers. It was a time when developing countries subscribed enthusiastically to the ideal of universal education. However this period was marked by insufficient regard to the content and appropriateness of education in relation to each country's development objectives and resources.

The concern for a more adequate preparation for life for both early school leavers and children without adequate basic education led to a series of innovative pilot projects in pre-vocational education, as well as attempts by ILO and UNICEF to draw on their experience and formulate an appropriate policy. Though undoubtedly a subject of great concern to many developing countries which were seriously perturbed by the lack of adequate preparation of their younger generations, clear-cut answers were still a long way off. Nevertheless, there were some interesting lessons where both content and methods for a more practical preparation had been integrated with an educational process. However, they were felt by some to be too far removed from the concern for the early periods of life. It is to be regretted that UNICEF did not pursue these early trials.

The provision by UNICEF of supplies and equipment had been very important in the post-war period in helping to strengthen social programming. Later the scarcity of hard currencies, tight local budgets, and the low priority given to social programmes in developing countries were added reasons why UNICEF's ability to provide much-needed essential supplies became of paramount importance. UNICEF supply staff developed an extraordinary ability to make intelligent use of local currency contributions all over the world, a skill much envied by other United Nations organizations. They also realized early

the enormous savings that could be made by introducing bulk purchasing on a competitive basis and assembling supplies most in demand at a central place, thus giving birth to the idea of the Copenhagen central warehouse and packaging center.

The range of supplies over the years widened considerably. From simple articles utilized for mass campaigns and equipment for health centers and schools, UNICEF moved to procure far more sophisticated equipment for water supplies, milk conservation plants, educational printing facilities, production of sera and vaccine, agricultural tools, etc. Transport, which became a major investment for UNICEF, was provided to facilitate mobility in mass campaigns, encourage supervision, and get trainees out into the countryside. Problems occurred at the beginning as a result of inadequate attention to proper maintenance and lack of introduction of modern concepts of vehicle management.

There was also increasing pressure from the field to make far greater use of local supply purchasing opportunities and help to build up production facilities in the countries themselves. At times there may have been a tendency to search for the most modern and at times sophisticated supplies and equipment without enough attention to the knowledge and environment needed at the local level for the proper use and maintenance of such imported supplies. In the early UNICEF period the predominant preoccupation was with the availability of supplies and the programming process was very much influenced by this. Later, however, a dialogue developed between those involved in programming and those engaged in supply procurement--a dialogue which was not without differences in emphasis. The supply function of UNICEF continues to be a very important element in its work.

The Executive Board had always exercised a greater degree of initiative in formulating policies. During this period a number of Board delegates from the developed countries had become more familiar with conditions in developing countries, in part through field observation visits encouraged by the UNICEF secretariat. Later delegates from developing countries began to gain greater influence in the Board.

In addition, at the various regional planning conferences for children, UNICEF was suddenly confronted with planners, experts, and officials from many more countries from the third world who gained a first opportunity to take part in broad-ranging policy discussions as responsible participants. They brought into the discussion a refreshing realism and interest in new initiatives.

On five occasions the Executive Board held sessions in developing regions - Bangkok (1964), Addis Ababa (1966), Santiago (1969), Manila (1977), and Mexico City (1979). In addition to UNICEF's regular business, these sessions, which drew larger attendance from the region, gave special attention to the needs and possibilities of UNICEF-supported action in the region. They also provided additional valuable opportunities for Board delegates to observe programmes in the field .

One perennial debate in the Executive Board concerned the scope of UNICEF. This was carried out between partisans of readiness to experiment and take risks to open new frontiers and enlarge UNICEF's role as a promoter, adviser and catalyst on behalf of children, and those concerned about a too

unbridled expansion, who counselled greater concentration on fields more directly concerned with the protection and development of the young child lest UNICEF lose its special impact and identity.

As indicated above, the gradual application of the country approach led to an increasingly close partnership between UNICEF and developing countries in all phases of the elaboration of national policies affecting children, the formulation of concrete plans, and their execution and review. UNICEF facilitated this process not only through the increases in resources it could make available to countries for this purpose but through financial commitments stretching over a longer period of several years.

