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CF/NYH/OSEB/HST/1995-007

UNICEF HISTORY PROJECT

David Haxton interview

by John Usher

Monday 19 June 1989

2132H

EXTERNAL
RELATIONS

John Usher: Mr. Haxton, we'll start off with some rather general questions.

Jim Grant and others have said UNICEF's external relations needs looking at. Indeed the Executive Board has requested a full scale evaluation. How do we strengthen our external relations? Do they need it? Just talk about external relations generally.

David Haxton: That is a tough and a difficult question. I've been out of the active work in external relations for over a year so I wouldn't want to suppose I know some of the current developments or what motivated the Board to ask such a question...
~~(Perhaps the Board only desires to know what we mean; what we plan to do, etc.)~~ But in thinking about it one has to consider that external relations is a rather all-encompassing title for a number of the functions of UNICEF; one of a number of processes through which the people in UNICEF go about doing their business, ~~so it's~~ rather a difficult thing "to get a handful of" in many ways. For example, if we want to be logical and managerial about it, we have to say, what is it we mean by external? Is it totally external to UNICEF or do we bend a little bit and say external to the UN? I think if I had to choose I

would choose "external to UNICEF." So therefore we have a special kind of external relations but within the UN group and family. What are our channels of communications and exchange within the UN system of information flow, maintaining an image, a status, a rapport, an exchange, a co-operation, ~~or whatever?~~

A second major element in our external relations is dealing with independent and separate governments. Too often, at least I believe, we look at them as "interchangeable spare parts." You know, they're different colours on a map, somehow! "But they are sort of all the same, don't you know!" Whether they're big or small, militarily led or autocratically led, democratically led or dictatorially led, when they occupy a chair on the Executive Board we pay attention to them and to certain issues once a year. And that's really not quite fair, to say the least, to UNICEF as an agency or to the individual governments.

Another set of considerations in the external relations business is that group that we dismiss or applaud depending on our view that day, called non-governmental organizations. But again there are so many of those that we tend to group them all as one and sometimes worse treat all the same. We are accustomed to teachers groups,

health groups, etc., as "NGOs," but, after all, Chemical Bank is a non-governmental organization! United States Steel is certainly a non-governmental organization, as is the Seiko Watch Company in Japan, although we don't think about those as NGOs; ~~it's not convenient,~~ or we don't have a policy for it. ~~We do with the organized groups of women and men, together in voluntary organizations or non-governmental groups who have an active role or issue, or whatever in social or economic development - that we do.~~

Another element in external relations is people. When I retired, my wife and I took a land trip across North America - we hadn't lived here for 26 years so we thought it would be interesting to know something about the continent where our roots are. We visited at least 29 states and five Canadian provinces and, as both of us are wont to do, we talked and listened to people. Everywhere we stopped we stated we had been with the UN - UNICEF - and UNICEF was - at least - recognized. Maybe it was only a general idea that it was about children. Maybe they didn't know all the intricate details that you and I like to savor with relish, but they'd heard of UNICEF and what they heard was sort of okay. It was good. More so in Canada proportionately than

in the U.S., which raised a couple of questions with me. Whatever happened to that constant flow of information out to the U.S. citizens so that when the U.S. Congress might have a little difficulty with regard to the contribution, the mail could start flowing in. ~~So that's a group for external relations. You can't reach them all through that non-governmental group.~~

External relations is an information management question and it shouldn't be confused with publicity or public information or public relations. Pieces of all of that comprise it, but it must, as a process, be managed appropriately.

Another thing we have to understand about our external relation business is that we depend on it - that's where the money comes from. It comes to UNICEF from governments as well as people for a number of good reasons. The first major reason is that they know about us and if they know about us they must know about us through some external relations function. After all, dealing with a government is an external function. Whether it's the government you're collaborating with by spending money with it or by getting money from it to spend somewhere else. It's an external relations function. A second major reason that they contribute to us is that they trust us.

We're pretty good at our work and if governments and people didn't trust us I don't really think that they would dig into their treasuries every year to come up with growing resources. ~~And~~ ~~these contributions are not just to UNICEF~~ ~~general resources - as valuable as that is - but~~ ~~to supplementary revenue, as well.~~ There are some countries using our channel - and I don't find anything wrong with that - to make better use of their own bilateral resources - because their channel isn't so good. They've recognized that there is more to development assistance than just bilateral aid, bilateral channels and multilateral expenditures. They like to see some result from time-to-time. Reporting on that too, is an external relations function. To the degree that we are effective in this, ~~to that degree~~, we help to generate more resources for children - and that is a major corporate goal!

ADVOCACY

An issue of "advocacy" (without being too immodest about it) we must address is about word usage! Advocacy is a word we're very comfortable with today in UNICEF although it hasn't always been a comfortable word to use. (I found [I thought] just before I left, that we're going through one of the phases that we go through every once in a while of using words as though they really didn't mean what the book said they

~~really~~ meant! But, rather, something else! And if we don't understand them [these terms] we can always confuse them with other terms, as though they were interchangeable spare parts! Like "social mobilization" is not the same as "social communication" and neither one of those two are substitutes for "advocacy," at least in my view.

~~So what is my view?~~ I believe that the original resolution creating UNICEF called for advocacy. So, the question becomes what was called for, what do we advocate and to whom, for what result? Where does my premise come from that the original resolution said that? Well, after all, it said that UNICEF could stay alive only if it raised its own money. How would one do that without advocating something? So what is it we advocate?

We advocate for children not as ~~a eleemosynary~~ ^{a missionary} effort; not as a charitable venture; although those are good, but because there is no other global spokesgroup for children. But that concept needs to be broken into manageable proportions. We don't speak just for poor children, although we're better at that than speaking for the less poor. We speak for children.

~~Let me state my premise my view.~~ Everybody, every institution and organization advocates something. Let me state it more simplistically than it really is! WHO advocates health for all - good health for everybody, and we say ~~terrific,~~ we agree with that. However, in a disorderly world with not enough resources for everybody and everything, while we support advocating health for everybody, if one must choose, we would advocate health for children first. Everybody advocates for more people to learn more things. Sometimes it's called education sometimes it's called literacy, ~~whatever.~~ We agree with that, ~~that's terrific.~~ It ~~ought to be done~~ but if one must choose economically or politically, then one must choose learning for children first. A lot of people advocate improved nutrition for everybody - you, me, everybody. However, UNICEF advocates for improved nutrition for children first. In agricultural development UNICEF should be in the position of saying to a Minister of agriculture "you've just made a nutritional decision," if the decision of the Minister is to remove 10,000 hectares from peanuts and put it into cotton! (One can make food for children from peanuts but not from cotton.) Now that might be a good economic venture, but the advocacy role of UNICEF is to call attention to the fact that they've

just made a nutritional decision that might have a negative impact on children. They may choose to go ahead anyway, but our function as an advocate is to say ~~let~~ us look at it another way. ~~In~~ In the field of agriculture, as in the field of finance, the choice of how to spend money creates the kind of society one perceives for ones own country. Our role of advocate for children is not restricted to contacts resulting from UNICEF programme investments. The role is all encompassing. It deals with the Ministry of education; the Ministry of land reform; the Ministry of health; the Ministry of social welfare; the Ministry of justice; the Ministry that handles land rights and inheritance rights; agriculture; internal affairs; foreign affairs. So there is no Ministry of government in which UNICEF should not be saying, just a minute, may I talk to you about children?"

