



CF-RAI-USAA-DB01-HS-2006-00008

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-DB01-HS-2006-00008**

External ID

Title

Dr. G. Sicault, "Statement to the Executive Board", CRP/1964-B/17, June 1964.

Date Created

Date Registered

Date Closed

Primary Contact

Home Location **CF/RAF/ZW/K0663-1997-539243601 (In Container)**

F12: Status Certain? **No**

6/1/1964 at 2:27 PM

2/17/2006 at 2:27 PM

Contained Records

Owner Location **History Related Records =60909132**

Current Location/Assignee **Record & Archive Manage Related Functions=80669443 since 2/17/2006 at 2:27 PM**

Record Type **A02 HIST CORR ITEM**

F13: Record Copy? **No**

d01: In, Out, Internal Rec or Rec Copy

Container **CF/RA/BX/EB/HS/1997/T003: Subject - PR Programme Related**

Date Published

Fd3: Doc Type - Format

Da1:Date First Published

Priority

Document Details **Record has no document attached.**

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Statement to the Executive Boardby Dr. Georges Sicault, Director, UNICEF Regional Office, Paris

The participation of Europe in work of UNICEF has increased year by year. Europe's contribution to the financing of the Fund, reached 9 million dollars in 1963, and should increase further and substantially in the course of the next years. But the participation is evident not only with respect to the financial plan. Europe is also increasing in large measure the support given to UNICEF through better informed public opinion with respect to children's needs and UNICEF's activities.

Let me, in this connection, mention the enlargement of our activities in the field of information as well as the increasing role played by UNICEF National Committees, which held very successful meetings in Dublin in the first week of May.^{1/} Many European countries were represented, including France whose National Committee was recently created. The Soviet Union, the United States and Canada sent observers to the meeting.

Whatever the means employed to champion the cause of children, without the support of public opinion, there is little chance of bringing these international efforts to fruitful results. This work of influencing public opinion is entrusted by UNICEF to its National Committees, each in its own country. It is up to these Committees to make better known the problems of children in the developing countries, and to mobilize young people in the service of these 600 million children in distress.

The problem we are facing is a tremendous one. The responsibilities of UNICEF would be overwhelming if we could not foresee in the future a considerable broadening of effective possibilities of action in the field, with the real participation of the more favoured countries. We must mobilize public opinion, direct the enthusiasm of youth and children towards this ideal, bring home to the people the tragic fate of children in Asia, Africa and Central America and all this in such a way that a real concrete effort will follow from the emotion aroused. This is the ambition we should

^{1/} CRP/1964-B/4 - Report of Tenth Seminar of European National Committees for UNICEF, May 1964

cherish together and the task we ought to try together if not entirely to fulfil, then at least to undertake with the maximum of hope.

The active role of Europe in relation to the needs of children should not, however, be limited to the direct action of UNICEF's Secretariat. New avenues were opened at the Bangkok Conference of the Executive Board which now permit each Committee to establish direct relations with the populations overseas in order to keep in touch with the reality. In addition, the distinguished participants in the Bellagio Conference ^{2/} have recommended that UNICEF co-operate not only with the developing countries but also with those which carry assistance to the developing countries in order that their programmes may take a larger account of children's and youth's problems. Obviously, bilateral and multilateral aid is subject to numerous economic, political and cultural considerations, but it is absolutely essential that a major part of such efforts be directed towards children and youth.

The Bellagio Conference likewise recommended that each country set down its "policy for children". A declaration should be made to the whole nation in order that the people may participate in this policy and the child - while he is at his most receptive period - may be taught moral values, honesty, loyalty to his family and his country, and that sense of solidarity which should exist among all the children of the world.

All of this requires our organization to redouble its efforts in Europe with a view to mobilizing the maximum resources for needy children in the developing countries as well as to promoting understanding between youth, which perhaps will be the best warrant for the peace of the to-morrow's world.

The activities of the UNICEF Secretariat in Europe include also the development of programmes in collaboration with the Governments of Europe and North Africa.

Our activities have diminished considerably in Europe. Current activities are being carried out only in some Mediterranean and Central European countries and only in a few specific fields. In North Africa and Turkey, the scope of UNICEF's action is considerably wider.

I have had the pleasure to point out before the Programme Committee, some of the outstanding aspects of UNICEF's work in different European countries.

