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Notes

[Archives: CF/NYH/SP/SUM; Folder: S0355.] Contents: Section 1: Members of the Planning Committee - Schedule of (remaining) meetings and activities; Section 2: Schedule and Programme of the World Summit for Children; Section 3: Draft Declaration of the World Summit for Children - Draft Plan of Action; Section 4: Report of Meetings: - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Meetings of the Planning Committee - Meetings of the Working Group on Format - ~~Meetings of the Working Group on the Declaration - Statement of Agreement of the six Initiating Governments -~~

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*Link with the
consultation on emergencies*

ESAR REGIONAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

COMMENTS ON THE PAPER, "GLOBAL AGENDA FOR CHILDREN BEYOND YEAR 2000" (CF/EXD/MEM/1998.20)

Nairobi, 27th May 1998

General Comments

1. The Discussion Paper is greatly welcomed and the RMT sees this exercise as essential at this point in UNICEF's evolution. Particularly strong support is given by the RMT to:

- the emphasis placed by the Paper on the need for the future Agenda to address structural as well as proximate factors that affect the realization of children's human rights;
- the emphasis on good governance and participatory, democratic systems and practices as a basis for the Vision;
- the recognition in the Agenda of children as future adults, which helps to highlight issues of human capacity development;
- the move towards a synthesis of science-based development issues and ethically-based norms and standards founded on children's human rights; and
- the envisaged development of global Targets (term preferred to "goals") to practically carry forward the Agenda, and to help focus and define UNICEF contribution.

2. The ability of children to actually influence the behaviour and values of adults (e.g. in respect of environmental awareness, substance abuse) should also be recognized, while the synthesis of science and ethics should be clearly highlighted and reinforced in future Agenda documents.

3. There is need for an assessment and in-depth analysis of the main lessons to be learned from UNICEF past programme and advocacy experience, particularly during the 1990s. This exercise is important to provide a basis for refining our understanding of UNICEF strengths and weaknesses ("comparative advantage"), in part 6 of the Paper.

4. There is also a need for UNICEF to clarify the linkages between the shorter-term Programme Priorities, the Medium Term Plan, the EXDIR on Human Rights approaches to Programming, and the emerging Vision and Global Agenda. A future version of the Paper should aim to do so (for example, linking the "flagship components" with the Programme Priorities for 1998-2000).

5. The Paper should develop further, the analysis of external partnership potentials for the

promotion of the Global Agenda for Children, including the opportunities presented by UN Reform. The Paper also provides an opportunity to promote and more systematically secure the role and commitments of other UN agencies in contributing to the progressive fulfilment of children's rights, including through the UNDAF framework at country level.

6. The envisaged position of UNICEF with respect to Women's Rights does not emerge clearly. In addition, a clear distinction between women and gender issues should be maintained throughout.

7. Greater and positive emphasis should be placed on promoting the role of men in child care and child rearing.

8. While the focus on "education" and "learning" is most welcome, they should be kept conceptually distinct. The latter could include values-oriented learning for peace and non-discrimination, for non-violent problem-solving, etc.

9. The "emergency agenda" and a number of strongly negative global and local trends should be borne in mind, so that the Global Vision for children does not move too far away from the harsh reality that is likely still to confront children in the early 21st Century. The theme area on violence is most relevant. Related to this is the need to stress respect for human life and dignity.

10. Care should be taken in analysis of the area of "strengthening the family", since this is also a place where violence can occur and where patriarchy may be enforced. The different forms and functions of the family should be distinguished and developed, e.g. caring and nurturing, safety, basic values for social reproduction that fulfills human rights, etc. This complex area of the family might be considered as a major priority theme in itself.

11. Concerning adolescents, it should be noted that many in this age group are already parents (and, in many cases, married). This should be addressed in the detailed work on this theme area.

12. There is urgent need for a conceptual framework to be drafted and discussed, as an underpinning for the Vision and Agenda. It will also be important to sort out the 7 current thematic areas as they are of different "natures" (e.g. some address social processes, others are sectorally-oriented, others address age-groups).

13. An Agenda of this kind strongly implies the need for restructuring of development assistance (ODA) into modes that would be more supportive of the kinds of transformations and strategies that are required - e.g. more stable, assured, longer-term, facilitative development financing.

Region-specific Comments

14. While the Vision and Agenda are broadly applicable, the particularities of Africa/ESA are not strongly taken into account in the Paper. Important to note among these are:

grounded in reality

- persistent poverty
- the continuing struggle for children's survival rights
- families and culture
- HIV/AIDS
- weaknesses - including lack of human development, public service and democratic orientation, as well as implementation capacity - of some Governments and key public sector institutions.

15. As one consequence, the ESA regional emphasis within a Global Agenda would tend to emphasize issues such as Living Standards/Basic Services, school and basic education access, complementary education opportunities and learning achievement. There should also be a clear linkage between these elements and the wider aim, for the UN, of Poverty Reduction.

16. The points above raise the question of whether specific Regional (including African) perspectives on the Global Agenda will need to be developed, with partners, in order to operationalise it in future. This would probably include region- and eventually country-specific targets for the next decade. (It is noted that ESAR has already produced a detailed Discussion Paper on Strategic Directions for UNICEF in the Region which potentially links well with the emerging Global Vision and Agenda).

17. Links should be pursued with African institutions, such as OAU, ECA, SADC, to develop mechanisms to carry forward eventual consensus on regional targets in support of the Agenda.

Regarding "Comparative Advantage"

18. This term is not particularly favoured and it is suggested to seek an alternative, which would incorporate perspectives of UNICEF weaknesses as well as strengths.

19. While the Paper rightly situates UNICEF major role in respect of childhood, and its basis in ethics and science, much more emphasis should be placed on the need for rigorous practice at all levels of UNICEF of taking up cutting-edge thinking and experience from outside the organization, and available through wider alliances.

20. The time frame of the Agenda needs to be more clearly defined, as a way of establishing a degree of consistency in future UNICEF areas of focus. One weakness in the past has been a certain lack of such consistency at the global level, counter-balanced to some extent by the relative strengths of flexibility and adaptation in country-level programming.

21. Analysis of UNICEF role in respect of the Global Agenda should reflect expected trends in the amounts and structure of funds available to UNICEF as an organization.

22. The Paper needs, at some stage, to be clearer about UNICEF roles in higher-income

countries.

Follow Up

23. It is strongly suggested that the process of further developing the Vision and Agenda needs to be institutionalized within UNICEF.

24. Children should be included in the future consultation process, in both the development and the endorsement of the Vision and Agenda.

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