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Interview with Victor Beermann*
Conducted by Doris Muck
on 22 November 1983 in Salzburg, Austria

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* Mr. Beerman represented UNDP, UNICEF & UNHCR in Sydney from 1964 to 1968. He was Special Advisor to the Executive Director at headquarters (for fundraising) from 1968 until his retirement in November 1977.

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Pre-UNICEF Experience

Muck: It's a pleasure that I might profit myself, and the History Project of UNICEF as well, with this wonderful visit to Salzburg. I think it would be necessary to state your personal data - name, date and place of birth so that we can introduce you and have your dossier filed with UNICEF.

Beermann: Well, Mrs. Muck, let me first say that I'm very happy that you are here with me in this city. We've met each other before; and I knew that you have joined UNICEF, and that you are active in the field, in which I have been trying to do something during my stay with the Children's Fund.

I also would like to say that I believe that the History Project is an excellent idea; it's a necessity to have with the change of the guard, but even if there hadn't been a change of the guard, there comes a time for an organization, which has been existence for almost forty years, I think, to put things on record which otherwise might be lost for ever. Not only for the sake of history - I happen to be a historian by my academic education - but also, as the paper from Jack Charnow says, to serve generations who hold the hand after us, with our experience, knowledge, perhaps, and also for inspiration. So you're very welcome, and I'm happy to say a few words.

My name, you know, Victor Beermann. I was born in the city of Nijmegen in the Netherlands in 1915; I attended primary school, the secondary school and also the University (which happens to be in my native city) where I studied history, some economics and administrative law. I took my Doctor's Degree in 1940, at which time I was already active for a couple of hours in the week as a Professor in a secondary school. I never wanted to be a school teacher, but because of the unemployment situation, one had to grasp whatever job one could get to make some money.

Then the invasion of the Germans came in 1940, and I was very happy to have a job; otherwise very soon I would have been put on the train to Germany to work for Hitler, the last person in the world with for I wanted to work. So I was a secondary school teacher until the autumn of 1943, when I had to disappear because the Germans were after me as I was a member of the underground. I then really went "under the ground" because the Germans were pretty sharp policemen.

In September '44, when my native city was liberated by the allies and in a terrible state; it was a front city for half a year with bombing and shelling everyday, so I really caught the war at the end. In '45 I turned to a little bit of politics, did some odd jobs and in '46, again in the autumn I became a member of the military mission of the Netherlands in Germany, which in fact was the embassy, for information work. So that at the end of '47, I became the Executive Secretary of a Committee to establish Cultural Relations with West Germany, "Cultural relations" to be taken in the broad sense of the word because there weren't

relations at all. The Dutch, in '45, were not overly keen to establish any relationship with the Germans, but it had to happen for all sorts of reasons. That I did until '51.

Then by pure coincidence, I received the offer to become the Representative of the UN High Commission of Refugees in Vienna, Austria, a country about which I knew a little bit, but I had never been there. So on 5 November - I will never forget that date - '51, - it was also the first time that I boarded a plane (I thought when I was a UN official I must go by plane) - I went in an old plane from Amsterdam to Vienna, had six I must say very happy years, under often not easy circumstances with 250,000 refugees in an occupied country. I also found my personal happiness there, because a year later I married an Austrian lady, Peggy, who is still my wife and who even took my nationality.

Then after Vienna, where I also witnessed the Hungarian revolution and the invasion of the Hungarians in Austria in November '56 (I have an unforgettable memory), I went to Athens - also a wonderful country - for three years for the High Commissioner, then one year and a half to Rome, for the same function.

Then I became, for the first time in my life, a fund raiser because I was transferred to UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, where for two years I was the head of the fund-raising section. At that time it was still a small organization, but still funds had to be raised, and some of the difficulties and pitfalls to get the money out of the pockets of sometimes unwilling donors already became known to me.

After two years I thought I had had my fill with the refugees; I wanted to do something else, and I applied for a job with UNDP.

Muck: This was situation in the time of-

Beermann: -That was in '64. However, the Secretary-General wanted my services for fundraising for two or three months for the International School of the United Nations in New York, so for about three months with the grandiose title of Personal Representative of the Secretary General - at that time, U Thant - I tried to collect funds for the establishment of a new building of the International School in New York, which now has a fantastic building.

Muck: Yes, wonderful.

Sydney assignment

Pate

Beermann: In April '64, I left for Sydney, Australia, totally terra incognita. I went through New York where for the first time I met some staff of UNICEF, because my job in Sydney was for three territories and three organizations, which were Australia, New Zealand, and later Papua New Guinea (then still Australian

territory). I was with UNDP basically, but also had to represent UNICEF and UNHCR. In New York I therefore met Mr. Pate for the first time, he made a deep impression on me.

Dick Heyward and Charles Egger were also at a luncheon given by Mr. Pate, I met them all for the first time, and in life you have certain moments which you remember as clearly as yesterday. It was on this occasion that Mr. Maurice Pate turned to me, totally unexpectedly and (as a good American he immediately called me by my Christian name), he said, "Victor, you are at the helm in Sydney. I have full confidence in you." Well, I must say, I almost had tears in my eyes, because why should he say such a thing? He'd only seen me for half an hour.

He asked me questions, "What have you been doing?" and I talked about it. I thought: if he says this, then I go to far-away Sydney with a very strong moral obligation on my shoulders, I must really do my best for UNICEF.

Muck: You were filled with expectations?

Perception of UNICEF as a "milk" agency

Beermann: Absolutely. I knew a little bit about UNICEF, not too much - I'm afraid I still thought in terms of a 'milk agency', the trademark UNICEF has had for many years. I also suffered from that misconception, the "milk syndrome," and then I began to understand that was not so.

Emphasis on speeches/TV/radio appearances

Looking back on my four years in Sydney, and looking at the way in which I divided my time, I was on the payroll of UNDP - that was my main job - I started a programme for UNDP in Papua New Guinea, etc., and these things I did with pleasure; but most of my time went to UNICEF because I did an enormous amount of public speaking, also television and radio appearances all the time. I was the only UN man there, apart from the Director of the Information office.

Contact with headquarters

I got very much involved with the Freedom from Hunger fundraising campaign. In my UN experience never did I have such a busy correspondence as during my four Sydney-based years with Barney Fraser. This preparation in fundraising for specific projects helped me a great deal in my subsequent job in Headquarters.

Work with Committees

Muck: Was there already an Australian National Committee?

Beermann: Yes, of course, and also a New Zealand one. We all became personal friends. There's another, if I may say so, word I remember. I was at one of these meetings of the Australian

National Committee in Melbourne, which was again in a sort-of crisis, because the Australians are wonderful people, but they sometimes like to quarrel. I listened to a dispute which was going on and thought it was all personal and there were positions to be defended. I thought I should go away. I told Wilfred Aston, who was then the Chairman of the Australian National Committee, who has died since, that I think I had better go now. And he answered, "No, you stay here. You are one of us." So I became an Australian; I really liked the Australians and I was touched by this.