UNICEF also sought to take much greater advantage of the knowledge and experience of regional and national institutions and their staff for applied research, studies, formulation of plans of operations, and the elaboration of technical and managerial concepts in UNICEF-assisted programmes. This did not occur without some considerable discussions with some of the specialized agencies in the United Nations system which initially had difficulties in recognizing the potential of this natural source of technical assistance.

The introduction of the country approach necessitated a greater delegation of authority to the field since the main dialogue on programmes increasingly took place at the country level. At the same time, the widening of UNICEF's programme scope called for a number of measures to maintain adequate control over operations. Programme policies had to be spelled out and guidelines more clearly established.

The Executive Board periodically reviewed criteria for the equitable apportionment of aid amongst countries at different levels of development, and as a result UNICEF aid to least developed countries increased threefold per child.

Selected programme areas were now periodically reviewed at sessions of the Executive Board on the basis of detailed appraisals and evaluation worked out both with the countries and the various specialized agency partners. These reviews, which included a critical retrospective analysis as well as recommendations for the future, played an increasingly important role in the determination of UNICEF's programme orientation. The Board also repeatedly demanded a more systematic approach to regular programme reviews and evaluations in the field.

The need to explain UNICEF's new ventures to donor countries and the demand for additional resources led to a much-needed recasting of relations with UNICEF National Committees. This involved their acceptance as responsible members of the UNICEF family, along with the Executive Board and the secretariat, as they continued in their important role, with the help of thousands of volunteers, in helping generate an understanding in industrialized countries of the needs of children in the developed countries and the value of support for the work of UNICEF.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly late in 1959, provided an impetus within UNICEF, to a new look at the child. Some years had elapsed since UNICEF shifted its major emphasis from emergency relief to aid for programmes of long-range benefit to children of developing countries. While the pragmatic

approach of the Fund had resulted in remarkable achievements, the future orientation and scope of UNICEF became a predominant issue in the UNICEF secretariat and Board. The General Assembly's affirmation that UNICEF provided a practical vehicle of international cooperation to help countries carry out the Declaration's aims provided support for the view within UNICEF that it should widen its horizons.

The award of the Nobel Peace prize to UNICEF in 1965 was both a silent tribute to the outstanding work of its first Executive Director, Maurice Pate, and a solemn recognition of what UNICEF had already achieved in its first twenty years in contributing to the idea of peace through its concern for children all over the world.

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The sixties was thus marked by a bold move to look at children in a national context and with a far greater responsible participation of countries as UNICEF sought to fit its programme interests into wider development concerns of governments. It was a period of lively and challenging expansion. The promotional role of UNICEF in advocating policies benefiting the child gained prominence, and the alliance between the Executive Board, the secretariat and the participating countries was strengthened.

#### IV. National policy and local responsibility: 1970-1979

The oil crisis and the increase in prices for industrial products and food shocked the world economy and affected developing countries severely. In order to draw attention to the serious situation of children who were amongst the first victims of this recession, the Executive Board in 1974 issued a Declaration of an Emergency for Children. Its aim was to warn governments and international public opinion that services for children should not be sacrificed by measures to mitigate a difficult economic situation. The Declaration also became a factor in UNICEF's efforts to raise more funds through the greater use of an innovative "noted projects" contribution system introduced in the mid-1960's. This gave interested donor governments, and private contributors mostly through UNICEF National Committees an opportunity to earmark support for projects in which they had a particular interest.

Although the Declaration was helpful as a goal, it did not have the impact on the "silent" emergencies that had been hoped for. It did, however, sharpen UNICEF's preoccupation with, and searching examination for, ways to help countries cope with the serious impact of unprecedented difficulties on vulnerable groups.

The period was also marked by the occurrence of serious emergencies, many caused by natural catastrophes such as typhoons (Bangladesh, Indochina), and drought in the Sahelian belt of Africa. Others were man-made disasters, e.g., the civil war in Nigeria, the critical situation in Indochina after the peace talks in Paris, the emergence of Bangladesh as a new country after the Pakistan-Indian war, the smouldering murderous civil war in Lebanon, and the very precarious situation in Kampuchea and on its western border after the fall of the Khmer Rouge.