That is all external relations. So if we get that right (i.e., what it is one advocates), then we have to determine to whom we advocate it in the external relations function. That might call for a change in the nature of the mix and the package of information. It would be nice if all chief justices, for example, of all the countries were fully knowledgeable on the benefits of improved infant feeding practices and drinking

water and whatever. That would be marvelous! However, maybe with them what we would like is a sympathetic ear for redesigning the codes which protect children and allow children, with that protection, to develop as human beings and productive citizens. On the other hand it may well be terrific if all the Ministers of health and education learn all the jurisprudence required to protect children and allow them to develop. But we might want to advocate to those people some other things they ought to be doing or could be doing for children. There needs always to be an appropriate mix for each advocate target. I hold the view that our priority target for advocacy is a sovereign government, and its people. So we need to know about that government; its people; its customs; etc. Then we need to know what to advocate and to whom. We also have other "targets."

There is the "UN group," and the bilateral group; I think, regrettably, too often we talk to these people and organizations in terms of what they could do for us, or fundraising. Now what I'm about to say is not anti-fundraising; I've done a little bit of that in my time, also, and not always unsuccessfully.

FUND RAISING

We advocate more resources for children; that's our first function. If it is better that some of those resources come through UNICEF, that is terrific, but first is to advocate for more resources for children. Why is that important? Well, it's important because it's right! When we advocate well for increased resources for children, we also make the special needs of children more widely and better understood. When the needs of children became clear, then the needs of UNICEF became obvious! We will never have - nor should we - all the resources required for all the needs of children. We need those that can help to generate national and local increased resources. Because the small amount of money that UNICEF may provide, or the technical assistance we may provide, is really marginal in most places to the development of that country in an independent way. What we have to learn to do is advocate the use of that small resource to create a greater resource of national endeavor for children. If the project dies after UNICEF financing ends, you've had it! You've made a mistake! I used to always say to programme officers "if the programme is designed in order to get financing from UNICEF it probably is not a good one! It's probably a bad project. But if it's designed to move forward a series of

inter-connected issues for children, then you should take a look at it." And then the UNICEF function is to advocate how that can be permanently installed in the system and to determine which part of that larger package might be accelerated, or improved, with an infusion of UNICEF collaboration. That's country programming and that's an external function.

Usher: A concern of yours as a Representative and regional director has been our relationship with governments. Are our Representatives sufficiently informed and able to deal successfully with governments?

RELATS.
WITH
GOVTS.

Haxton: Let me try to deal with that but not directly answer that question (which I don't know that I'll be able to do), but discuss relationships with governments. Again, you see, "relations with governments" covers such a wide variety. [Too,] we use the term in all such internal language without being clear always! (But that's okay, I mean everybody has their own lingo to get things done. We have "Call Forwards" and "BALs" which nobody outside understands nor should they!) Too frequently we group nations as "donors" or "recipients." (Suddenly the world is divided into two groups!) However, in every country where I worked - and that's 19 - they

were also donors. Not much sometimes, certainly not a net donor, but they did contribute to UNICEF. Maybe not as much as theoretically they received but this division of the world is really rather insidious in many ways, so that's an element of dealing with governments that has to be understood.

Another question to be addressed is related to how a government works, functions, etc. Most people, I believe, don't even know how their own government works! A citizen from South Australia, north Yorkshire or northeast North Carolina may see government as something that reaches out every once in a while and takes money. Or they see government as that group which is called 'they,' as in "they ought to do something about this." But how does it really function? I don't think that in the United States citizens know very much about how their government functions until things stop or until C-Span starts reaching out or "Watergates" take place and then suddenly that's wake-up time and then there's "how did that happen?"

So to tell someone, a John Usher or a David Haxton or a Mary Glockensphiel that "you're off to the Duchy of Upper Overshoe and your job is to do this and your 'challenge' is to change the

world, and your call forward level is X, and you report to the Comptroller on these things" is fine, but the key question remains "what is the Duchy of Upper Overshoe?" How does it work? So I wrote down for Representatives things which I don't think they read with the same fervor as a banned novel, but at least I would ask them every once in a while if they looked at it. Some of these things were: find out what that government is. Okay you can get it from the dictionary, from the library, from the encyclopedia from whatever, and you know it's a republic and it has a President and it has this, or it's a kingdom. Okay, that's terrific, you need that. But how does it fit in the UN? What is its position on a variety of issues? Is there any pattern? Are they always sort of for or against some of these things? To what groups do they belong and how do they exchange information among themselves in that group so that you can have some idea of a resistance or reaction to a proposal or discussion? How does it do business with its neighbours? How does it handle its question of culture? You and I are sitting with our ties undone and shortsleeve shirts, with our elbows on the table and that's okay because you and I understand each other. But that may not work everywhere. What about wearing leather shoes into the wrong temple? That's not really as

simple as using the wrong fork at dinner; it's a little bit more subtle than that, to say the least! How do they handle their religious beliefs? How do they handle relations among themselves? What do they do that makes them who they are? How have they come to some conclusions about what kind of a society they perceive they'd like to have, (called the planning process of their country)? Are all these projects carefully designed or are they projects of a certain General? The King's son? the Prime Minister's nephew? or what have you? Did they build up an infrastructure of public administrative responsibility which is almost carved in stone, or did they come up through that same system not carved in stone but a little more open and free and flexible? What makes this work? Why is the development of rural drinking water in the Ministry of agriculture when urban water supplies come from another Ministry? It can't just be a bureaucratic mistake. There must be a political or other motivation for that. What is it that does this? Who are the actors in this drama? Are they really the ones with their fingers on the buttons of power? Does the system of judiciary, legislature and executive function or does it just operate separately from each other in a great march into the future without any recourse to change? Is there a recourse

mechanism of any kind? What is happening to children? We are, of course, invited guests to a country and must constantly recall that and act appropriately. We are UN officers and must not meddle in internal affairs.

It is correct that we have to be careful not to meddle in the political affairs of countries, but it is equally correct to tell the Minister (who may remind you that you are a foreigner in the country) that you are involved - up to your eyebrows! - in the internal affairs of the country as long as so many of their potential citizens die so silently, and that you know that, and that your function as an advocate for children is to tell the people what you know. This is not easy! It means one has to have a style, a little risk taking, but you can use the style, risk taking and knowledge only if you know the country-specific situation. That's why I reject a part of your question. It is not just the Representatives who need to know! Usually, if a relationship with a government is mismanaged, at some other level or in some other fora, it is the Rep who picks up the debris! There are two or three dozen people in New York dealing with governments through the missions, through travelling and visiting, through visits as a technical advisor, supporter or help through a field office. (Maybe the three or four dozen

is exaggerated but it doesn't matter what the number is. The point is valid no matter if it's 30.) The Representative is the one on the ground, at the national level, so everybody dealing with the Duchy of Upper Overshoe has to understand, what is our approach there? What are the channels we want to use - and it can't just be one channel - it should be a principal channel and then should be supported by others. It can't be institutionalized by an individual at country, regional or central level. What happens if the individual gets hit by a truck? The institution continues to go on and the position of UNICEF is the same. It may be managed a little differently, it may one or another subtle move, but the continuum, the process remains constant.

So, do our people know enough about how to do business with governments? Well, I don't think so. But I would've said that 30 years ago in my own case and I would probably say that 30 years from now, also mainly because it's a constant learning process. Governments may change their names, as one just did last week. That's not just a whim; there's something behind that that merits attention. Look at this and think about and how it may affect UNICEF. Our advocacy cannot go over the heads or around the bodies of

those who govern sovereign nations, if we really want to be helpful. Most politicians I've met - the bitter, the sweet, the crooked, the safe, the honest, whatever - really do want to do something worthwhile for their people. Their problem is that they have to stay in office in order to do that. Our advocacy position has to make the subject of children politically okay.