Importance of field observation

I had to go in March 1968 to Hot Springs where there was a global conference of UNDP, and there I met the UNICEF delegation - Charles Egger, Fred Hamilton, who became a very close friend and a great travelling companion - I will talk about him later - and Sherry Moe. I still see them there. Charles, who knew me because he was a Director in India at the time and I had made several trips to Southeast Asia to look at UNICEF programmes which I had to sell in Australia. I had always believed in one big principle of fund raising: "Sell what you, if possible, have seen with your own eyes. You are in a strong position."

Muck: Exactly; it makes it much more credible.

Fund-raising at headquarters

Recruitment

Beermann: Then in '68 my number was up in Sydney, I had liked it after four years. Charles took me aside, and said, "Look here, UNDP has a dynamic leader, Mr. Paul Hoffmann, a grand old man, an enormous fund raiser." UNDP was in the 'up-wind;' now they are a little bit in the 'down wind', unfortunately. 'We are lagging behind; we need a man who will put some steam in the fund raising, in the business of UNICEF. Mr. Labouisse, our Executive Director, whom you have never met, agrees that we should recruit somebody who for a certain period - let's say for two years - will join us to set up a system to get more out of this.' I was not wholly unprepared for the assignment with UNICEF. It was a sort of two-year secondment from UNDP, because as I mentioned, I had been engaged in fund raising for UNHCR for two years, and also in Australia and New Zealand I was continuously engaged in fund raising - that was one of my main jobs. So I accepted the offer, and in September '68 moved with my family to New York and instead of staying with UNICEF for two years, I have been hanging on for nine years. I left the organization at the end of November 1977. So, on the whole I had thirteen years with UNICEF, which is just half of the total period of my life which I spent with the UN, which was 26 years.

Barney Fraser

Muck: Up to then, there was no special fund-raising person?

Beermann: Yes, there was one person whose name I would also mention with respect and affection, and whom I hope will also be interviewed for the History Project, Barney Fraser, an American, who had been in the fund-raising business as a kind of personal assistant to the Executive Director, I guess, from the very beginning. I'm not quite sure about that, but for years, for sure. Under Maurice Pate, surely, on a high-level basis. Barney has great qualities, I always admired his precision - he was of German origin so he had the German precision - patience, he was very organized. However, I don't think I do him injustice if I say that he was not exactly the outgoing type. He was rather-

Muck: Shy?

Beermann: Shy, no, but a kind-of backroom worker. We need that, the back stoppers who do the real work; he was not a man who would board a plane and say, "Well, let me immediately go to Finland, now, because I think there's a million dollars lying there for us." I cannot praise myself as a man who is distinguished by his administrative qualities. To tell the truth, I don't like administration very much; I think it is a necessary evil. So Labouisse also told me, when I met him, he said, "Well you have here, Barney Fraser--"

Muck: You two together made a wonderful team?

Beermann: He did a lot of the spade work, he knew the whole game. But there was also a new feature coming up for fund raising for UNICEF - the "noted" projects for special contributions. I will tell about that later.

Fund-raising structure

Muck: When you joined UNICEF in '68, what was the title that you were being given, and what was the organizational structure, in which you, along with Mr. Fraser, worked?

Beermann: The fund-raising structure of UNICEF, as I found it in '68, was a simple one. For fund raising, as in all other UN organizations, the supreme responsibility and the policy-making lie clearly with the Executive Director, no question about it. Mr. Labouisse had as his assistant - he was also for that reason sitting in the front office, as it was called at that time - Barney Fraser, who worked directly under him. He was a unit unto himself with a secretary, then there was the Paris office, which at that time had as director Dr. George Sicault, a man of whom I still think with the greatest respect, who was responsible for fund raising in Europe. But I don't think I do him any injustice when I say that it was not my impression that fund raising was one of his favourite activities. Of course, there was somebody who looked after the National Committees, some of which also collected funds.

Muck: From New York or from Geneva?

Beermann: From New York and from Geneva. They were a constant source of income and a very welcome one, because they are unique and for that reason they are much envied by other UN organizations. There was the Greeting Card Operation in which they were a key element, and of course there was an active Information Division for many years, headed by Jack Ling, now with WHO, a very able man - a good

man to work with. However, these separate operations were not related to each other. The External Relations Division which you have now was in the making during my later years with UNICEF. It was only established after I had left, and its chief head has the ASG rank which I think is appropriate. It's the same in every UN organization, it's a high rank and with the programme, policy, administration, personnel and finance directors, these are the high officials running an organization, but always it is the Executive Director who has to be the number one. No question about it.

When in 1968 I arrived in New York, there was not much of a structure. After the first few weeks having walked around in the corridors of power at UNICEF headquarters, I told my wife, "I don't know what I'm doing here. I have really nobody to speak to; I'm working with Mr. Labouisse, but he has other things to do than listen to my lamenting. There is Barney Fraser who does the routine work and the spade work, and I have not the slightest ambition to cross him in his role. He knows it very well. I wonder what I am doing here." That feeling I lost pretty soon afterwards, thanks also to the noted projects about which we'll still talk.

Title of "Special Advisor"

So, basing myself on my previous experiences, I knew one thing. I should not call myself head of the fund-raising section of something. That was wrong because if you announce your visit, Mr. Beermann is coming, head of the fund-raising section, the reaction is: "Ah, there he is again. He wants our money. No, no, no. We have no, etc." So I gave myself a mysterious title which nobody understood, least of all myself. I called myself 'Special Adviser', Mr. Labouisse said okay. So I carried the title "Special Adviser to the Executive Director" to the end of my UNICEF days.

Programme Funding Office

Later, however, when we had more to do, especially when the "noted" projects came up, the work had to be structured and therefore I was looking for a term which was not a copy of any other term used in any other UN organization with a comparable job description, so I invented the term "Programme Funding Office". At least the word "raising" is not in it. Programmes have to be funded. Nobody can have anything against that. Some people thought I was the chief administrator for finance, but that would

have been the end of UNICEF if I had handled finance! Mr. Middelman did it in my time, in a very able way. Well, after the Programme Funding Office I was also called, if I remember well, the Director of PFO, if it came to situations when it was necessary, but on the whole I rather stuck to my special adviser title.

Muck: Special Adviser, mysterious special adviser.

Beermann: I discovered soon that if UNICEF wanted to expand - get more money - the road of increasing regular, annual contributions would be a stony one. There was a formidable, top fund raiser, Mr. Hoffman of UNDP, whose charisma was unsurpassed in the UN system at the time.

Muck: He was a finance man, wasn't he?

Beermann: Yes, he was a man of the Marshall Plan, and I myself was under the spell of Mr. Hoffman because I had been serving UNDP. Mr. Hoffman, let me say briefly, was already 75 or older, but he could talk about the world in the year two thousand as if he would be a young man then. I admired him for that.