More than previously, UNICEF was actively involved in providing emergency relief to children and mothers in those difficult situations. This was partly due to the exceptional nature and magnitude of the emergencies; also partly because UNICEF had earned a reputation of impartiality and effectiveness in the first phase of immediate aid and was alert at early stages to the need to link up with the rehabilitation period. In certain cases UNICEF felt obliged to take over some operational tasks and showed its inventiveness in devising new systems of aid. UNICEF also showed particular aptitude in raising funds in response to such dramatic situations.

In Indochina UNICEF set up a special secretariat group to direct operations in the countries and maintain frequent contact with donor countries. UNICEF field representatives demonstrated a special capacity to deal with the sensitive situation in Vietnam after so many years of murderous warfare. They helped to rebuild the primary school system by importing entire prefabricated buildings or components of buildings and to strengthen the simple but effective primary health care system set up during the war. Throughout the tragic period in Lebanon, UNICEF's field staff showed remarkable resourcefulness and courage in coping with a continuously changing situation so as to reach children and mothers of all religious and political communities in critical emergency situations. At the same time UNICEF embarked on a huge reconstruction programme in the south to restore the social infrastructure of hospitals, schools and water supply systems with funds contributed by Arab countries or raised by UNICEF itself. In Kampuchea UNICEF had to assume the role of lead agency of the United Nations system as the country was not recognized by the United Nations. Working with the International Committee of the Red Cross from the outset, UNICEF coordinated a massive relief operation, which was very much concerned with the vital logistics aspects as well as the actual provision of food aid, which included seeds and fertilizers, and the re-creation of a minimal health structure and primary education in a country that had lost a large part of its cadres.

The United Nations itself felt the need to reappraise its own capability to respond to critical emergency situations and introduced the concept of a lead agency amongst the agencies directly concerned. As demonstrated in Kampuchea, it is not so much formal arrangements amongst agencies as the personality and responsiveness of each individual agency that constitutes a determining factor in bringing about greater efficiency and coordination in the system.

A number of World Conferences under United Nations auspices took place in the decade of the seventies on growing problems such as population; environment; hunger; women; basic needs for employment; water; science and technology; human habitation; and primary health care. Almost everywhere problems of children were involved, impelling UNICEF to participate in varying degrees at those world conferences, and in their preparation, to use the opportunity to get UNICEF's main ideas across.

In response to the major themes emerging from some of these conferences and with the desire to present to developing countries more thoughtfully worked out and practically oriented policies and models, UNICEF embarked on a series of efforts to elaborate its assistance concepts more clearly. One of the most important ones was the strategy of basic services for children. Since the different facets of a child's development are so closely interrelated, UNICEF sought the answer through an interrelated approach

amongst different sectors that were simple, effective and supported by the community. UNICEF took great pains to spell this concept out and advocate it in the industrial as well as developing countries and in the international community, including the group of 77 at the United Nations.

The idea met with considerable interest and influenced social development policies. It also had a fruitful effect on the development of an "area" concept for neglected and difficult country zones. It acted as an eye-opener for the sensitive interrelationship between government action in different sectors at the local level and the essential participation of local communities which were expected to assume a responsible role in matters related to their own development. However, the practical application of the idea of basic services proved to be somewhat more difficult. In some quarters there was fear that it represented a cheaper service for the poorest countries and did not offer a basis for reaching a higher level of service over a period of time.

There was one field, however, where the idea of basic services found a more direct application and that was in primary health care (PHC), a concept jointly promoted by WHO and UNICEF. UNICEF and WHO worked out the key elements of a new primary health care policy in the form of a wide network of simple health care and protection over which local communities were to have decisive responsibility. Thousands of auxiliaries drawn from the communities were to be trained. A fundamental change of emphasis was envisaged, moving from a hitherto urban-oriented health system to serving the needs of the people at large. This revolutionary proposal, which brought in elements beyond the immediate concern of health authorities, was enthusiastically received by the UNICEF Board and WHO. An international conference on PHC in Alma Ata, USSR in 1978, sponsored by WHO and UNICEF, contributed greatly to the endorsement of this new concept in countries all over the world.