Although an effort towards the methodical planning of policies has been made, it involves in most cases only a few specific fields, thus:

- training - almost everywhere,
- nutrition - by putting into effect a diversified and suitable dairy policy to meet children's needs in the cities (where both pasteurized and sterilized milks are used) and in rural areas where dry milk is widely consumed (Poland and Yugoslavia),
- preparation of food for the weaning period, for use by working mothers who have only a little time to prepare their children's food,
- MCH, for better co-ordination and supervision of activities in this field, as has been achieved in Yugoslavia.

In Turkey, our action has been so diversified as to include the following health activities:

- BCG campaigns (extremely well conducted),
- malaria eradication which resulted in a significant decrease of children's morbidity and mortality,
- anti-trachoma campaigns,
- development of MCH, well integrated in the health services activities,
- training at all levels
- nutrition policy (starting from school canteen)

In North Africa, our action has been implemented gradually along the general policy lines laid down by the Board in the fields of protection of children and their preparation for an active life.

Of the three North African countries, one may consider Algeria - the last to reach independence - to be still in the "emergency" stage. Our activity, in fact, during the first two years of independence, has concentrated particularly on measures to assure the maintenance of primary education and health protection which had reached a precarious state owing to the departure of many teachers, doctors and nurses during the months just before and after the independence.

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After this first phase, a more rational study was made of the public health problem, leading to the establishment of a general plan for the development of the public health services : on the one hand through the training of personnel, on the other hand through the equipment of services for treatment, and for preventive and social medicine.

In the same way, in the education field, and in close collaboration with UNESCO, our efforts are being directed towards the training of staff better prepared for their task by a diversified form of training in the normal schools; the accent is not only on subjects like arithmetic, spelling or geography, but equally on concrete problems of health and nutrition and, in a way, on "preparation for active life".

In Morocco, UNICEF's action in the health field has also been on a pragmatic basis. Since 1953, this action has become more and more intensified. Immediately after Morocco became independent, one of UNICEF's first activities there, in close collaboration with WHO, was in the field of training of para-medical personnel. The public health programme is the most important of those in which UNICEF is now participating in Morocco. Its essential activities is the training of personnel with a view to the creation of a network of health centres and dispensaries to be used at the same time in relation to maternal and child health, hygiene, and malaria eradication.

The home-economics and child-care project is one of a long-term nature, which should allow the harmonious development and evolution of family life.

Finally, UNICEF's activities extend to help for a programme of rural education in which the training of 12,000 masters, in close liaison with the agricultural services, should allow of giving to students a teaching such as to permit them to participate effectively in the agricultural life and in the development of the country's resources. To this programme must be linked that of nutrition education, which, with the participation of a FAO expert, is in the course of progressive expansion. 1,200 canteens are already established and working.

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It is in Tunisia that the Government has perhaps most clearly sketched the way in which a policy for children should be envisaged, in requesting UNICEF's co-operation on a certain number of essential problems affecting Tunisian children: public health and the fight against tuberculosis, the fight against eye diseases and trachoma; nutrition: school meals; nutrition education; teaching (orientation of the normal school towards the preparation of children for concrete tasks and a trade); apprenticeship and vocational training for children abandoning school, or completing only their primary studies; and finally, quite recently, grouping and co-ordination of the efforts in an urban sector of Tunis with a view to defining the broad lines of a policy for children.

We would underline that the very real integration of a policy for children and youth within the general framework of development prospects in Tunisia has already been achieved.

In conclusion, I would like to mention a few personal comments:

First, I would like to insist:

- upon the necessity to make the immense needs of children known everywhere in Europe, as these needs are still not often realized;
- upon the advantage there is in justifying our organization's mission not only by invoking humanitarian aims, but also and primarily, by pointing out the results already achieved, and even more those which we could attain with respect to the economic and also the demographic aspects (for it appears clearly that in history the reduction of infant mortality has coincided with the reduction of the birth rate and that the acceleration of history enables us to obtain such results in shorter periods of time);
- upon the advantage for UNICEF to initiate and orientate the efforts of bilateral or multilateral assistance for children.

These objectives require from the members of our Secretariat not only an increased effort, but also and often a certain amount of abnegation, because this anonymous task for a great cause will surely not appear clearly in the reports or the statistics.

But the mobilization of public opinion and the creation of new resources for children and youth, are perhaps, in the present circumstances, one of the most effective ways which we have of reducing the gap existing between the mission with which we have been entrusted and the limited means of direct action at our organization's disposal.

Thank you Mr. President.