Muck: Did he have a structure in the UNDP, to support him in the fund-raising area?

Beermann: No, the structure was not very strong there. Clint Rehling was his assistant.

Muck: But there was one.

Beermann: Yes, of course. It is now better organized at UNDP. We also tried to work with UNDP for fund raising, to the point of cooperative efforts in the UN system in the field of fund raising. I have to say something on this a little bit later.

Muck: Yes, it's extremely interesting.

Dorothy Schleimer

Beermann: The battle I won was for an Administrative Assistant, because I knew if we were to get special contributions over and above the regular contributions, they would have to be administered; there would have been correspondence with the field, procedures would have to be devised, reporting would be extremely important, and I needed an able administrator who would do all the things which I emotionally and intellectually refuse to do - administration - and I got a lady who had a long experience with UNICEF behind her, then had been seconded to the Pension Fund for almost a year and was ready to come back to UNICEF, Dorothy Schleimer.

Muck: You know, of course, that I know Dorothy, and she was really the first one that I cooperated with from Geneva, and as I told you I really hold her in great respect and admiration because she, as I

would say, is a living computer. So you really started with Dorothy, at that stage in '68?

Beermann: Yes, sure, because I knew the programme of UNICEF had to attract more funds from regular increased annual contributions, which was the basis of the whole thing, no question about it. I have never doubted over all the years that that is number one.

But once you have them at a certain time of the year, there is not much to be done for the rest of the year. You have to wait for next year. You can prepare the groundwork for the next year - that you have to do.

Dorothy was an extraordinary personality; she had a singular perception for financial things, for budgets, for projects; she immediately discovered their weaknesses; she had a very good memory; she was a very hard worker. I should mention that with her, with all my travelling - I liked travelling, I always considered it a necessity to go both to developed and developing countries - Dorothy sitting in the office in New York and doing all the back-stopping work, I knew I could rely on her. Even if I was absent for months at an end, she would keep the thing going.

Special contributions

But I wanted more money to come off, and good luck had it that just before I joined UNICEF, the Board had, for the first time, accepted two special contributions, and I remember who made them and why they were made. The two special contributions came from Sweden and Norway. They were both in the field of population because UNICEF had then embarked upon certain population activities and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities was not yet in existence.

Muck: I see, so it was UNICEF that undertook this project?

Beermann: And we were very much in favour of the UN system doing something about that, so that money was given to UNICEF for India and Pakistan - I remember that very well. This procedure, then, was, so to speak, put on a more continuous basis in '69. It wasn't until the Santiago Board session which I attended, because at that time I was already a member of the staff. Then there was a firm basis to start an all-out campaign, if you like, for projects "noted" by the Board and worthy of support, but for which the regular general resources position did not allow the funding.

Swedish position: The funny thing is, when the thing really took off, Sweden turned against it because they said they didn't need UNICEF anymore for population because UNFPA -

Muck: Was newly created, that's right.

Beermann: Of course, I could never refuse that argument; it was logical. But the idea of special contributions had already got their own life, and the Swedes said it was not a good thing because it would

distort the programme. They were funds which the Executive Board did not distribute over projects, the Executive Director did; so they were always against the special projects, but the Swedes are very fair people, especially the man who always represented Sweden at the Board, Nils Thedin.

Muck: And still is the great eminence of National Committees.

Beermann: Of course, he's a very fair man, and he never said, "Well, we don't do it anymore, so the rest shouldn't do it." He let it go, but Sweden, apart from emergencies, never joined UNICEF in the field of special contributions.

Muck: Were the special contributions from Sweden in the original stage of population activities coming from the bilateral funds of Sweden?

Beermann: "Multi-bi": I guess so. They mostly came, as you know, from the bilateral segment of the budget. For that reason, the expression 'multi-bi' came about. I became a great 'multi-bi' specialist, I can assure you.

"Noted Projects": Now, the word "noted" - you know where it stems from? It became a specific UNICEF intellectual property.

Muck: Who invented it, do you know?

Beermann: I don't know, maybe Mr. Heyward, who invented many things, one of the great characters of UNICEF. UNICEF had many great characters.

Muck: I know, that's why we try so very hard to get the knowledge from the giants.

Beermann: He was a supreme man. It was funny, I went to the field both in developing and developed countries and members of government or officials said, "Well, here I have a 'noted' project." Even Kathmandu knew the word 'noted' and no other UN organization ever took it over, though in fact they did the same thing in a way. UNHCR does the same thing and even UNDP is now starting, but nobody had the guts or the temerity to take it over; that always remained UNICEF's domain and that was a good thing.

Revenue targets

Muck: Exactly, I've seen in the little historical survey - Milestones of UNICEF's history - that in 1969, actually, the Board, for the first time meets in Latin America and then decides to seek contributions from governments for specific purposes. And then, interestingly enough, in 1970 UNICEF's annual income was \$59.4 million and a target for \$100 million was even set for 1974. Can you remember what the volume was when you joined UNICEF?

Beermann: Yes, I remember very clearly that the revenue of '68, a year which I couldn't influence because I first joined - but through Barney's work and Mr. Labouisse's work, was \$38 million. If you look back before that year, there was not much of an increase because Mr.

Hoffman was there and UNDP was a big competition and UNICEF got a little frightened. We had fallen back. Yes, the target system was introduced then.

I remember the first target was to get \$50 million, to get over the \$38 million. Then it was \$100 million. There were more targets and then I left UNICEF. I remember clearly that Mr. Labouisse proudly proclaimed - I think it was in '78 - \$500 million to be reached by mid-1985. I also remember that I wrote him a note to say that it was a very good idea; a big jump forward. Of course '79 was the Year of the Child - that should help (I don't think it helped enough; frankly, there could have been a bit more). Anyway, UNICEF since has been making great progress and from what I now see from the documents, \$500 million is no longer an impossibility, with one footnote, however - the dollars of which Mr. Labouisse spoke in 1978 will no longer in real terms have the same value in 1985; so it needs more to compensate, but that may not be possible.

Muck: I wanted to ask you, how can a fund raiser like you, with - as we mentioned - Dorothy, who probably did the back-stopping when you were abroad, how were you two able to plan this immense increase in resources? The relationship with the Programme Division, with the Comptroller, how did you organize yourself in that respect?

Staffing of PFO

Beermann: I was always against a large office; I didn't want many staff members. I wanted a small group, but a very able group. Later, when the operation grew and grew, I had to recruit more staff members. But I may say perhaps I was never, from that point of view, an empire-builder, and I didn't believe in much staff.

Relations - PFO with other Divisions

The relationship with the Comptroller's was very good. Mr. Middelmann was the Comptroller most of the time when I was with UNICEF, a very able man; he was also a fund raiser because he made a lot of interest on the investment; he was a great man in that.