Based on a number of critical appraisals of different aspects of education, UNICEF committed itself to support a concept of basic education to meet the essential learning requirements for underprivileged children at the primary school age group through both formal as well as non-formal channels. This was a response to the mounting critical debate in developing countries concerning the serious implications of a too schematic application of the principle of universal education as well as doubts about the appropriateness of the content of existing schooling and its inadequate preparation of children for life.

Although admirable as a concept, and while new impetus had been given by UNICEF and UNESCO to a re-evaluation of the importance and relevance of primary education, basic education was not applied as widely as had been hoped because of difficulties in getting it across at the country level, overcoming the resistance of traditional elements, the cost of changes, a certain lack in follow-through at the policy level by UNICEF and UNESCO.

Throughout the decade UNICEF continued its pioneering work to help improve the conditions of children in periurban areas and shanty towns. Its main emphasis was on maximizing self-help initiatives to mobilize hidden resources in urban communities and strengthen a network of cooperation with municipal and private agencies for the upgrading of existing services. Productive and innovative experiences in this field, particularly in Latin America and Asian urban areas, came to the fore and established a new

relationship between UNICEF and enterprising NGOs which brought their particular knowledge to this field.

While UNICEF had always shown concern for the role of mothers in childrearing and safeguarding the health of children, it took some time until UNICEF's response to women's concerns was considered in all its dimensions--more adequate preparation and education of girls, functional literacy of women, finding ways to alleviate their heavy household burdens, and creating new possibilities for them to earn money within their natural setting. It also represented the major answer of UNICEF to family planning and responsible parenthood, which from a modest beginning in 1967 grew over the years to a valuable component of wider efforts supported by both United Nations, bilateral and private agencies.

All had an important contribution to make in gradually moving UNICEF away from its limited view of women solely as mothers to seeing them in the totality of their roles--as mothers and wives, as economic providers, as citizens and leaders at all levels and as responsible participants in community life, and together with their husbands, to express a somewhat more decisive voice in the number of children they would to have.

It took some time for these ideas to gain ground amongst UNICEF staff as well as amongst UNICEF's own partners, who sometimes seemed entrenched in existing customs and traditions. In particular, in family planning there was not always the required support forthcoming to enroll UNICEF more firmly in all its aspects since considerations of fund-raising and public reactions inevitably had to be considered. The guidance of people like Aida Gindy and Titi Memet and the efforts of a number of other highly committed and qualified women staff members assigned to the regions, helped greatly in this process of change and learning.

For many years, UNICEF has sought to encourage governments to involve in some degree of programme participation by parents and local communities. Moving from a loose form of association to a real sharing of responsibilities and decision-taking as well as having the possibility to exercise judgement on priorities is a long process, but it can have a real potential for bringing about change and lead to a more equitable sharing of the fruits of development.

Many governments are still distrustful of a process of delegating too much authority. While there has been no wavering in support of the principle, it has not been always easy for UNICEF to see this idea fully realized at the grassroots level. The decentralization of field structures and a new approach to the decision-making process, the very essence of basic services, all pointed in the right direction. But many more efforts will be required to reach full understanding of how communities reach decisions and how much governments will be ready to share power in a development process. With centrally promoted programme concepts, UNICEF must realize that it will require time and carefully worked out processes if it is to take root. Although it is one of the battles not yet won, it is essential to any development that touches people so directly as the future of their children.

Many non-governmental organizations active in social development have a unique blend of committed field staff, flexible ways of spending modest resources and real skills in establishing meaningful contacts at the grassroots level. This has been increasingly recognized by UNICEF staff

members. The possibilities of NGOs as valuable allies were highlighted at an enlarged UNICEF Board session on work for children in Asia held in Manila in 1977, in conjunction with the Board's regular session. Both governmental and staff participants learned directly about the extraordinary valuable pioneer work which many local NGOs were carrying out to reach the poorest groups of the population, and this had an impact in their subsequent programme perspectives.

During the seventies, the development agencies of the United Nations made a determined attempt to organize themselves more coherently and improve coordination in the United Nations system. At the country level, efforts were made through the establishment of a focal point, to facilitate a common dialogue between all agencies with governments. Thanks to its experience with the country approach as well as its decentralized field structure, UNICEF had a positive contribution to make to this United Nations endeavour, although in some places there were difficulties in achieving a smooth team approach.