Politically good. It may well be controversial but not politically controversial. On the other hand we don't want to get so married to one political leader that, in some of the more macho societies, once that political leader is off the scene - because people don't follow politics by party they follow it by charisma and leader - the next one says I don't want to copy that programme.

ON THE
QUESTION
OF
MONO-FOCALITY

So our whole menu has to be available. While today we might advocate EPI (Expanded Programme of Immunization) because that's right to do; on the other hand, in our list or menu, in our inside coat pocket, are things for other people to consider. Remember: during all the attacks that we were "monofocal," The Executive Director had on his conference table an award from the water development people. Let's not forget that. Too bad everybody couldn't have seen that; but it was a clear message that we were not monofocal (unless it was monofocal for children -

that's true!) I remember we had a staff meeting on the question of people accusing us of being monofocal two or three years ago and I was one of those, who said, "Well, wait a minute! That's where we came in. It's the same music; they just changed the words. What about the years we suffered through malaria eradication? If that wasn't monofocal I'm seriously mistaken! You know, we had a lot of our money going into one thing - malaria eradication - and we never eradicated malaria - anywhere! Talk about being monofocal, EPI was a piece of cake compared to that.

RELATS.
WITH
GOVTS.

So, it has to be a constant orientation; and people who join the UN as international civil servants have to understand that we're doing business with sovereign and independent governments. You may like that government or dislike it but that has to be in the silence of your own mind. If you really want to work and advocate for children, then you have to do business with the people in charge. It's something like playing bridge, you can only play the cards that are dealt. So if your function, is to attack hell with a sponge and a bucket of water, then with any hope of success, it'd be a good idea to keep your sponge wet.

SOCIAL
MOBILIZATION

Usher: Okay, let's talk about social mobilization. The seeds for social mobilization were sown about 20 or 30 years ago; as I said earlier, Danny Kaye's role was an early result, I think. But are we nurturing its growth correctly? How are we doing with this?

Haxton: Let me start with that one backwards. I don't know when the seeds were planted. If, however, I understand social mobilization as it is now in [the] current [UNICEF] literature that I have seen over the last couple of weeks, and as it is now apparently understood or being discussed, there is a regrettable tendency, I think, to confuse that term with "advocacy for children." That is another process, another function. If what we mean is to mobilize society or social groups to do something, to think about something, to create an awareness or be aware, whatever, that's terrific! But it can't be done even by our best goodwill ambassadors alone. They can only help under certain conditions. On the other hand, remember we're invited into a sovereign and independent country not to create social unrest. (I mean, we just saw an illusion, an act of social mobilization in a major country [China 1989]. Is that what we mean?) Or do we mean by social mobilization: an effort to get all of the

slum dwellers to go down and beat on the door of the mayor's office to make sure the funds are equitably distributed for water supply and day care centers in the slums of Rio or Calcutta? Or are we unsure? unclear? or glib?

We glibly throw these terms around as if they were "First Earth Run" or other "catchy" titles. If what you mean is mobilizing a community, whatever its size, for a short period of time to do something worthwhile for children because its right to do, like get immunized, okay, say that! And be up front that it's a short run thing. If, on the other hand what you're doing is saying we really need more money from X country in Europe and we'd like to mobilize that society to recognize that it's their turn to pay; after all, we were there when they needed help now it's their turn to help us somewhere else, that's another set of things.

GRAND

ALLIANCE

I think that's why the term, the "Grand Alliance" became bandied about and misunderstood. Maybe it's even a bad term, that's another matter, but the idea is correct. Everybody who's organized is organized for a reason but that reason may not be us or children. So the trick becomes how to take their interest in being organized and insert into that a concern for children, so that that

SOCIAL
MARKETING

becomes a self-generating, self-motivating group mobilized for children. There are books written on what social mobilization is and it's not like social communication; it's communication after all, whether social or otherwise. Like marketing - marketing is marketing - the difference between social marketing and economic marketing is that in social marketing, usually you're peddling an idea, and in economic marketing you go down to the store and buy the toothpaste. But again in social mobilization, as in social marketing, the idea has to be available to be applied. No use promoting the idea that every infant should be immunized if the vaccine isn't available, if the health center is closed, if the gas bill for the vehicles isn't paid. It has to be hand-in-hand. So, as a separate thing, I don't believe social mobilization is good for UNICEF. It has to be part of whatever we do. Again, in this national context do we really want to mobilize all Afghan society right now, is that what we want to do? Do we really want to mobilize all of the society in a country having a very close election? How would we disassociate ourselves from the bad things of that political election? Is that what we want to do? So we have to think of social mobilization as a process which is part of something else again under this umbrella of external relations.

The key ingredient to all the things we've talked about this morning: relating advocacy with social communication; social mobilization; dealing with governments; running this rather complex organization called UNICEF; boils down, in my view, to a couple of simple ingredients. One of them is people, and within those people, competence.

STAFF
ORIENTATION
AND
TRAINING

It really doesn't matter what you advocate if no one believes you. You have to be competent at what you're doing, you have to be trusted and that's why UNICEF has been successful: because our people become competent (some of them regrettably a little late). In our training and orientation process we ought to be [aiming] for [competence]. We can't expect everybody to join UNICEF and get off the airplane running. On the other hand, we shouldn't recruit people who aren't able to think in these terms nor should we, I believe, let people deal with governments unless they understand what they're dealing with and how it works.

One can deal with the second secretary of X here [in New York] or the ambassador of X, but what happens in their system back in the capital? what is that flow? how does that work? [This] is

really very important to know. Many of our PFO people have ferreted [this information] out. The difference between the "bilateral channel" and the "multilateral channel" of the Ministry of finance and the Ministry of foreign affairs in most countries has been looked at and understood by PFO colleagues, that's terrific! But, more [staff] need to know that and how it works as they [PFO] do. That's just one or two illustrations of the point I'm trying to make. In programming it works that way.

COUNTRY

PROGRAMMING

I used to say almost anybody can spend money quickly - no problem. But to give it away is very difficult. I remember having a car ride with Jim Grant one time. We agreed that one of our problems is understanding that we raise money by the million, but we spend it by the dollar and that's what makes us different than all the others. And that is a key element to understand when beginning discussion with a government on a country programme.

We should never advocate an undertaking if there is no hope of its continuance. We cannot ask others to adopt something they can never afford. That would be dishonest. One of the questions we must ask is "what are you going to do?" We must state that governments should not look to us

since these are not our children after all; they belong to the government. "What are you going to do, how are you going to get that done?" We should be glad to help governments but we're not here to say we're ready to do it: we'll pick up the check; we'll social mobilize everybody for you and you can tag along! It won't work; well it may work for a short period of time but not for any length of time; and then you're doomed. So I guess what I'm suggesting is let us not bog ourselves down on the theories of social mobilization but rather understand that what we want is an enlightened government and citizenry in favour of an adjustment upwards of the priority of children.

SOCIAL
MOBILIZATION

Social mobilization is best expressed in that sense by the national committees in net donor countries. Governments where there are national committees probably would be more inclined to maintain or increase contributions to UNICEF, as long as their citizens committee is there looking over their shoulder saying, "Hey wait a minute." Moreover they have a reason in their parliament, their congress, or legislature to say, "Look, the reason we give fifty million dollars to UNICEF is because our people also support it"; so that's politically okay - that's social mobilization in that sense. We have to do that more in many more

countries, but in different ways taking culture and other values into account. The current training I can't discuss because I really don't know what's happening.

