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Interview with Miss Julia Henderson

Conducted by John Charnow*

(This interview was conducted on 30-31 July 1983 in Miss Henderson's car en route from her home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina to New Paltz, New York.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

* Biography to come.

36 pp + Øb

30 July 1983

Setting up a UN children's agency

Charnow: Julia, your period of association with UNICEF began before you came to UN Social Affairs, did it not?

Henderson: Yes, that's true Jack. I began in January 1946 with the Preparatory Commission for the UN to work on organization/management/finance and my very first memories of the origins of UNICEF come from the last session of UNRRA in Geneva when they were deciding to wind it up and to give its assets to various successor agencies. I heard the speech of Will Clayton, the Under-Secretary of State of the U.S. in which he said that there would be no further contributions from the U.S. to UNRRA but hoped that the assets would distributed in a way that would carry on the humanitarian work of UNRRA. And, it was at that stage that I first became aware of the assiduous work by Dr. Rajchman and Al Davidson on behalf of an agency for children. I can't remember whether it yet had its name but they were urging that the children in Europe should be rescued by a special agency. Of course, I was there looking at this from a financial point of view but I was also very much concerned with crucial questions of organization of UN work for social and economic development and I thought this was a great idea.

After I got back to New York, one of the things I worked on was the relationships of the UN with the specialized agencies. We were drawing up the agreements and Mr. Manuel Perez-Guerraro, who's still around as Ambassador of Venezuela at the UN, was head of the branch dealing with specialized agencies.

Rajchman

The second time I met Dr. Rajchman, was a time at which he came to see Perez-Guerraro to discuss what kind of organization UNICEF should be - whether it should be a specialized agency, or an integral part of the UN, or whether it should be autonomous. I remember very well Perez-Guerraro commenting on what a tremendous lobby job Dr. Rajchman had done in the creation of UNICEF as a new kind of relationship which would recognize UNICEF as an integral part of the UN but with its own Executive Board and considerable autonomy.

Attitude of agencies

Charnow: But Rajchman anticipated that there would be a considerable amount of money on the liquidation of UNRRA that would come to UNICEF?

Henderson: That was my understanding.

Charnow Did you have indication that some of the specialized agenices had their eyes on that money and that they were not happy about the creation of a children's agency which might cut across their lines?

Henderson: I think there was no doubt about that. Those meetings were in Geneva and agency representatives were very much around and, of course, I began to meet them in other capacities in New York too and to understand the strong feelings of WHO which, of course, was in its infancy, and the ILO, which was already an old agency, and by the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 had covered everything including child welfare as well as child labour. I think that there was great concern about this new agency which was organized on a different basis -- by clientele rather than by function, and they felt that surely it would cut across their mandates.

Henderson moves to Social Affairs

Charnow: At some stage you got out of management into Social Affairs.

Henderson: Yes. I may say that in the five years I spent in the Bureau of Administrative Management and Budget, I was also interested in funds for social welfare advisory services and Mrs. Roosevelt was a moving spirit on that. She was in the Third Committee and Senator Vandenberg was in the Fifth Committee and, by agreement between them, they also put in a resolution in late 1946 asking some UNRRA assets be made available for social welfare advisory services. The tiny little nucleus that still existed when UNRRA was dissolved consisted of three country projects: one on rehabilitation of the handicapped in Poland, with Roland Berger as the Advisor, and one in Vienna on Child Welfare with Marguerite Pohak as the Advisor, and one in Greece on Community Development (it might have had another name at that stage) with Glen Leet as Advisor. This programme was adopted at the very first General Assembly, Second Part, in New York - and began to shape up as a part of the Social Welfare Division of the Department of Social Affairs. Maude Barrett and Charles Alspach, two social workers from the UNRRA staff were transferred to the Social Welfare Division which included in its mandate family and child welfare. I mention that because it's a kind of prelude to some of the things we'll talk about later in the relationship of social welfare and UNICEF.

Charnow: And then, because of that you moved into Social Affairs?

Henderson: Well, the real reason I moved into Social Affairs is that the Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, became impatient with the Administration of the Social Welfare Division. It was part of the Department of Social Affairs with Professor Henri Laugier as Assistant Secretary-General and Alva Myrdal as the top ranking director in the first five or six years.