Programme Division of course was the main liaison. I had to sell projects and programmes not cooked by us but by the Programme Division though I must say I could help a little bit with programming and some people seemed to know this. I remember a staff meeting, Martin Sandberg, a very shrewd Norwegian, an intelligent guy who was then the Director of Personnel and Administration, passed a note to me asking 'who in this Headquarters sets up programmes?'. I wrote back, 'Of course, the Programme Division, aided by the wisdom of PFO'; he gave me a broad smile. How could this be done?

Fred Hamilton

There another name turns up, Fred Hamilton, Deputy Director of the Programme Division under Charles Egger, Director of that Division, very devoted, knew UNICEF like his pocket.

Muck: Had been in the field himself-

Beerman: Yes, a practical man; wrote very good English. I still see Fred coming to me at the Board meeting of '78 in New York, which he attended, in order to get a little bit acquainted with UNICEF. I still see him coming to me when I was sitting in the gallery, with a piece of paper in his hand and said, 'Victor, put out something

about the 'noted' projects and the special projects, for which you will be working now'. I immediately understood: that was a man with whom I could work because he was thinking with me. You need a conceptual man to think what concepts we should work out now, and then we execute it and keep others informed. That, I must say, was perhaps the beginning of what became a cooperation which existed all my time with UNICEF. Later Fred and I started travelling together to Africa and Asia; he looked at the programme side, helped the people in the field to understand the concept of "noted" projects; what they should do and not do; what they should expect and couldn't expect. I looked at the fund-raising side. I can still hear Aida Gindy, who was then Director in Nairobi, say when we went to her office, "There again is the team Hamilton/Beermann. You complement each other fantastically."

Muck: Here do they come again. But of course the Programme Division cooperation, I think, is essential to Programme Funding because without that it's not possible.

Programme Funding Book

Origins

Muck: If you, then, look at those years when the "noted" projects started to get their importance, how did the first, what we call

now, Sales Book come into being - the "noted" projects book which is really one of those milestones in Programme Funding, and I think I even remember the other agencies wanted to copy us a little bit. How was the idea born?

Beermann: When they started the special projects the first two years I visited most of the donor countries - it takes you one or two years to know your customers - afterwards it was the turn of the developed countries. I can say I've probably visited all donor countries, apart from some smaller Eastern Europe countries. I never went to Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic. But the rest, I've seen them all. To the Arab countries I went much later and missed the boat a little bit, I must say, but then Mr. Grant has since recuperated that. They are doing well with AGFUND, which is very good.

At the same time, you began to instruct your counterparts at the foreign offices and at the missions in New York - I was always in contact with the Missions in New York on what it was all about. There still was not much of an expanding business in the beginning. There was a slow start.

Child Emergency Declaration

Then something happened which was very important and really set the thing off. That was the Child Emergency Declaration of the Board '74, which resulted from the oil shock which had taken place

a couple of months before, which has really, as we all know, very deeply changed the relationship between North and South, and the whole world economic picture. That Child Emergency Declaration pointed to the fact that you don't need an earthquake to have an emergency for children; also a deteriorating economic situation cause permanent emergencies.

Muck: So-called "silent" emergencies.

Beermann: Silent, that's what Mr. Grant now calls it, silent and loud emergencies, which is a very good distinction and a strong talking point. That Declaration was proclaimed by the Board and I remember that after the summer holidays in '74 at a staff meeting I said, 'We have now the Declaration, and if anybody suffers from the economic crisis it is the children of the third world. But where are the programmes now, because we have to do more for them; we have to tap the potential of goodwill towards children with the countries by saying, "You can do much more now because we have a larger programme now-'

Muck: Exactly; we have it ready.

Beermann: Yes, partly "noted" and partly regular. I said it at the staff meeting on Friday morning with Mr. Labouisse, and Charles said, "Well, we'll do something about it." He agreed with me; we are

working at that. To cut a long story short, working with Fred, Programme Division gave instructions to the field, "You have to do more now on the 'noted' things." There was some reluctance in the field; more projects, but where is the money now? They couldn't understand it.

Muck: How to administer it from the administrative side; do we get more personnel?

Beermann: Etcetera. It was a new concept. How does it go? But basing ourselves on the Child Emergency Declaration, it became clear it was the will of the Board, no longer of the staff. The Board said, more projects because there was an emergency. The Board established this fact, so in the first months of '75, extra projects started coming in, many more than before. And then at a certain moment, sitting in my office with all these papers on my desk, I told Richard Pordes, who was then a newly recruited assistant, "Richard, we can't go on with distributing pieces of paper among the donor governments. Here is again a project; there will be more any day." And on the spur of moment I said, "We must have a book, a nice book - not luxurious but nice, dignified. I saw in a second the whole thing before me. I still hear myself describing the colour - blue colour, UN blue, the UNICEF symbol in

it, introduction of the Executive Director, preface and technical introduction, a list of projects and all this. I had the thing in ten seconds and before that had never thought of a book-

Muck: And this was in '75?

Beermann: Yes, that was the first book. And I can tell you that when Mr. Labouisse gave me a little party when I left the office in November '77, in that big meeting room next to his office, he invited me to stand next to him, and on a table I saw the whole collection of the books, and Mr. Labouisse said, "These are the books which are so well well known to the field (when I went to certain field offices, the people talked about the "Beermann bible.")"

Use

Muck: But with this new fund-raising instrument, because I think it was a fund-raising instrument, how did you go about it, how did you market the special funding book?

Beermann: What happened was that a special project had to be noted by the Board to form part of the Board documentation. I got the copies on my desk; I had a say on the volume - how many should go to the Board and what was the type of projects, the geographical distribution; we went later more and more to the poorest countries. You couldn't put the book out before the Board had noted it, but at a later stage, not in the first year but certainly in the second year, the book was already ready because

the noting had become a formality. It was even put on the desks of delegates to the Board, I told them with a faint smile, 'Of course, I realise you have still to note them, but I know your generosity. Noting doesn't cost you a penny.' Some of the delegates even wanted that because they wanted to go home with the book under their arm. That was the informal method; the more formal method was the presentation of the book to all donors with a letter from the Executive Director.

Muck: Through the Missions?

Beermann: Through the missions, yes, mostly to the Permanent Representative - not to the Minister at all - and then I said, "Would you be kind enough to forward it on.. " and I remember it was also said that Mr. Labouisse would take the liberty of sending somebody at a later stage to discuss the book. Only to send the book and wait for replies - that is not enough. The Board was always in May, so May/June I started taking off, and I combined, especially from '75, visits to developing with developed countries. I had a look at notings and then went with it to Bonn, Vienna, The Hague, and said, 'This and that I have seen myself. This project you can take.' Sometimes I did the usual little trick, I whispered, 'Don't take that project.' This, of course, strengthens your credibility, but you must know with whom you talk.