Usher: I have a problem with the term social mobilization, maybe you do, too, could you . . .

Haxton: I do, by saying it's "advocacy" in other terms sounds contradictory to what I said in the beginning, but the terms are not interchangeable spare parts. What is it we really want to do? We want to create an atmosphere that is better for children. Some of us have written on it; Jim Grant has written on it I know, so have I. We want a new ethic for children. The Convention [on the Rights of the Child] may help that, that's what we really want to do, and that covers such a wide spectrum of things. No wonder the Board gets upset with us by saying how are you [UNICEF] going to do all of these things at one time. I don't know, I don't know if the question has to be answered. As an aside let me posit that perhaps The Board, in asking for an evaluation of external relations, was in fact asking us for more information (on which to base policy) on precisely how we want to get so many things done.

EXTERNAL
RELATIONS
EVALUATION

If I was asked about this issue, I would propose that we approach our task of "evaluation" in that stance, spirit, and approach rather than a "routine" questionnaire or "evaluation" (since - maybe - we won't like the replies!) So, in a number of countries, and again this is why it has to be country-specific - (and I meant to say this a moment ago) which is not to say there shouldn't be a global view. I'm always in some N.Y. quarters recorded as being anti-global, anti-headquarters, which is pure nonsense. A "global review" won't work alone unless there is an acceptability of that stance country-by-country since local leaders stay in office on local issues! We need to comprehend that the debate is not about wording or whatever; it doesn't matter, but we need to understand that children don't live globally, they don't even live in countries, they don't live in villages; they live at home, except the miserable ones on the streets, but that's where we have to mobilize opinion about children. That's the first line of attack or defense for children. It's not UNICEF, not the sovereign state, not the community but the parents and the families. (Do we think of PMs, Kings, NGO leaders, parliamentarians, labour leaders, etc as parents first?)

REACHING
PARENTS

So social mobilization is really an attitude of looking at a country and saying, okay, with these resources can we help create an atmosphere for children and a movement that is itself self-sustaining, to generate more resources within that national structure and for children. This requires the sovereign state's blessing or at least its non-interference, knowledge and permission, not written, but stolen, begged or borrowed. We might ponder what good is EPI promotion globally if Mama doesn't get in line with little Juancito? All the broadcast messages in the world may be helpful but if Mama doesn't want to go 'cause she suspects you're going to do something bad, you do have a serious social mobilization, social communication and advocacy problem.

SUSTAINABILITY
OF UNICEF
PROGRAMMES

You got to think about that before you start. That's what I always said. Within the programme if you haven't thought about that, don't start, take it easy. As bad as the situation is, it's probably been that bad a long time, another week or two of thought and planning won't really hurt that much; and in the long run five hours of planning produces one solid hour of work, and it's not fix-up, paste-up, finger-in-dike (like mark ??).

I guess one issue is our habit of creating a term and then a unit to support it which then adds to our communication channels and clogs them up still more, rather than saying, "but the objective is another one." EPI is forever, after all. Where you install an EPI programme it must continue forever. If it's done properly there'll be no way to return to the status quo ante, no way! Today it's these six antigens, tomorrow it's something else. Look at Japan. Last year in Asian Week and Far Eastern Economic Review there was a big one-page article about how Japan used its former immunization structure for an attack against rabies and encephalitis. Why not? It's there after all. That's social mobilization in an infrastructure that shows it's natural. I think every programme ought to be tested and every investment we make in a country programme should be subject to a test that includes this factor.

Usher: When you were Regional Director did you relish the challenge of trying to sell to governments such ideas as the summit or the Convention on the Rights of the Child? I know those subjects didn't come up during your term, but how did you deal with directives from HQ?

ON
DEALING
WITH HQ
INITIATIVES
AND
DIRECTIVES

Haxton: Well, let's for the purposes of this discussion, let's separate two thoughts there. First: dealing with major issues like the Convention and similar matters; and second directives from New York. After all the Convention isn't a directive from headquarters, anymore than UNICEF discovered breastfeeding. Although there are a number of people in this building who like to think that it (the Convention) is a directive from New York! Well it isn't. Its something else! It came through the external relations process and had an impact on us.

On directives from New York, let me deal with that first. While I was a Representative, and later a Regional Director, there were two or three kinds of so-called "directives" from New York. (That idea needs to be understood or we'll get the discussion confused.)

For example, one kind is that which is a note signed by somebody with rank or title, whatever, sent to a Representative, which is interpreted to

be a directive by the Representative but it may or may not be a directive "from headquarters." It might be an enquiry, it might be a request for clarification, it might also be erroneous, whatever it might be. Frequently, it is a request for information - which could have been in the annual or other report - but which the directive on annual report preparation omitted.

The second is a guideline, a marching order in finance management, in supply management, in logistical management. Those are usually precise, thought-through, correct and consistent over time. Let me give you a couple of illustrations of what I mean by that. The financial circulars or the guidelines of how UNICEF money is managed in field offices are great examples. Its much more complex in New York in many ways so I'm speaking from a field perspective. I find it very interesting that we're about 50 years old and there are less than 50 financial circulars. So each one of those must have been thought through carefully because it resisted the erosion of time and is still valid. I can still quote some of them. You want to get rid of some documents and old records? Financial circular 46, no question about it, that's what you do. The same with supply directives. There just aren't that many of

them. Sometimes for what we're doing and under certain conditions they come at the wrong time or a little late or whatever! That's another matter, that's a standard moan-and-groan and nobody takes the complaint too seriously, nor does the complainer take the complaint too seriously, it's just one of the little things that happen.

The other kinds of directives are difficult to put adjectives on, because some of them come by telephone and in the days of modern communications some come by telex some come by telefax some come by messengers, parachutists that drop into your town for a day, break a few eggs and leave town. The others say, "well we heard it at the executive staff meeting," - sometimes it's even in the flash. A matter of judgement has to take place there. Is that really a directive or is that just something somebody wants. They should be judged on the same basis, I think, as a request from a government, verbal or otherwise, because there are a lot of verbal requests from governments, where the Representative has to say, wait a minute, is this this Director General's favourite pet project or is it really a good thing? How does this all fit together. So it's a matter of judgement and putting things into perspective.

Dealing with the government on those issues is complex, it's always complex but it's not very mysterious. You have to, I think, discuss it, understand it. If you reduce the magnitude of the thing to a practical issue, then you can see a number of things that would happen. Let's take the question of improved infant feeding practices. Let's make up a directive that says, breastfeeding is the thing from now on! Well if I got a message like that (I know that I wouldn't, not from this HQs - because they don't write in those silly ways), I would say, wait a minute, breastfeeding is one element of improved infant feeding practices. Lets look at all the elements of improved infant feeding practices and just see what the situation is here. We might have to take a look at what the situation is in the particular country where we are. As in Brazil, for example, we literally had to do a survey to find out what the situation was with regard to breastfeeding and other infant feeding practices in hospitals, because most children, even the poor, were born in some kind of public assistance centre. What happens with regard to improved infant feeding practices at the workplace etc., etc. Then we could say we're in a position to discuss it with the government. One might say, well the assumption would be the

government would know that. Well, the assumption that every government knows what's happening in its own country is not always a safe assumption. So take a look at what the situation is.