The Department included Divisions for Human Rights, Population, Narcotics, and Social Welfare, with a little Social Policy Unit which was attached to the ASG's office. Well, the Social Welfare Division had already had three directors in its first five years: the first one, Maurice Milhaud was brought in by Laugier and later transferred to Geneva. Then Sir Raphael Cilento, a medical doctor with an UNRRA background, who went back to Australia. Then there was a Dutch chap, Mr. Van Heuven, who after six months on the job fell dead on the tennis courts in Europe.

At that moment Trygve Lie was in Geneva and, according to the stories I heard, said, "My God, there must be some good woman in this organisation who could take over Social Welfare". So one of these colleagues proposed that it should be me. I was pretty well known in the organisation since I'd been there from the beginning and had dealt with every department, but most espcially with the budgets for the Economic and Social Departments. I had a Ph.D in political science and economics and experience in U.S. Social Security. So, out of the clear blue sky came a cable from Lie appointing me as Director for Social Welfare including the social policy unit. I was age 36 at that stage and the youngest D-2 in the organisation.

Charnow: What year was that?

Henderson: That was 1951. And so, my interest in UNICEF at that stage took a quantum jump because of the relationship of the child welfare function in Social Affairs to UNICEF as the operating organisation in that field.

Continuation of UNICEF

US and agency positions

And, of course, by this time, UNICEF was also going through a crisis about it's future and I remember Arthur Altmeyer as the U.S. member of the Social Commission bringing the position of the U.S. -- that it had done its job admirably in Europe but the scene was changing and that emergency was now over - a long term approach was needed, and it was time to wind UNICEF up.

There was no doubt WHO was delighted with this position and some of the other agencies as well, I suspect, though they weren't so verbal about it. So you know, then I was seeing a quite different aspect of our relationship with UNICEF and

maybe partly because we felt it to be an integral part of the U.N. even maybe if Maurice Pate didn't, always. But we felt very protective of UNICEF and felt that it should be continued in a permanent form.

Charnow: When the future of UNICEF began to be questioned, there were some inter-departmental groups and inter-agency groups discussing the future of work for children, in which Dick Heyward was pretty much involved. I worked with him on it. And my recollection of it was that the agencies were no friends of ours.

Social Affairs position

Also Alva Myrdal felt that it would be a good thing for us to become part of Social Affairs engaged primarily in technical assistance. And I felt very disappointed with that because she had quite a reputation. So I didn't sense any real support within the UN system for the continuation of UNICEF.

But by 1950 we already had a continuing resolution and by the time you came on the scene in Social Affairs much of the fight was over.

Henderson: You may well be right but it was still on the agenda of the Social Commission and ECOSOC in 1951. Dorothy Kahn was the Chief of Social Services when I came to Social Affairs. And Delerneaux was the acting head of the Division of Social Welfare. His interest was in prevention of delinquency and in prisons. So there was no strong support there but certainly my recollection is that Dorothy was a strong supporter.

Charnow: Yes, she was. Until 1951 the main effort had been in health and in feeding but around that time thoughts were turning to what UNICEF might be doing in the field of social welfare. Was it called the Bureau of Social Affairs at that time?

Henderson: No, it was called the Social Welfare Division and then Social Policy was put within that Division and Don Granahan worked on the First World Social Report in 1951. It was in Hammarskjold's period in 1954 when it became the Bureau of Social Affairs. Housing and Urban Development and Population Divisions as well as Social Policy and Social Welfare were included in the Bureau.

Social Affairs

Lack of impact on UNICEF

Charnow: In the early '50s DSA was talking about many of the things which seem generally valid today without a great deal of change. This had to do with the training of auxiliary workers,

community development, and an integrated approach to meet all the needs of the child. Some of these were in your literature earlier, or certainly fuller, than in ours. This included the concept of the whole child and the fact that the child's health, nutrition, education and other needs could not be compartmentalized.

Henderson: That was very much Social Commission policy, ably supported by Dorothy Kahn and then Martha Branscombe who succeeded Dorothy as Chief of Social Welfare Services in 1953.