For historical reasons and in the light of its special mandate for children, UNICEF has maintained a spirit of autonomy and originality throughout its existence. As the United Nations expanded its activities and became more diversified, there was undoubtedly need for greater cohesion in the United Nations development effort leading UNICEF to enter into multiple relationships with different UN agencies, in fields of common concern - health, nutrition, education, and welfare. A pattern of collaboration had emerged with WHO, UNESCO, FAO, and the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs over the years which evolved from a relation of the dependency of UNICEF, as a more supply-oriented agency, on the technical views and advice of the agencies, toward a different type of relationship of trying to reach a common platform of objectives and policies which allowed the various partners to join forces and take advantage of the capability and specificity of each of the partners concerned.

A different collaboration established itself with voluntarily financed agencies, such as UNDP, WFP, and UNFPA. Here, it was more a question to bring the respective programmes into a meaningful relationship at the country level under the aegis of the coordinating authorities of the country. The endeavours of the United Nations to bring about a great harmonization of the United Nations system in the development field, through the appointment of special representatives of the United Nations Secretary General, helped enhance this effort toward improved coordination.

A third range of relationships was gradually established with international financial institutions such as the World Bank, regional development banks, etc. Its nature was more an exchange of experiences, and it allowed UNICEF on the basis of its field experience, to plead for increased recognition of the needs of children and mothers as part of the lending and other external aid policies of these agencies. Over the years, under the impulsion of Robert McNamara, these institutions were themselves becoming more aware of the necessity to balance the imperatives to strengthen national infrastructures, economic development and preparation of human resources, with a greater focus on possibilities to reach the poorest groups in developing countries.



Finally, there were the opportunities seized by UNICEF to advocate its major child policies in the various organs of the United Nations, particularly at the time of the preparations of the declaration of successive development decades, or for special international years, of which the International Year of the Child was by far the most important. While UNICEF recognized the need for better integration of its own endeavours to facilitate coordination and efficiency of the United Nations system as a whole, it was also always mindful of the need to retain its own identity and autonomy. UNICEF looked upon coordination efforts as opportunities for active participation in the overall effort, which included dissemination of its own messages on important child-related issues.

As part of a deliberate effort of critical appraisal and self-assessment, UNICEF initiated two independent management and organizational reviews. The first concerned the much-discussed exercise undertaken for UNICEF by the Scandinavian Institute of Administrative Research in the mid-1970's, which brought positive improvements in the decentralization of UNICEF's field organization, improved coordination within the organization and a revamping of its personnel service. The second consisted of selected analyses made by Inspector M. Bertrand of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit at the end of the 1970's on budgeting and the need for better programme documentation. Both demonstrated UNICEF's strength in subjecting itself to such searching reviews and follow-up on what it considered worthwhile.

Ever since the Board session in Addis Ababa in 1966, UNICEF has showed considerable resourcefulness in obtaining greater financial support from industrialized as well as developing countries. Ambitious but at the same time realistic targets were set from the first daring figure in 1966 of \$50 million annually to the \$200 million annually marked for 1979, the International Year of the Child. It reflected not only skillful planning by the UNICEF secretariat but also much greater involvement and participation of the governments represented on the Board. The general favourable reaction of developing countries to the evolving work of UNICEF was influenced by the greater resources that it could make available, its special efforts to improve the planning of programmes benefiting children as part of wider social development efforts of countries, and continuous flexibility of UNICEF in adapting support to changing situations in the countries. UNICEF's initiative to open up a greater exchange and participation with bilateral and voluntary external aid agencies also had a positive effect.

Since its inception, UNICEF has depended on voluntary contributions for its work, and later increasingly promoted major child policies that went beyond UNICEF's more immediate role. It was therefore inevitable that information and education of both the public and government should have a predominant role. Starting from the more direct projection of its role, UNICEF came to realize the wisdom of putting more emphasis on the needs of children in developing countries and highlighting national efforts and achievements. However, it took some time to resolve different tendencies within UNICEF and recognize that it was basically if not all important to highlight the national and local scene, and blend appealing humanitarian stories into a wider spectrum of national endeavours. Some differences also arose relating to the relative merits of the varying audiences to be addressed. A proper blend had to be worked out between an information policy reaching out to the masses and more refined thrusts catering to the intellectual and decision-making levels in both industrialized and developing

countries. Such different points of view were a natural expression of a lively and flexible information policy that had to adapt itself constantly to changing emphases and climates. The initiative taken by UNICEF to mobilize well-known national and international artists and the media to assist in the information effort proved to be of inestimable value in highlighting the problems of children and the UNICEF cause.