Dutch \$10 million contribution

If you would ask me, "What was your latest biggest coup, when did you really make one?", when, I must say as a fund raiser, was the historical moment? The amount which I will mention is no longer so impressive, but at that time when the noting thing had just started and had taken off in a big way with the book, it was a big thing. I was in November '75 again on a European trip. I was in Vienna, and there I got an urgent telephone call from Mr. Labouisse. Mr. Labouisse knew in a general sense that I was somewhere in the world, but he had never hunted me; he gave me complete freedom, and I immensely appreciated the confidence he always had in me. Mr. Labouisse ringing me - urgently? I said something tragic must have happened with my wife, and he wanted to tell me to soften the blow. Well, I was sitting - somewhere, I think, at the National Committee of Vienna at four o'clock in the afternoon - ten o'clock in the morning in New York - I would ring him or he would ring me. There his voice came through and I was really trembling, but I immediately heard he was cheerful. He said, 'Victor, something very unexpected has happened; we got a lot of money from the Dutch - ten million.' Now, I had already known there was something in the offing; being a Dutchman, I would know. So it was not entirely new to me. I said, 'Ten million guilders?' 'No, dollars,' he said. I said earlier this was November. I think when I spoke with Mr. Labouisse, it was close to the end of November, which meant speedy action.

Muck: You had to spend it before the end of the year?

Beermann: No, not to spend it; you had to make the submission before that date to enable the Dutch to pay, otherwise the money was lost. I dealt with Mr. Yan Pronk, who was then Minister of Development Assistance or Development Cooperation. 'Can you change your trip and go to The Hague?' Mr. Labouisse asked. I said, 'Yes, of course; I'm almost finished with my trip here. Are they expecting me there?' 'Yes, I told them that you were going there. Ring so and so.' I knew the people 'that you are coming and then talk to them. Do you have your projects?' I said, 'Well, I have the book with me, but I must really take the book and make a package for the Dutch.'

Now, if you offer a package to a government, you always offer "X" plus five or "X" plus two; it leaves them a choice. Ten projects plus two. I went to Salzburg, the place where we are interviewing now; I was sitting in this same house. It was also empty because it was November, a cold house, and I took my book and I said, "What package shall I now offer to the Dutch? Are there still projects in it for ten million dollars which are immediately implementable, serious, not shaky? Who is there now to type this for me?" I had to present the list in typewritten form. I had to think very fast. Two days later I was sitting in The Hague and I

gave them the list. I had two days of sometimes tough bargaining - the Dutch can be tough - I went back to New York and told Mr. Labouisse -

- Muck: It's done.
- Beermann: It's probably in the bag, but we have to wait officially for the confirmation by the Ambassador whom we immediately saw. To cut a long story short, I didn't go on leave between Christmas and New Year because I wanted the cheque in my own hands and immediately went to Mr. Middleman who was forewarned, and it came, I think, 30 December. That was a highlight.
- Muck: Fantastic. That is a highlight because at that stage what was the income of UNICEF?
- Beermann: Seventy five, probably one hundred million dollars.
- Muck: That was the target, maybe, so it was ten percent of what-
- Beermann: It wouldn't be repeated because there was in 1975 the accident of a special budgetary situation but ten million is ten million.
- Muck: Did you get to go to the Dutch or to others the following year for the same?
- Beermann: Of course I told the Dutch, "You cannot buy me off" and next year I shall come back. Ten million, I agree, is perhaps rather high, but perhaps eight million or so.

Viet Nam funding

I also had another coup. We were the first in Vietnam; we beat any UN organization to get in Vietnam and I was the first fund raiser, even before UNHCR which has a formidable fund raiser who is still there, Mr. Wolfing, a Dane. He's very good, but I think he has never forgiven me for this; we got more money than he got. We were the first to be in, but when the Vietnam operation was a little bit over the next year, it had to go down. You couldn't make an extra twenty million because there was no more money for this purpose.

Criteria for "notings"

- Muck: This leads me to the question that you already more or less responded to. Before the "notings" went to the Board for approval, you sat down with Mr. Hamilton, looked at the project submissions from the field, and from the experience that you had by having gone to the field, you said 'I don't think from the fund-raising point of view this should be done.' How did you select it?
- Beermann: When I looked at it, I also worked with other staff members, with Charles Egger himself, but Fred was the liaison man; he did it with the other staff. Wah Wong was the Canadian who was responsible for the Middle East, and Perry Hanson was for India. You asked yourself: Is the project really serious or did they just put something to New York to be on the noting list? Fred was a

realist, a pragmatic man and we both usually decided what would be put in the next project book.

Water

One thing I always went for, I would like to say that now, you could sell it like hot cakes - water. Water was the main thing.

Muck: It was the beginning of the Water Decade also.

Beermann: The Decade came later, but it was Martin Beyer, the Swede, who made me an honorary member of the UNICEF Waterfront. I have it upstairs, the scroll; not only a very nice man but he had also a good feel for fund raising, which you can't really say for all Programme Officers. They all have other qualities, but Martin Beyer had a good feel for public relations to sell the project and was enthusiastic, and he and I worked together wonderfully. Water projects were good; some activities were not very good, not so attractive; good in themselves, but a little dull - not imaginative.

Muck: Did you select also the countries? Did you, for instance, decide that some countries should not be in the special funding book because of difficulties that you wouldn't count afterwards to really sell for political reasons, or did you try to universally give all countries a fair deal?

Beermann: Yes, I would say so; but I must admit that some projects were in the books so that you could tell the government of the country it is in the book, but you knew that it wouldn't be worth selling. Afghanistan, I'm sure, has not sold much since the Russian intervention of '78.

Indian sensitivity

There was one country, now you mention it, that comes back to my mind, which did not like to be in the book and at the same time was the main recipient. In '72 I had to go to New Delhi to have it out with them, do you want to be in the book yes or no - India. In India we did a lot of water selling, hard-rock drilling. Enormous drilling rigs coming from Sweden. This project sold very nicely. Everybody liked to give money to the thirsty Indians, and India said well, you know...

Muck: What was the reason for this?

Beermann: Well, they had the feeling that they are a nation which you don't beg funds for. We work with UNICEF and that is okay, UNICEF can work here; but we are not to be portrayed as a kind of a beggar nation, it was a great shame because that was especially the attitude of some central authorities in New Delhi. When you went to the field in India, to the States, it was totally different. More money because they saw the needs from their doorstep, so they finally agreed. Mr. Labouisse also went to India and spoke with

Indira Gandhi, explained once more so they then agreed to be included in the book, but don't beg for us. So you had to be a little diplomatic in all these things. But on the whole, I think, the developing countries were grateful for everything they got more.

General resources/specific contributions relations

Muck: What was the relationship between the general resources and the specific contributions? Was there any unwritten proportions between the two funding sources?

Norway

Beermann: There again, you must look at every country differently. Norway concluded an agreement with UNICEF for special contributions. I went there in '72, and signed an agreement with the Secretary-General of the Foreign Office - the agreement may still be valid - in which they committed themselves to give UNICEF every year a special contribution over and above the regular, and the volume of both was every year one set by Parliament. They said, 'Now, Mr. Beermann,' knowing that I would always come back again with a new trick, 'You cannot come back anymore, you have now your regular contribution which is very high, and you get a fixed volume of special contributions; we will negotiate with you on the basis of your own book. You cannot come back for new contributions; with one exception - emergencies.'