Now within this general guideline or directive, as you put it, of improved infant feeding practices as a marching order of the day, there are a variety of things. Training. Well if the UNICEF team at that moment has now done its analysis of what's going on and who's doing what: if UNICEF at that moment, is paying any money to anybody for any training, it should stop and take a look at the training itself, not the cash expenditure. The objective is not to make the BAL balance at the end of the year. The objective is to improve the quality of training in this case. In that training, if you are not including references to improved infant feeding practices, improved nutritional practices, then maybe you should change the curriculum. To illustrate my point, lets suppose you are training drilling engineer managers and operators drilling for water. What do they do when that big thing [drilling rig] is making a hole in the ground? And what are the people in the village doing at that time? They're watching, it's a big event. But they're watching the thing go around making a hole in the ground. Why not show some

slides on improved infant feeding practices: how water relates to that process. The second thing then, if you've looked at training, is to say alright, we have a team here this level, and whatever. Who gets assigned, what element of this, at what level, in what places of the government so that we see a UNICEF cohesiveness in the advocacy of improved infant feeding practices. That requires internal orientation training, it just isn't calling the people together some morning and saying, "here John, here's a folder full of stuff, off you go, do your best, see you when you get back." If your staff do not understand what it is all about and why it's important you better not start, because the reason UNICEF has been successful in advocating things to governments is that governments trust what is heard from UNICEF; and you cannot be trusted unless you are credible; and you cannot be credible unless you are knowledgeable. So it's not just staff training, it's a managerial responsibility to see that that takes place.

We did that in India with diarrhoea management. Little by little we took our staff, all our programme staff and many others, off to training seminars and said "okay, mix some oral rehydration solution. You got the salt, you got

the sugar, you got the glass, everything, go ahead, you've read, go ahead." We would then have an analysis of what was made. A lot of them would have killed their own child. And then we'd have a training session on how to do it. What is a pinch? What is a scoop? How does it all work. What is dehydration? What is rehydration? What is the solution? Why is the salt sneaked into the body in the trojan horse of glucose?, etc. And at the end we gave them exactly the same test. Only they didn't know it was exactly the same test. And we would compare these two results. From then on we knew: that person can do it and transmit it to somebody else. But now they can talk about oral rehydration solution because they can do it, they know about it, they understand it.

There are a number of issues that we can take up with governments. Take logistical management. How do you handle the spare parts delivery to a fleet of drilling rigs? What about the drug chain? How do you handle the cold chain? What about spare parts? What about constant training once you've trained a million people, as was the case in India. You can't believe that they're all immortal! Some are going to get hit by trucks, some are going to die, some are going to move, some will leave the country, some will

quit, some will never make it, they're just not going to do the job, some will steal the money and run away, some will stay. After all programme development is nothing more than doing business with human beings. We all have idiosyncrasies; programming is not a lock step operation.

Another set of things is budget management. When the document finally gets to New York, it is said, and the government commitment is stated and the documents are always there to support contentions, but getting to that point is an extraordinary adventure! Many times, all too often I believe, in many countries, the same amount of government expenditure is counted for every activity, rather than as we used to do with the old system of making sure that this is new or additional resource commitment for children, except in the very poor countries where all kinds of rules ought to bend to help out. In any case, that is not just that one Ministry alone. It is another Ministry that handles this also and a series of interlocking government agencies.

Another set of things (if the Representative is in a country when that country is a member of the Board) is to make sure that the country at the ground level is getting the same information and

the same story as the country at the headquarters level. This is not always easy because in the field we don't know who's dealing with the government in New York. It's not good enough to say, "well the office of the Executive Director." We know that's true, but it's not good enough. It needs to be more clearly understood all around that many directives need discussions with government - especially those with financial, technical, logistic and external relations implications. Therefore the message must be the same at both levels; this is especially so if the government is on the Board. Somebody from the programme section might be doing something at a certain U.N. Mission today, then someone from PFO, then there is something from the Information Division, and something from the Supply Division. We don't want to transmit confusing and conflicting messages because, whether we like to believe it or not, the people in the Mission do communicate with their principal office in the capital city but UNICEF doesn't do the same with their field offices as well as it should. That confuses directives shared with governments in many ways.

SUMMIT
FOR
CHILDREN

Usher: If you were asked to approach a government, maybe not at the highest level, about the State of the World's Children suggestion for a summit for children - obviously it was important that all our offices around the world tap their various sources for information about response from that government, how would you . . . ?

Haxton: Well, I think maybe you're writing a scenario already, just in the question, but in this hypothetical case I would have read the draft text of the State of the World's Children report and if in that draft text that paragraph were there my alarm bells would ring immediately. I would like to think I'm still young enough to have alarm bells and I would call or telex and say, what is this doing in this document?

Usher: You would call headquarters?

Haxton: Absolutely! What is that reference doing in this document. My nose would say, why? I'm not saying the inclusion is bad or good! I am saying that I need to know why it's there. If it's there for a fishing expedition to see who bites on it then tell me that. If it's there because it looked like a good idea at the last minute to fill that space with these kind of words, tell me that. If it's there because five heads of state have been pressuring to get it done (which I find

difficult to believe), somebody should tell me that that is the reason. I'd need to know that. Okay. It is unfair and perhaps unwise to send 100 UNICEF Representatives into 100 foreign offices with a 'get a summit organized' kind of "directive," only to find out that we didn't mean it. We've had our First Earth Runs after all! I rode into the office of a senior government official to get First Earth Run done and I got agreement on it, only to find out that we weren't supposed to do it that way. There was another concept going on, so one gets gunshy!

Now to your question: first, I would sniff around. "Why is that there?; what is it we want to accomplish? Tell me what it is you want to get done and when I've got that sorted in my mind, leave it to me to get that piece done in my country, where I work. I would do some investigatory work, I wouldn't necessarily start at the top. I would say lets talk to some people who know this situation, and that particular leader, and find out what that leader might think about it. Or, how could that leader get to be pushed, suggested or cajoled, to think about it. So that when I walked into the office the atmosphere would be somewhat prepared, so that it wasn't a surprise. You don't want to ever put the Representative in the position of saying

"good morning King here's a surprise for you!"

On the case of summit I think that's what I would have done.

I think it's a good idea to have a global summit, a terrific idea. But if we're serious about one, that [the SOWCR] isn't the vehicle to put it in. You don't state a case that might be, by trying to create a myth and then make it come true.

Sooner or later the truth will be known and next time This is serious business: then do it seriously. I'd like to see if there are any of the directives on that. Then I would look at them to see if the guy who wrote (not signed) the directive has ever been in a head of state or head of government's office; has ever done business for more than a courtesy visit to a head of state or head of government. And I'd like to know that it's been thought through. This is a good political rule, don't ever pick a fight that you can't afford to lose. Now if you're talking about global summit, if that's what's really meant, 115 or 20 or 40 or whatever heads of government or heads of state, or both, then you'd better figure out who can you accept, affordably, to say, no I don't want to play. Conversely, you'd better figure out in advance who is likely to say yes and help get colleagues, brethren and sisteren into the stream. It would be a good

Usher: Same in the United Kingdom.

Haxton: Where the system works.

Usher: The Prime Minister and parliament and the party . . .

Haxton: That's right, exactly. This is what our people have to understand. So when you say a directive, to have a summit, I'm glad you said it with a smile on your face. I don't mind us being recorded.

PROGRAMME
IMPACT OF
EXTERNAL
RELATIONS

Usher: What has been the experience of how we relate external affairs functions with how UNICEF does its business?