Although one could have wished at times for a more refined sense of priorities and more emphasis on the countries and the way they perceived their problems and endeavours for the benefit of their children, by and large, UNICEF's information work has come out with a very positive record in support of the aims of the organization.

A highlight of the seventies was the International Year of the Child in 1979. Although at the beginning, UNICEF had accepted this initiative from NGO sources with some reservation, it became increasingly convinced of its positive values. The emphasis of the Year was not so much on UNICEF as an organization as on national efforts to focus on problems of their children. It gave countries a unique occasion to assess the problems of children in depth, to bring all potential partners - government, non-governmental organizations, universities, professional groups, political parties, churches, etc. - together for a frank appraisal of the conditions of their children and to move towards a variety of actions to strengthen national efforts. The original concept of IYC met with considerable response at the national and international level in both developing and industrialized countries. Considered to have been one of the most successful international years, it provided the basis for UNICEF to move to a wider global perspective as an advocate for children. One would very much hope that its positive results will continue to enrich the work for children.

UNICEF's achievements over the years would not have been possible if it had not enjoyed the collaboration of an excellent corps of devoted staff members, both at central points and particularly in the field. In the early years of UNICEF, they were people who had been marked by their wartime experience. This motivated them to try to bring about changes in difficult world conditions by concentrating on assistance and development of children and mothers. Practical experience counted as much as levels of education. They were hard-working, ready to face difficult assignments, and prepared to take risks and deploy initiatives. On the whole, an atmosphere of frank and open discussion existed between all levels of staff.

As UNICEF's scope became more diversified, incorporating planning, advice and promotion with practical tasks, it became clear that there was a greater need to look for a wider grid for recruiting candidates from developing countries (including the use of national professional officers--a category in which UNICEF pioneered for the United Nations system), to increase the percentage of women on the staff at professional levels, and to look for higher levels of education and different professional experiences. Staff had to be recruited with the ability to maintain an intelligent dialogue and establish a constructive relationship with their partners in developing

countries on a wide spectrum of subjects. They were themselves moving ahead in terms of education and accumulating experiences in the difficult art of administration and development. A strong feeling of a common purpose and a real "esprit de corps" prevailed among the staff, even if at times there was on occasion some feeling of greater importance than their colleagues in some other parts of the United Nations system.

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In the decade of the 70's, UNICEF certainly laboured imaginatively to counter the economic difficulties facing developing countries in protecting and bettering the prospects of their children. While it brought a substantial contribution to meeting needs in a number of emergencies, it continued to focus on major longer-term objectives and on ways to accelerate progress in achieving them within the framework of national and international development efforts.

#### V. Conclusion

As the decades of the 80's began, UNICEF continued to be characterized by an unrelenting focus on the survival and development of the whole child without discrimination. It had demonstrated a capacity of growth, moving from being predominantly a humanitarian aid agency to becoming also a force for national development which embraced all aspects of children's well-being. It had the strength to adjust itself to changing conditions and experiences in order to meet new demands entrusted to it. It also suffered disappointments, setbacks and failures while making considerable efforts to learn from them and apply the lessons for the future. A healthy and constructive relationship prevailed between the Executive Board, the secretariat, National Committees, and participating governments. The relationship with the non-governmental community deepened. UNICEF's staff felt committed to its ideals. The enlightened and capable leadership of UNICEF's two first Executive Directors, Maurice Pate and Henry R. Labouisse, provided solid foundations for the third Executive Director, James P. Grant, who took office in 1980, to lead UNICEF toward new frontiers.

The imagination and vision of those who helped to create UNICEF after the war, and the efforts and commitment of countries and of thousands of persons all over the world and in all walks of life gave promise that progress would continue to be made in the eighties toward the objectives of UNICEF.