They were very fair. The Norwegians were, I may say, my favorite customers. We went there on an afternoon; we had it out with them; we made our selections. We didn't get any fishy questions which some donors put to you, or you're asked to do things in the field, to control certain activities of developing countries which you couldn't do. The Norwegians never put unanswerable questions; they needed their report so the reports had to come back - that's a very important point and then you had the Norwegians for the year. For the whole year, high on the list of regular, high on the list of special.

Mutually reinforcing

Regular and special contributions are mutually reinforcing, that is my experience and I have seen that Mr. Grant also sees it. The documentation of this year's Board sticks to this thesis and I agree with practically everything which one can find in there on fund raising. I also have seen that not much has changed since I left, I saw that with pleasure. Mr. Grant made a strong point.

Muck: Administrative costs?

Beermann: No, that is also another point. But the strong point he made was that special contributions do not detract from regular contributions. On the contrary, they stimulates them, because people who invest a lot of their funds to UNICEF through the channel of regular contributions in this way demonstrate their

confidence in UNICEF. If their budgetary position so allows especially from the bilateral sectors, they'll give even more to UNICEF because they get value for their money. So Mr. Grant is absolutely right; it's not competition, it is mutually reinforcing.

Administrative costs of noted projects

Beermann: You mentioned the point of administrative expenditure. The British, especially, were the ones to say, "If a government wants to give extra money for extra projects, this would entail extra administrative expenditure, and this would have to be paid by the government which makes the special contribution." It's a theory which I always fought tooth and nail because: (a) it is not true because many noted projects are extensions of normal projects, more of the same. The whole staff is there also on the government's side, only instead of sending ten trucks you send twenty trucks; instead of sending under the regular programme ten drilling rigs you send fifty. I gave you a simple example. Of course, there are more complicated "noted" projects, but I always tried to keep it simple for the donors. And (b) it would mean that five or ten percent of special contributions given to UNICEF would go to administrative expenditure, which I didn't like at all. I wanted the money to go to the field, to the people who suffer. In Norway - Norway, again, my favourite - I was clearly told, 'Don't levy administrative costs. Don't do it; take it from the normal budget. It enables us to lower the overall percentage of administration for our total official development assistance programme because it is in contrast to specialized agencies, which have their own reasons to levy the administrative charge, UNICEF doesn't do it; the more we give to UNICEF, the more Parliament likes it, because they don't like giving money to red tape.'

Field attitude toward notings

Muck: Was the field interested in notings, did they find it attractive for them or was it an additional burden which they had to face?

Beerman: When you have to put more projects to the Board because there are "notings", surely then there is more work. I would say the majority of the field staff understood that, while it was more work it would open, at least potentially, the way for more income, for more activity in their respective country or region. So they responded favourably. Some started even pushing you, "Why don't you give us the possibility of more 'notings'?" Others had to be persuaded - they were not so much in favour of it and what would this all bring. Some of them probably understood that their country may be in the book, but the chance of their getting the money in view of the type of country they worked in was not very great. I agree. But on the whole, I must say the understanding was good. Here again I have to think of names. Sometimes names strike you. I remember that the present Director of the Geneva office, Uffe Konig, was always one of my favourites in UNICEF. In my time, he was in Sudan, in Khartoum, and he just produced notings as you wanted them-

Muck: And got the funding.

Beermann: And got the funding because you really had a response. If you sent him a cable for such-and-such, you immediately got a response. He was right on the ball, and when you went to Khartoum everything was lined up because there were notings in the offing.

He was right behind it. My best memories of Uffe and of others; for instance, Martin Sandberg who was in Indonesia, was a great one for notings. He manoeuvred notings with us; concocted all kinds of plans, you know. So on the whole it was very good, I must say.

Field/headquarters relationships with potential notings donors

Muck: Was there a shared responsibility in the fund-raising sector between the field and Headquarters, meaning you? Did you accept the field representatives, or did you encourage the field representatives to try to sell some of their "notings" to the Embassies on the spot, and through the embassies to Headquarters or was this a little bit of a problem if it had grown?

Beermann: No, no, I was sure that the field representatives had to talk to the embassies. If they wouldn't talk to the embassies, the embassies might talk to them, because some governments, when they got a noting, played it back through their embassies, and they would say, 'Tell me the truth about this noting' through the embassy. The man there looked up the UNICEF Representative and discussed the Project with him. I encouraged that. But one thing I discouraged - there were one or two instances when I had to stop - that they would start negotiating the donation. No, that belongs clearly with Headquarters. No question about it, because

there is general UNICEF policy, even political considerations at stake which those far away from New York couldn't possibly know. So warm up, help to pave the way-

Muck: But then leave it to Headquarters-

Beermann: Don't clinch the deal. Some people wanted to clinch the deal; that couldn't happen.

Headquarters/European Office relationships

Now the field, of course, seen from New York, is also our European Office. May I say a word about relations with our European Office?

Muck: Please do.

Beermann: I think I've already mentioned Dr. Sicault and how I respected him. Jean Guibbert was his second man, also, a very good Frenchman. I was not sure, in the beginning, what I should do in Europe, since there is an European office. I remember when I was a year in UNICEF, Mr. Heyward called me and criticized me a little bit. He said, "Well, Dr. Sicault is not so happy about you."

What had I done wrong? "You should do more in Europe," he said, "Dr. Sicault wants you to be more in Europe." I replied, "I've nothing against it. I like travelling, and I like to be in Europe. Does he really want that?" I didn't know where to put my foot, because he was the Director for Europe. "No, no, as long as you keep him informed and talk with him, please do the job in Europe." Wonderful. So it happened, and I then came into the habit to go to Paris every year for a couple of weeks; I sat there because there was no specific fundraising officer, which you have now in Geneva. That didn't exist at the time, so I did it. Then I phoned everybody in Europe, made my trip from Paris, came back to Paris. I became a member of the Paris office, and I liked that very much.

Muck: It was not difficult?

Beermann: Not difficult at all. Then Mr. Twigt came, my compatriot, who left the whole fund raising squarely with me - no trouble. Then after him, I think, Gertrude Lutz was there for some time as a Deputy holding the fort, no trouble. A very wonderful person, Gertrude. Then came Gordon Carter from India, an extremely able man - probably one of the ablest UNICEF officials - then the office had moved to Geneva - and Gordon had soon understood that if he would abstain from fundraising, there was not much else to be done, so he started fundraising on his own, and again I was fully in favour of that - his going to all the European capitals

talking to ministers, etc., on the highest level. It was fine, especially paving the way for increased, regular contributions. Always the mainstay of UNICEF programmes. But, for the special contributions there were complications, for the same reasons that I had discouraged field staff in the developing countries from clinching deals for UNICEF with a certain country for a special project. I had to put my foot down; I said, 'Well, if it comes to a final clinching of the deal, it is done at the center, i.e., HQ. The same is true for the other UN organizations.' I was not an exception in the UN field because I always kept in close touch with other UN organizations on fund raising.