Charnow: So we should have been natural allies and partners, without the reservations about us which marked the rest of the UN system, and yet somehow or other the impact that you had on us was not all that great. I keep wondering why.

Henderson: Well, that's a good question Jack. I have thought a good many times that our influence on governments in social policy was considerably greater than it was on some of our sister agencies including UNICEF. I don't know whether that was because we tend to bureaucratic jealousies or whether or not the nature of UNICEF's work being as practical as it was in getting out the supplies whether it's BCG vaccines or skim milk, or whatever, had its own momentum. Priorities were clearly in the health field and therefore the relationship with WHO was more important.

There was no room for long-term social policy and social welfare concepts that Maurice Pate tended to think were fuzzy long-term stuff which didn't have much bearing on the work of UNICEF. We found more sympathetic ears, of course, including your own, and, Dick's. And later, of course, Adelaide Sinclair began to have an influence too. So, I think by the end of the '50s we saw more evidence of UNICEF interest. This increased at a later stage when you began to be interested in long-range planning. Edward Iwaskiewicz was an important part of this change.

Then there began to be a more sympathetic dialogue, and of course, interest in all kinds of things, social policy matters, relationship to economic development, and so on. But it took a long time.

Community development

Even community development which was eagerly accepted by a great many countries in the 50s and early 60s - it was one of the real feats, I think, for the Social Commission and the DSA because we also had a lot of opposition from specialized agencies who didn't want to be integrated into anything. And I remember when WHO simply walked out because we would not

promise that we would always advise governments against having a Community Development Ministry. As I remember UNICEF took little interest in the idea and did not participate in the inter-agency group in Community Development.

But the whole idea was that of trying to get local participation since it is participation and the way in which you connected technical services and local organisation participation that is the key to implementation of national development plans. There was a really profound interest in community development, and it started with the Social Commission through the Egyptians in 1951, and by the end of that decade there were more than thirty governments with formal community development programmes, a great number of them having UN advisors.

And so, this is why I say, there was more influence on the governments than there was on UNICEF. Now, to what extent those governmental policies had impact on their health ministries who were your partners in the field, I really haven't any assessment of that.

Charnow: I don't think that in UNICEF we had trouble with the concept of community development. However I think you're right that in the sectoral way we operated in the field and perhaps also because of a narrow focus on what benefits the child, there wasn't too much scope for moving into it.

I had discussions at the time with Glen Leet who headed up your community development section. Glen was talking about community development as a process and we were asking "Where do the children come in?"

Also we didn't have a very strong bond with the people who were doing community development for you.I don't think there was a professional ease or depth in our relations with your community development people or the assertiveness we got from WHO who were making waves and made us make them pay attention. Your people created no tension that caused us to look up.

Henderson: I haven't thought about it in that way, although it is true that some of our people who were very committed were not pushers, not in the same way as the WHO people. I took a big interest in that programme personally, however, because I thought that this was really the wave of the future - that this was the way that social development should go.

Charnow: But then somehow or other, didn't the whole international interest in community development die down? Now with some differences it is being revived in basic services and primary health care.

Henderson: Well, maybe because of bureaucratic fights within the countries. Here was an integrated concept with an overall mandate. In many countries it was captured by the agriculture extension people so far as the villages were concerned, and by somebody else - the regional and town planner, local government and so on in the urban areas.

Health and education never wanted to be absorbed in this anyway -- and by the way -- I don't believe that primary health care or basic services are substitutes for community development. I guess basically I agree with Glen. It's a process involving people and helping them know how to get those services and how to make their own views felt. It's got the link with the services but it is the process itself. I've seen attempts at revival. And I've seen community development departments, sometimes in social ministries and sometimes connected with local government - this has happened in quite a number of countries. That, in my view, is not a bad way to go, if the local government people have some status in the government, and very often they do because they're connected with interior, which is usually a strong ministry. If the idea gets across to all the ministries that they need to involve people at the local level, that people need to really have a say and what's happening to them, and how the services are provided - this is a doctrine I've been preaching in population work, especially family planning. There are so many things you simply can't do with the central government alone.