Haxton: We've always had problems with that. Mainly because in a good number of places the experiences of programming, its impact and positive result was not as carefully monitored and reported on as it might have been. On the other hand, in some places it became so well received that the organization began to respond to it and extend it or promote it in other places. That became a sort of an extension of the programme process or an extension of the public relations, public information process. But in the meanwhile, UNICEF over the years has

idea also to look at the spectrum of things the summit leaders have to look at every day and see if this is on their short list of 10 things they want to get done that year. Or if they can do this on the way to something else. And how would the venture be paid for and who is doing the research on timing? on allocation of time per summit leader? on protocol? on how to handle the entourage of each? the media? the issues? the agenda? the report? the background papers? the briefs? And if the groundwork isn't prepared that this is politically good, and while no one will quarrel with a meeting on children, there are still needs for adequate preparation so that the event itself feeds a process and does not remain but an event - politically forgettable in time. This is a delicate operation.

I remember when we got started with the SAARC business (which I believe was the first major summit worked on by UNICEF staff), the major government of course was India. It was the biggest, but is surrounded by countries that don't necessarily have the same view of world affairs as the people in New Delhi or for regional affairs, even national affairs, for that matter. So it was a delicate balance of how far do you move with India while moving with some of

the others, so that the balance is always maintained, and that any initiative comes from a source that cannot be denied by anybody. So it was Bangladesh, in that case, to be the inspiration for a meeting and in getting that idea on the list to discuss. Then we went to some of the other countries who had people, key people, who understood our objective, didn't find much fault with it, and could use their own channels in the SAARC to sort of smooth the way. Then the question came up of where the conference on children could be held. In public we went through a method of listing all major cities and capitals by physical inventory of what was available for a major conference and then gradually eliminated. This city was too remote; this wasn't the capital of the country; air service was this; Kathmandu and Thimpu were ruled out because of security reasons for a conference that size; there was only one airline into Thimpu and that was twice a week, and Kathmandu, twice a day. Little by little the list became short and finally it had to be a city in India. But we didn't say New Delhi and we went to three governments simultaneously to say here's our study, you've asked us to look at it, we've looked at it. I assigned myself, of course, to go to India where the senior officer with whom I talked, very senior, I must point out, said, "we

will make no initiative. However, Mr. Haxton, if we are asked to be the host we will respond favourably to the maximum of our capacity. But we will make no initiative. Thank you." So I had to depend on my two colleagues to come up with two pieces of the response. "Yes, we could have it in our country; and yes, we don't mind if it's held in India." And we had to let them percolate through the system. I went back a week later - our two colleagues performed impeccably - I went back and said, well, "you've won you're being asked." "Will it be formalized," I was asked - "no it won't, it's all being handled by us and this is as formal as we can get" - "Fair enough, we take your word." And that's how it happened. So, what would I do if I got that message? I would say I'll call New York I think, and say, hey, wait a minute, this is not the place to put the message. If you want me to act upon a document, address it to me, not to the world.

Usher: You've had the experience in that. Now let's just go one step further. At least 50 countries have indicated interest.

Haxton: Now what does that mean, tell me about the country, what does that mean when you use that word.

Usher: Well, for example let's take the first country. We were in India when it was announced. The first country to come in was Zimbabwe.

Haxton: Now wait a minute, you said country - who? Who did what in Zimbabwe.

Usher: The President of the country indicated to UNICEF that they were interested in this call for a summit.

Haxton: Very good. Spontaneously? Was it the State of the World's Children report?

Usher: It was in the State of the World's Children report and presumably our Representative in Zimbabwe, when he handed over the document to the government, pointed this out and they responded favourably and that is how it came about.

Haxton: Let's find out what that means. Someone John Q. New York, called and said it would be good if someone from Zimbabwe, head of the non-aligned movement, or whatever, would indicate we need somebody to take that lead, that's I believe what happened. At that point the Rep has a directive of sorts. I don't believe because the President of Zimbabwe read that paragraph after breakfast that he told his people spontaneously that this is the greatest thing in my whole day!

Usher: Okay.

Haxton: We desire that governments and leaders support us and rally to our calls, but we all know that that takes some doing on our part sometimes. Getting the leaders of the world to sign off, as it were, on the State of the World's Children report is a goal case in point. It wasn't because they read the report and said, Wow, I want to send a message to New York about how much I love the document. In 1981, one Regional Director that I know of sent a telegram to N.Y. and said "what do you think of this crazy idea: that simultaneously we ask a number of heads of state and government to support the good points for children made in this document." The Deputy Executive Director for external relations at the time responded with alacrity by saying, "I love crazy ideas." And I went to Mrs. Gandhi's office and asked our Representatives in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Nepal and Afghanistan to go to their respective heads of state and I called Timpu on the telephone. They came through. The King of Nepal and the Prime Minister of Nepal; the King of Bhutan; the President of the Maldives; the Prime Minister and President of Sri Lanka, Tarzie Vittachi at the time helped. Mrs Gandhi was campaigning for re-election. She took the request with her and called us from a campaign stop to endorse the report. Then Mrs. Thatcher

and the rest came in. So I understand how the President of Zimbabwe might have volunteered to be the first in. That's good for the Representative and good for someone in New York who convinced him on the phone it was a good thing to do.

Usher: It was passed on directly to Mr. Grant in New Delhi while he was sitting in the news conference and he was able to announce that.

Haxton: That was a coincidence also.

Usher: That was a coincidence.

Haxton: I just don't believe in a lot of coincidences.

Usher: Okay. We'll go on to another point. This is a surprise, I think, this sort of question, but let me know. Two years ago we published the Children on the Front Line. Now, I remember the nervousness about the whole document. Should we or shouldn't we start pointing the finger. It was impossible to write about the children in the front line states without naming South Africa. Should we in UNICEF do that sort of thing? Some within UNICEF believe, yes, that's one of our roles, others have said we shouldn't be the conscience of the world - what do you think about that sort of document? We did that, should we do more? In fact soon afterwards someone said, well, if you've done this on southern Africa why don't you do one on Afghanistan? Why don't you do one on the West Bank? Tell me what you think about that.

Haxton: I remember that discussion very well and I'd like to think that I was a participant in it. Helpful or not, I don't know. UNICEF must speak, in my view, on the issues affecting children. Most of which, regrettably, in the examples that you've used today, are negative. And probably will continue to be negative in many ways for the next few years. We are the advocate for children; there isn't anybody else. It's in our original mandate I believe, although not as clear as one might like and in 1979, after the International Year of the Child, it was very clear. We are the lead agency for development issues relating to children. Now here's where we come to a problem. It is not correct for an international agency to publish a situation analysis of children in a particular country with no collaboration with that country. After all, today it's the South African; who will it be tomorrow? However, that doesn't mean that the negative impact of apartheid which is expressed in a number of unanimously supported or greatly supported resolutions of the United Nations should not be discussed by UNICEF - it should be. The manner of discussing the issue becomes the most important, whether it's a book or pamphlet or whatever becomes the issue, and it should not impinge on political issues of a

partisan nature. We're talking about children not about their nationality. That was a delicate one but I thought what they published passed the test. I believe that. We also had serious discussions about what to do about children in Sri Lanka, when I was in South Asia. After all, there are school houses that got blown up, are villages that are abandoned and that's where children live after a situation of violence. We urged the Government to consider how it will teach about these violent years. After all, it takes a good bit of time to change text books for schoolchildren. Meanwhile the horrors continue. So, we said, please place this idea high on your agenda.

Usher: In the north of the country?

Haxton: And the south.

Usher: And the south?