It was not so easy with Gordon. It was really never resolved in a very clear way, but I'm not one to fight about little competences etc.; I kept my peace with him. I also came to Geneva but did not sit for weeks in Geneva, like I did in Paris, because under Gordon that was not necessary. I can see that the relationship between Headquarters and the Geneva office has a built-in difficulty. How can the problem be resolved - which still may exist, I don't know. Just by tolerance and -

Muck: Informing each other -

Beermann: Informing each other, also on a personal basis, getting on well with each other, working for the cause and not for personal aggrandizement - that is very important. But there is in that whole field-Headquarters' relationship potentially always an

element which can lead to conflict. I must say this clearly. Do you agree with me?

Muck: I do agree that there is an archaic-type administrative conflict of potential because of the decentralized nature of UNICEF, but if you look at the UN system as such, it's the same - Missions in New York and Missions in Geneva, or Missions in Geneva and Headquarters in Vienna. In my particular case of Austria, it's always the question of a decentralized system, in which of course Headquarters plays, and has to play, a predominant role. But I think it is to be overcome, and if there's a clear understanding that there is room enough - and there is, especially now in economic dark times - then I think a certain division of labour is possible. It actually has been taking place by giving the overall responsibility for National Committees to Geneva as its prime role. I think that's a clarifying statement, and in the other area, I think if Geneva can sort of complement and come into a fund-raising strategy of New York, then I think it's a problem to be overcome. But I agree that there is a sort of in-built difficulty that has to be taken into consideration and in an intelligent way to be overcome.

Fundraising for emergencies

Muck: But one question that I wanted to ask you is, how does the whole emergency area come into the general resources fund raising/"noted" projects fund raising? How did the emergency operation of UNICEF that started off with the Declaration progress and become a part of the fund-raising activities?

Beermann: That's a very good question. When I entered UNICEF, it was in Biafra, so I really started the whole thing, even before "notings", because the "notings" have to be approved by the Board, which meets once a year. You can't wait to do something until the Board -

Muck: You mean in an emergency situation?

Beermann: Yes. The Biafra thing was immediately on my plate, and I started my fundraising work for Nigeria, Biafra, and there was a whole series of emergencies thereafter. The Pakistani war, '71, then broke a tornado in Pakistan in which I think 300,000 people lost their lives in one night in the Bay of Bengal. All the time, emergencies, but that was easy fund raising. You did not have to say much about it; all the people saw it on the television screens and read it in the newspapers. The thing you have to do, and fortunately UNICEF was always very good at this, was to tell the public and government as soon as possible, we are already there.

Now there's one thing I must say clearly, so you try to capitalize on that and the money flowed in - Vietnam was one of the classics. Later yet, Kampuchea, after my time. UNICEF became even the lead agency.

UN Coordination in fundraising

However, you had to watch two things, first of all the competitors in the UN field - UNHCR where there was a refugee-problem - when they smelt a refugee, they were there. That would involve Mr. Wolfing. Then there was WHO, which always wanted to do something, so we had to keep in touch with them, and in the UN system there is no structure for this. Coordinated fund raising doesn't exist; we have tried it a little bit. I still remember the meeting with Mr. Labouisse and Hoffman, when at least we tried to agree that the intervention should not take place on the same day. In the morning there was an UNDP man in Dublin and in the afternoon there was UNICEF, which gave a bad impression. Spread it a little bit. That never worked.

Muck: It never worked?

Beermann: No, no, it never worked. Also with UNHCR there was never a formal agreement. I soon learned my lesson. It could only be done, as so many things in life, and that it has certain advantages to do it that way-

Muck: On a personal basis -

Beermann: Exactly, on an informal basis, so Ole Volving, who knew me and I knew him -

Muck: And you informed each other.

Beermann: Yes, I telephoned him immediately and maintained contact. Ole Volving is a very interesting guy and an enormous fundraiser. Look at the UNHCR budget I have the deepest respect for the man. I don't think he ever took money away from UNICEF. He will probably say that I once took money away from him, in Bonn for Vietnam. But there were special reasons, and beyond my power. By pure coincidence, I was in Bonn, it was 17 million Deutsch Mark and Parliament decided on the day I was in Bonn. I also knew that if I don't take this money for the United Nations in Vietnam, no other one would get it. So we had to take it for our organization. UNHCR was also trying to do something and needed money; it was just a day too late.

Muck: But the main competitor in this emergency area was, of course, but also in the other, UNHCR?

Beermann: No, competitor I wouldn't say -

Muck: A reinforcer, but people that were as UNICEF active in the fund-raising area?

Beermann: Yes, competitor - you may use that expression if it is not interpreted in an antagonistic way.

Muck: No, of course not.

Beermann: I happened to have served UNHCR even for a longer time than UNICEF, and I'm going back to UNHCR in a week. I'm again working for three months for UNHCR, so I knew UNHCR very well, also their New York representatives, and they always played with open books.

Muck: Yes, but they're very active in the fundraising area, more so than other agencies. Whom would you say is the most active fundraising agency, UNDP and UNHCR?

Beerman: UNDP is a totally different cup of tea. I think at the moment, with all respect for UNICEF in the UN system, I guess UNHCR, because I have to think of the refugee-explosions; think of the boat people; think of Afghanistan, Somalia, etc.

Muck: Yes, because of its mandate UNHCR is extremely attractive as is UNICEF -

Beermann: And needed. When I started with UNICEF, UNHCR was behind us. In our times they always kept a little space with us, now UNHCR is in front of us. But the situation has prompted that.

Emergencies and reconstruction

Muck: After the emergencies, how did UNICEF cope with the increased flow of resources? Was the implementation capacity of UNICEF then as big as that in order to cope with the increased flow of resources?

Beermann: Well, in a big emergency assistance is needed within 24 hours, say. You have the Copenhagen Warehouse, you have funds from the Emergency Fund so UNICEF can start right away. The funds are coming in later - days and weeks, perhaps even months. If you have a large emergency, a lot of the infrastructure for children, health, education, etc. has been destroyed. It is much easier to keep people going by feeding them or by sending them tents, antibiotics within 24 hours than to build an infrastructure. You have anyway to do more for that country because the infrastructure doesn't exist anymore. So without, in any sense, betraying the donors, the public or governments, the emergency funds coming in - the newly-raised funds - were really channelled to this second phase or third phase.

Muck: Rehabilitation.

Beermann: Reconstruction, rehabilitation process.