Charnow: In retrospect, would you say that somehow or other the lack of impact within the UN system, and within UNICEF, of community development as an overall integrative process suffered because it came across as you putting yourself up as a coordinator of everything that we, the other UN agencies, who had more money and more staff, wanted to do. Suddenly you appeared to be the topping of our cake.

Henderson: That's a very interesting point. It is true that as ACC we had an inter-agency committee on community development and I was the chairman of that. And each agency had its own version: UNESCO had fundamental education, WHO had rural health demonstration, FAO had agricultural extension, ILO had cooperatives -- and we struggled through a processs of defining community development so that it encompassed all of these outreach programmes which were supposed to get the local citizens involved.

And even within social affairs, Dorothy Kahn, for example, couldn't understand why social welfare wasn't the central point because she felt, just as all these other professionsal groups felt, that they were in the best position to be the central point - the entry point. WHO thought that if you could just work on health at the village level and have a health

committee, that would be the beginning of it all and you'd get people involved in their own development. Horace Belshaw, who at that time was at the FAO, was one of our biggest supporters of this concept of community development and defining it not just in terms of the services provided by central government, but in terms of how the people react and what part they have to play. I don't think that it's an idea you can kill either, it will be coming back in other forms if you believe at all in democratic processes and local governments. I remember Sir Oswald Allan who was on the Social Commission when the idea was first brought to the Commission by the Egyptians based on their community centres experience, said "Aren't you just talking about the growth of local government ... you know that what's happened in Britain but it has taken 1000 years, you know, to get to the stage where people decide all these things for themselves".

Social welfare advisors and UNICEF

Charnow: Well, to get back now to the social welfare advisors would you say that the real connection between UNICEF and social welfare advisors came when UNICEF became able to provide for local costs, especially for training, and for assessments of needs by local people. We could then really enlarge the scope of our projects and help social welfare services whose need were in a large part not for the traditional UNICEF supplies and equipment. Social welfare experts without aid for local costs, it seemed to us, couldn't get all that far.

Henderson: We probably have slightly different perspectives on it. The social welfare advisors were normally attached to ministries of social welfare in that country. And those ministries were usually the bottom of the totem pole, or not far from it. They did not have as much status as health departments in most developing countries. They all, of course, took an interest in children but they were apt to be concerned with handicapped children or with juvenile delinquency or children with special needs rather than the mass questions of child health and child feeding. They were also concerned with legislation concerning children. We had a good many calls, of course, for child welfare advisors - and they normally did help countries get better legislation for child welfare and they did, in many cases, try to broaden the outlook of Social Welfare Ministries and get them coordinated or at least talking to ministries of health and education, nutrition and agriculture and so on. There were a good many efforts of that kind - so that may have had some influence on the ways in which governments dealt with UNICEF.

In the '50s, you already had close ties with ministries of health but they paid very little attention to social affairs

ministries. I think at a later stage when you began to be interested in the general assessments of needs and to be more interested in development policy and so, some of these things might have interacted a bit more. And, of course, these things always depend on the personalities too. Somebody like Evelyn Hersey, in Turkey for example, or Sattareh Farmian/Farmian in Iraq would certainly not have let UNICEF projects go on without being concerned about them and getting the ministry of social affairs concerned about them. I can probably cite a number of other cases of that kind ...

Charnow: Then on the UNICEF side when we had somebody like Alice Shaffer in Central America working hand-in-glove with your Maude Barrett. I think the personality factor was a factor and we have an awful lot of people in UNICEF who were very primarily supply-minded at that point, that, they felt, was UNICEF's mandate.

Henderson: But you had others like Gertrude Lutz who was also sympathetic to whatever social welfare advisors were doing. But I think you're right in terms of the importance of the local cost policy in promoting training of all kinds of child welfare personnel, including auxiliary social workers.

Charnow: My impression is that many of the social welfare advisors had a developed country orientation. And, moreover, they usually were only in the country for a limited period of time. Now in retrospect, might this have had it's effect on how the UNICEF field people regarded them? There was a common feeling that many of the WHO experts were asking for things which were too fancy and too expensive. Were the social welfare advisors in that stage also transferring standard models without trying to work out the most effective approach for countries because they weren't there long enough, and so on? And didn't the people in the ministries they worked with also often want those fancy models because they didn't want to be treated as second class citizens?