Haxton: That's right, people forget about the southern part. That's where a lot of murders take place, in the south.

Usher: For the purposes of the record we're talking about the Tamil unrest.

CHILDREN
IN
DIFFICULT
CIRCUMSTANCES

Haxton: Civil unrest in Sri Lanka. We also had the problem of indentured and bonded labour in India. We have the denial of some services to some children because of their national background in many countries. Whether they be Nepalese in India by accident or Tibetans in Nepal or Bhutans or Vietnamese or Laotians or Cambodians or whatever. These are serious issues. We must not be silent on them but we are not "Amnesty International for Children." But then neither are we the Red Cross for children. But "being silent" in the public media is one thing; being quietly forceful in private discussions is another. We are the advocate for children. It is our function to bring these issues to global or national attention but it doesn't have to be done with a trumpet always. It can be done with a soft sonata. The objective of the exercise is not to raise your voice but to raise the issue; not to magnify the problem but to solve it.

However, over the years I have been confronted with situations. Our agreement with governments is that our aid cannot be denied for a whole

series of reasons: race, religion, culture, nationality - the whole thing - when aid to children was denied, or made difficult. I'll give you two or three examples: one government official said we don't want to worry too much about that salt plant in that part of the country right now. We have too many political problems there to be worried about that. "You would deny iodinated salt to the children of that particular part of the nation because of a political problem there? Well, sir, we really only have two choices. Remove the plant or stop our assistance to iodine deficiency. I really have no other choice as the UNICEF Representative, I want you to know that. I understand your problem, I really do, but you have to understand mine. Now is there a way we can elevate this discussion and get off this piece of dead centre?"

That's a true story. And another one: I had a photograph of a UNICEF anti-malaria vehicle, six of them as a matter of fact, in the political campaign parade of a political party; complete with orchestra and flags; one of the flags were draped over the UNICEF symbol and every time the wind blew the flag flopped up and there was our nice blue symbol. So I called on the head of the party, so I wouldn't get a run around in government channels, as it were. And said, wow,

I really think you overstepped the lines here. Well, he said, "you know that - blah, etc., etc., etc. - and, by the way the President authorized it." Oh, he did, did he. Alright can you show that to me otherwise I'll have to report this to the press. I have no choice. Please, you know, help me on this one. All this was done verbally, of course. So I went to the Minister of health in that case and said this is what I was told by your cousin; that's what he told me. I have no choice. We must stop provision of vehicles to the Malawa programme or we need your written assurance that this won't happen anymore. Really, it's up to you; I have no choice. But I think a lot of Representatives have gone through that, I'm not the only one, but those are my instances.

CONVENTION

With regard to promotion of the convention, UNICEF staff will have to be extraordinarily adept. First of all, naturally we advocate there be a convention. That cannot be denied. On the other hand, we are a secretariat in the United Nations. We can advocate to the leaders of governments that their government seriously review this text preferably to agree to ratify it, whatever that process may be. But at that moment our advocacy ends for the convention. Once it is ratified it is national law. Within

that context, country-by-country, we must be then extremely cautious. We are invited guests to the country, we are not going to drag the President or the King to the throne of public inquiry and say, you're violating your own law! ~~I~~ I don't think we will anyway! However, we probably will do so quietly, ~~Too~~, as in a case in Africa right now, ~~today~~ - ~~We~~ might, through other channels, help build some heat for such a leader to consider. ~~I~~ But we can help implement the convention by taking a more macro and different look at our country approach and country programming exercise. Because we still have too many people around, I believe, that look at the country programme exercise as the objective to get a viable document to New York.

What we need to do is look at all of the problems of all of the children in a country and now, at long last the bell has rung for us to look at the judicial problems as well, ~~And~~ ^{to} ~~see~~ see what we can do. Maybe what we can do is nothing but that doesn't mean we shouldn't look. Maybe what we want to do, we shouldn't finance, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be done. That's the country approach, that's country programming. ~~And~~, ~~therefore~~, directives, advocacy stances ~~I~~ and some issues have been a variety of factors

that one has to judge from experience, from practice, not just, "I think it's a good idea, off you go, Charlie." Think about it, each one is a little different.

WORKING WITH
PARLIAMENTARIANS

Also, this holds true for doing business with legislative branches. There is a strong push on in UNICEF now and I think it's terrific, to work with parliamentarians. I would also suggest that we take a serious look at whether or not they're really parliamentarians. Because that is a good solid western concept and there are some groups with whom we should be wary!

Usher: You mean whether they have a democratic parliament, whether they are true representatives of the people, elected to the Parliament?

Haxton: Can they be removed? How is the society run?

Usher: Every parliamentarian can be removed in a democratic process.

Haxton: That's what the book says, but there are a lot of parliaments that have never changed. The seat is inherited by the next richest relative. So let's be cautious about that. In other words, don't get a reputation of dealing with parliamentarians that seems to suggest that we'll deal with any "parliamentarians" under any condition. But, I'm saying, be aware. On the other hand, be aware

that dealing with parliamentarians who are really parliamentarians, you may have to change who you're doing business with every couple of years. By the election process, there may be a different crowd there, so while it's a personal thing politically to do business with a parliamentarian, it has to be set up as a process in which more people become involved. (You know and I know, this is not a history document to go out on the street, but I'm a Republican in this country.) I would never have believed that Senator Dole [a Republican] would be a co-sponsor of a piece of expensive legislation for child care during the day for working women. I just wouldn't have believed it. But he is, and that is not the position of the White House. But what made Senator Dole change his mind finally? Was it the number of people who got to him and said these are the facts? "We're not talking about boondoggles we're talking about facts and here it is, in your state, take a look." Moreover, he ran as a candidate for President last year and that's what he got hit with everywhere he went. Finally, the women in his state told him it's important and he's up for re-election. So it may be only personal when you get to a Senator Dole, but the issue has to be drawn so it's clear and it's politically okay.

never really sort of sat still; we've had our doldrum years, but there's always been something new with something different, or whatever, happening in UNICEF. This is what causes some of our external relations problems. Some of the UN agencies are chagrined, to say the least, about the flexibility and speed with which we can respond. Sometimes that's even jealousy maybe, I don't know, but it's something that has to be managed in UNICEF, in any case.

The point here is that where that took place, the Secretariat of which I was a part, so I'm not pointing a finger at any person, said, 'Oh, my goodness,' that is something that's becoming too big to be run in a small office, unit, section or secretary, let us respond to that - and we needed an appendage to our organization chart. But we had a public information division since the beginning. But then we needed a unit for the programme funding since it was taking on such a pace. We called it a programme funding office, but it was part of the Executive Director's office. But then that became too big, but we never changed the title, it was still programme funding. But it was programme funding. And then we got public affairs and, whatever. In 1980, I guess it was Jim Grant, the current Executive Director, who could recognize that the bits and

pieces of doing business outside the programme application process, the admin process, the finance process, couldn't be coordinated from his office, with all the units created. So he saw correctly the need for combining a set of functions called "external relations," and to appoint a Deputy Executive Director for that. Correctly so! A Deputy Executive Director for programming was also needed, who wasn't simultaneously the Director of the Programme Division; and a Deputy Executive Director for the internal functions of the organization, the finance the bookkeeping, the auditing and all that. However, the external relations processes of which there are a number, (greeting cards, doing business with a Prime Minister or a King, dealing with parliamentarians, dealing with the press, dealing with other agencies, dealing with a government, all those things which are external to UNICEF) were not always managed well. Unless they had been handled as part of a one country approach, they tended to have a separateness to them. But it really depended more on the Representative than on anybody else. If the Representative could see clearly there was one UNICEF and one set of things, then the external pressures on that person to do the job, finance, accounting, programme, programme-policy analysis, evaluation, whatever became, you know, one thing.