Reporting on special contributions

Beermann: When it came then later to reporting - a very important point with special contributions - you have to tell the donors what you have done with the money. This is a point which, despite all the efforts, especially of Dorothy Schleimer, was never in my time, I must admit, completely solved. There were always problems with reporting - either the Field didn't come through or we were slow, or the Comptroller could not make out the amounts, the funds. It

was complicated, the whole operation - I fully admit - and you had often to compromise or improvise. I never will forget that very good Executive Director of the Canadian UNICEF National Committee, Harry Black; a man with a good sense of humour, so he took things relatively easy. He said, 'Victor, your system doesn't work. Your system cannot work as it is; it's just not possible. I will go myself.' So what I did, I started travelling with him. That's also a point, travel with donors if you can make it. I travelled with him, and he looked at new projects and took the notes himself on the old projects, on the spot. Because his funds came, not only from the Canadian public but also-

Muck: But also from the co-financing?

Beermann: From CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), exactly, so he did it himself, and we helped him. His line was, "Forget this and say that and emphasize that, gloss a little bit over that," without being dishonest. I don't know what the present situation with reporting is, but it is a difficult point, I think, with any UN organization. Evaluation and reporting are not easy, but with emergencies you could channel the funds the way UNICEF did it and I don't think we have any had a scandal, that they say, 'We gave you millions and what did you really do with it?' I think especially in the Cambodia operation, which was after my time, UNICEF rose to great heights of international reputation of efficiency and handling things.

Muck: How often did donors then ask for reports, formal reports? What was the normal relay with donors?

Beermann:: Well, we even put it in writing. The "noting" can be implemented as soon as a reliable donor has given his promises and pledge in writing, be it Government, be it National Committee. You got so much in installments or in one sum. The letter of confirmation comes in on a certain date, then the procedure starts with the Comptroller and the Programme Division; the noting is ripe for implementation or part of it. We also sold parts of projects because "notings" can be very large - too large for one given donor. So the green light was given so that in principle the first report should reach the donor one year later.

Muck: One year interval.

Beermann: Now, even that we didn't always keep, I must say. I was sometimes in difficulty. The donor said, "You're coming again for new funds?"

Muck: And you haven't reported on the old ones.

Beermann: We had to give an answer to that.

Muck: How did you cope with this particular problem? With your charm?

Beermann: I don't know if I have any charm, but I don't think we have ever lost friends that way. I can't remember anyway, but sometimes I found myself a little uneasy. I'll tell you frankly, I felt uneasy. I tell Dorothy, I go to that country now. If I were the person to whom I would talk to, I would say immediately, "Mr. Beermann, nice to see you, happy to see you," -

Muck: Happy to see you, but

Beermann: "Exactly what happened to that project in Tanzania?"

Donor requests for details on proposals

Muck: To come back to an earlier remark of yours, when you told me about the ten million dollars as a contribution of the Dutch at the end of the year, you said working over a weekend and you made the package and you managed. What were the donors asking then, apart from the description that you had in the supplementary book? Did they ask for detailed project proposals?

Beermann: Yes, I can tell you one little story there. First of all, I always considered the books - the Project Book - as a bait, really a bait. The descriptions are more full now than in my time; they were a little thinner then. I don't know what exactly is done now, but I think you give more details. I didn't give all the details. First of all, it was again extra work, cost more money and why tell a story in twelve sides if you can do it in two sides. If someone is really interested and puts questions, I would pass the request for additional information back to New York for Dorothy to gather, and then forward it to the donor. And then you have all the information now at your disposal. If it is okay now, then you go forward. Now when I was after the ten million dollars, in the Hague, for that very hurried negotiation, there was a project in it for the Central African Empire.

Muck: Then Empire?

Beermann: I had put the Central African Republic on the list. I gave comments on the projects; some of them I had seen; some of them I knew; some a little bit with a blessed imagination; and then we came to Central Africa where I had never been. So I started talking, 'Look here, the Emperor may be a fool, but the country, etc., and it is so needed and we have very good officers there, and like the other projects you get value for your money.' The man listened patiently and said, 'I'm just back from the Central African Empire where I stayed for two years,' and I had never been there. So what did I say, 'Okay, you know more about it than I do, but I can tell you one thing, sir. You finance that project, I ask you urgently to finance it, but at the same time I make you a promise. In a year's time from now on, I will be in the country and look at that project. I write you a personal report on how the project goes.' 'Oh, you are kidding,' he said. 'I make you that promise; I'm not kidding.' 'I will see.' He came back a day later, with the project on the list. I said, 'Ah, so you are going to finance it.' 'Yes, but you have to make the trip.'

Muck: You did go there and how did the project go?

Beermann: Well, I could write a report which was so - so but I came through with it, you know, but I never lied. Sometimes it's good to admit that UNICEF is bad on this or the other; it makes a good impression but sometimes I tried also to protect its good reputation. I can't give prescriptions; you must have the feeling for this. If you don't have the feeling, don't raise funds!

In retrospect

Personal satisfaction

Muck: I'm a little hesitant, but still with all the joy and satisfaction that comes out of your description of your activities, there must have been some sort of disappointments that you had in UNICEF. Are there any?

Beermann: Of course, I had absolutely no disappointment with UNICEF on the personal level; I always enjoyed the colleagues - they were nice; the working atmosphere was good, I found. Some colleagues you like more than others, it's human in a large organization. But on the whole, I look back at my UNICEF experience with very positive feelings.

Donors and notings

But the donors were not always behaving like they should - that I can tell you frankly. This relates more to the regular contributions. For the notings you knew more or less where to go.

In the field of notings, if I may say, looking back, it didn't go too badly, there was always scope for innovation and again trying new approaches and doing something else. But on the whole I think that's okay - it must have been more or less okay, because UNICEF is still going on along the same lines, as mentioned before.

Problems of donor burden sharing

But one thing which I certainly couldn't solve and which UNICEF has not yet solved and which UNDP has not solved, nor UNHCR - all comparable organizations (and don't talk about specialized agencies, that's a different cup of tea) that is the question of burden sharing. If you look at UNDP, I've just made a big study for UNDP for an article I've written about the UNDP financial crisis for a Dutch political magazine, not only that the DAC countries (OECD countries) pay 90% of the bill of UNDP, of the 17 DAC countries, half of the 90% - or even more than half of that 90% - comes from five or six countries. If you say, 'Of course, but these are the large countries such as the United States, Japan, Federal German Republic, France, Great Britain, not at all. They are the good old Swiss, Scandinavians and, I may say, the Dutch. And if you eliminate them, UNDP can fold up. The

burden was so unequally divided between the donor countries, there was really no equitable distribution - key. It was always a problem which really vexed me.

Final thought on role of fundraising

Beermann: At the end of this interview I would like to state one thing clearly. It refers to the ancillary function of the fund raising in its relationship to programming. Any organization which - like UNICEF - has to depend on voluntary income, needs fund raisers, otherwise it could not operate. However, for which objectives funds are raised and how they will be spent, is not for the fund raisers to decide; this is a matter for the programmers and for those donating funds. Fund raising per se is non-existent. Fund raisers should at all times be keenly aware of this. Their role is limited though essential.

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