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CF/HST/1985/006

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To: Mr. V. Tarzie Vittachi Date: 9 September 1982  
From: J.C. John Charnow Ref: Hist/6  
Subject: The History Project and Déjà-Vu

The memo setting out the objectives of the history project (HIST/2, 8/23/82), written in Standard Reports Office cadence, underplays what I believe should be an important objective of the history project.

Late in 1959 Maurice Pate asked staff members to give him their views about the future of UNICEF. As we burrow into the archives I hope very much we can find their responses. However I have uncovered the answer I prepared in January 1960 (attached to this memo) which reflected a trend of thinking among some of us in the UNICEF Secretariat.

What strikes me about this answer is that now - more than two decades later - it is still up-to-date in many respects. I mentioned this unhappy thought to Dick Heyward. Sharing it, he felt that the history project should encourage pondering about why we have been so slow in achieving our aspirations. How might we have done things differently to have made better progress?

I should like to see this self-critical attitude underlie the approach of all of us who will be engaged in putting together and analyzing the record of the UNICEF experience.

Personally, I know that it would be shot in the arm for me if I could, in the year 2000, read a memo on the future of UNICEF which did not need to rehash so many of the same issues and remedies.

(4p)

4 January 1960

Dear Maurice,

One of the main reasons I was deeply pleased to receive your letter of 24 November asking for comments on next steps forward for UNICEF was because of its portent for the future. If historical periods in the life of an organization can be said to be marked by single actions, I think that perhaps this letter and Dick Heyward's paper on "The Real Problems of UNICEF" could well mark the beginning of the new phase in the widening of UNICEF's horizons.

I have no original ideas to offer but I do share a number of ideas advanced over the years by my fellow co-workers, and I am therefore setting forth below what I regard as the main ones:-

- a) Ultimately, there should be no limit on the types of programmes aided, or the types of aid given, or on any other activities undertaken by UNICEF, as long as the basic objective is achieved of encouraging countries to develop permanent expanding services for children. This means, of course, moving into activities to advance the mental and emotional, as well as the physical, development of children.
- b) It is important for us to move more decisively in this direction. If the world is entering into a period of greater international resources available for economic and social progress - as well it may - we must be prepared through advance planning, policies, and experience to channel a fair portion of those resources for the needs of children. Pilot projects in new fields would be important.
- c) UNICEF should not hesitate whenever necessary, to finance the cost of technical personnel, studies, applied research, and evaluations in order to do a better job. In addition to project personnel, there is a need for more technical personnel in overall planning and for aiding governments to develop requests if we are to move forward faster. If

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these activities cannot be developed at the pace required through reimbursement to specialized agencies (and I rather doubt that it can in many instances), we should do it directly ourselves. I have no doubt that we can work out coordination devices to undertake this directly without infringing in any real way on the objectives and activities of the agencies. As a matter of fact, I believe that in the end the agencies would find that the new system gives them much more than it takes away.

- d) I doubt very much that we can make progress along the lines suggested in a) to c) above unless we have a carefully planned strategy on a country-by-country basis to upgrade the caliber of our Executive Board and of the key governmental officials and others who help determine the governments' positions on major policy issues confronting the Board. To my mind this deserves a considerable amount of detailed time and attention for the next couple of years.
- e) We should make the "brain-storming" process started by your letter and Dick Hayward's memorandum on "The Real Problems of UNICEF" a continuing one. The purpose would be to encourage in the staff as a whole a new sense of dynamic potentialities and imagination. I know what ferment of ideas there is in the Executive Director's office. One of the challenges for the future, I believe, is to remove the obstacles which have prevented this ferment from moving out of the Executive Director's office into the organization as a whole, so that there is a much wider area of stimulation, cross-fertilization of ideas, and alertness at all levels to new possibilities of action and an encouragement to making the most of present ways.
- f) Especially important, I believe, is the need for greater direct, intimate, and continuous communication between the country representatives and UNICEF Headquarters. This stems from my belief that the day-to-day relationships of our country representatives with governments constitute the key element in UNICEF's work. Our goal should be more autonomy at the country level, with planning and policy development at Headquarters benefitting directly from country level experience, and country representatives understanding every aspect of new policy as thoroughly and as early as possible and participating in a real way in its formulation.

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4 January 1960

- 6) To accomplish this upgrading of staff outlook and teamwork, we need to be open-minded in examining our present organizational structure and practices for possible changes. Included in this examination should be the whole question of regional organization; of rotation policy/ of the headquarters organization, and of staff recruitment policy and practices, especially for field posts. While we must make a greater planned effort to draw more out of the potentials of our present field staff, I believe if we are ultimately to become the kind of agency envisaged in a) above, we will need a new type of field representative. I recognize, also, that there are many pros and cons for any organizational changes, especially because it may affect a number of individuals. Changes, therefore, may have to be made gradually. But I believe it would be helpful to analyze our problems and set down clearly our objectives so that we will be prepared for new and larger responsibilities.

With great appreciation for the opportunity to set down these thoughts which were stirred into motion by your letter, I am,

Cordially yours,

J. J. Charnow