But in UNICEF the explosion of a number of things created the impression, in my view, that the external relations process was comprised (I don't want to say composed because that would only be music), of a number of events which took place, as opposed to understanding that we had a set of external relations which created those very events, not the other way around. It is because we are able to do it that we can have the event. The event didn't create the opportunity for us to do it. We were ready for it no matter what. Okay, it was a little abrasive, a little difficult, but it could be done. And I don't know if I've used the same analogy before but we seem to have a battleship, a canoe and a duck and they all float on water but together they do not make a navy. We were not able, in my view, to instill in our [external relations] stance, that which is needed: country specificity; country intelligence; and a true country approach.

Various management reviews (fortunately, in my view), all internal, have shown, I believe conclusively, that something has slipped. It's not an evil, it's not a sin, it's not anything but honest criticism for improvement purposes. Something slipped. The external relations processes which are vital to the success of

UNICEF really don't have much connection with the other processes: programme; programme management; whatever. We found that in the management information study in 1985 or '86, whenever it was, and just recently in the Programme Division management study. The document I have here, it shows clearly that the link is missing.

Usher: Could you read that, the title of that document?

Haxton: Sure, this is the report of the Programme Management Information Network Task Force. It's on the Programme Division, and the programming in the field and it's in three levels. Level one is a field office, level two the regional office and level three, headquarters. And it's interesting when you go through this. At the field office there are a number of data processes comprising each work process - except for external relations. They are not part of the programme process, that's what this says. It may well be wrong but that's what they found; they didn't find something else. When you ask for an isotope to identify a problem, you can't argue with the isotope. Then it gets to the regional level and finds none at all in the external relations process. Please look, I didn't make it up, it's not here. But then at the headquarters level it

finds an extraordinary number. So one can ask the question; global advocacy will take place where? It will only happen if it takes place within a national boundary somewhere, if you really want a UNICEF result. That being the case, it relates back to the country approach and the country planning process. Unless those external relations elements are in that from the very beginning, be it Finland or India, sooner or later we will run into trouble and I believe that's so important that people ought to spend some time on it.

I certainly don't mean to imply that the current Executive Board saw that and that's what made them upset. Not at all. But in many ways it really doesn't matter why they were upset - they're upset - so a response is required. And in the short time I've been here this week, it occurred to me to suggest that within the framework of the evaluation which the Board has asked for in the external relations process, that the evaluation ought to be directed to the process and its success over the years and not to the individual events. Some which may have not been successful (and that's not a crime!). Everything doesn't have to succeed, which is the difference between a demonstration and an experiment! A demonstration must succeed but the

experiment doesn't have to. So I looked at the evaluation and it may well be a very rough first draft, I don't know, but the first question is, how do I describe the actual effect of a particular publication. (How do I know what effect a publication had on a King, or a Prime Minister?) And the second one is, has there been any activity to mobilize? That's the word, mobilize, high level political leaders. I don't know how that's done. How do you mobilize a political leader? There is only one in every country. So again you see we're looking at external relations and a set of particular events you can identify but not as a concept or a process part of the country approach. And my argument says you must do that whether it's Finland, which doesn't need us but we need them, or a poor country. Second, if you have a process and it is a sensible, intelligent process, then any event that happens down the highway can be fit into that without a lot of difficulty, we don't really have to adjust.

It could well be, therefore that we might want to consider: (1) Do we want to evaluate the process or individual events? (2) Was the Board asking for evidence or was it asking us how we would like to go forward based on our past success? (3) How do we relate this [E.R.] process to all other processes in UNICEF?

So I guess what I'm suggesting is that in the evaluation of the external relations process, two things strike me as being very important. Number one, since fifty percent of the solution to any problem is to get the question correct, then let us address the question correctly, and I'm not making a suggestion for the question right now, I need more time. And the second is take a look at how we manage information in UNICEF and relate it to the various other elements. We can call forward supplies and equipment and talent and cash, but in the next 25 years I would argue that we'll have to be able to address the question with relative speed because of the nature of communications. The question being, what does UNICEF think about that? What is UNICEF's position on that problem? And I'm not talking about that problem in that country. I'm talking about that problem with regard to children, because that's our first premise of advocacy - children. For example, what is the position of UNICEF with regard to that child-related problem. Well, we better have some information available that we can call forward. When this idea was first broached, one Director was opposed because (I believe) of an interpretation that what was being proposed was a massive data base (which is not the case). What I see happening is

that we keep referring to that publication, this document, that data, that's not the same as calling forward information. I'm not making an argument to substitute a collection of data or information in UNICEF for something which already exists. For example, if WHO has a large, good, effective and accessible database on health problems of children, by all means call it forward, don't duplicate it in UNICEF. However, if it does not, don't repeat it, help them build it up. But there are issues related to children that don't fit some convenient, organizational package. If that were not true there wouldn't be a reason for UNICEF. In the UN family, think about it in these ways, there is an agency for almost every sectoral Ministry in the government: health, education, science, agriculture, labour, etc. But there is none for children, because children don't form a sector they form a cohort. So with the same rationale, there are databases, information bases with regard to children, which no one else has been a caretaker of. With an Executive Director like Jim Grant, who is interested in a variety of subjects related to children and is creating a format for that curiosity in UNICEF, in the UN, then the staff and the organization better damn well get ready to respond to the question, "what does UNICEF think about that?" And that is not

the same as saying, the data on EPI and Zambawanga today is X. I'm talking about a thoughtful information process which has to be called forward. He (Grant) has called for a new ethos for children. He is right. But, how will UNICEF respond to that challenge if it has no information management, no positions, no experiences, etc., to "call forward" and to share country by country?

CONVENTION
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RELATIONS

The convention will force us into the judicial systems of governments once it's agreed to. It will force us to think about that. We're now working with parliamentarians, that means we must be forced to think about the legislative elements of problems of children. We shouldn't be dealing with parliamentarians in an isolated way just for things called CSD, as good as that is, we should be thinking about working with legislatures because it is there that they can make some basic judgements for children in their own country.

We've grown up as an organization to work with the executive branch of government which is traditionally either the most cautious, the 's called a bureaucracy, or the most short term, that's called the political, but we're not yet comfortable with politicians in the legislative sense or judges and advocates for and against in

the judicial sense. Thus, we must build up this core of information on children and children's problems whether it's inside UNICEF or connected or whatever so that we can call forward supplies, equipment, talent, cash or information. To do that then, and that gets me back to where we started today, we need these two things.

Number one, is the evaluation of the external relations process, not necessarily their events, that will come as a natural consequence. Why was "that" successful in Indonesia, can be answered by describing the that, the element, the event. But it won't be complete until you describe Indonesia, the timing and the background, which made that event acceptable to do. We could promote growth monitoring and breastfeeding and immunization and oral rehydration therapy and education for women and village based development in Indonesia at that time because there was a successful track record before that of acceptability and competence.

Second, I believe it would be good if the external relations people would sit down and have a study like they did in the programme group, not the division alone, but, the programme people, and say this is what we manage as information. What we need to know is how that relates to

everybody else, so that the programme processes, the information processes and the external relations processes are blended and become interchangeable. You cannot programme in the absence of a good external relations stance in the country, anymore than a good external relations stance will help you programme if you have nothing of an information nature which the government wants to accept.

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