Henderson: Yes, and many of the responsible country officials, had been trained in Britain or the U.S. and most of the advisors were European, Canadian or U.S. in the early days. I think by the 60s we began to broaden out the kind of the people who were being sent. Also the community development people tended to come from Asia rather than from the West. But it's a mixed picture as when you can use techniques from the West...for example, rehabilitation of the handicapped -- dear old Dr. Kessler who was our Advisor a number of times and also Dr. Balm of U.K. -- they had been around enough that they knew something about the adaptation of those models to a developing country. They didn't have to have all the same equipment they had to have in New York or London. But in the field of child welfare

as such, whether they were asking for Western models which couldn't be effective and the kind of legislation that couldn't be enforced, I don't know. I'm sure some of them did that. But I think of a fellow like Murray Fox from Hawaii who was our Advisor in Thailand - I think he had dealt with all kinds of ethnic groups long enough, and he was very thoroughly interested in Eastern cultures, that he was very sensitive to that kind of adaptation. So was David French in East Pakistan. Of course, we use quite a number of Egyptians in social welfare and community development - but most of them had had some U.S. training. As the new African countries began to ask for social welfare advisers and training, we drew on the French-speaking countries as well as English-speaking. Of course, as you know, the French social workers combined health and welfare functions.

Charnow: I would guess that to the extent that they had that kind of sensitivity, they worked better with UNICEF people and related better to our programmes.

Henderson: I think your basic premise that there was not a whole lot of connection is true. I remember some of the social welfare advisors complaining about that, saying they made big efforts to join with and be partners with the UNICEF people but that, number one, the projects were practically all in health or in feeding, and number two, the people were so concerned with supplies that they didn't really have much time. Really it was very hard to collaborate.

World social reports

Charnow: Now, to get back to your impact on us. I never sensed that the reports of the World Social Situation report were really, certainly in the early days, paid much attention in UNICEF, except probably by Dick Heyward.

Henderson: We always had a section dealing with children and, not only for the social welfare point of view. Don McGranahan certainly was very broad in his approach, as you know. I think that our efforts to document the problems of the two-thirds of the world that were poor, illiterate, and in ill-health did have some impact on planning boards as well as social policy of governments. This was the base for what a good many agencies later developed their own. This includes your "State of the World's Children" as well.

Everybody's in the act now but we did the first Report on the World Social Situation in 1952, really a companion to the "World Economic Report" which had been published by the League of Nations and then by the Economic Department of the UN. We really were the only ones in the field for eight or nine years. I agree that those reports had more effect on

governments than they had on UNICEF. ILO, WHO, FAO and UNESCO really collaborated quite well on the "World Social Report". They each had people who worked on chapters and it was, I think, a very good relationship. They usually picked out research type people who worked on that with us.

Development planning

By 1958 we began working on the two-way business of inter-relationships of the social development and economic fields and how you got that into national development plans. And I think this kind of consideration and some really innovative work that Don McGranahan and Nancy Baster did on that question had really considerable impact on Planning Boards as well as on the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

Iwaskiewiez, Heyward

And I would say that this was a kind of precursor to what UNICEF began to be interested in when Iwaskiewicz came. I don't know whether it stimulated Dick to want that kind of thing in UNICEF.

Charnow: Dick was an enormous synthesizer or all sorts of development thinking, all over the world, including within the UN and applying it to UNICEF. I think this is one of his enormous strengths but I never felt there was a kind of close personal relationship in the process of picking his brains or back and forth between him and your people who were working on it. One can speculate as to whether that wouldn't have been much better for both of us if this had been done.

Maybe the agencies worked with you closer because they were more sensitive in not wanting to be left out of the picture. I know in the UNICEF Board if any time an agency representative spoke at the Board, every other agency had to have equal time. I'm sure they did more than that for the "World Social Report".

Henderson: Oh, they did more than that. They were real participants. In my presentations to the UNICEF Board, whenever it was at the time of "The World Social Report", I tried to give some of its findings to the Board and the same thing, of course, on community development as well as developments in the Social Commission and UNICEF, but certainly in the 50's it didn't seem to have any impact on the programmes at all.

ACC Working Group on long-range activities for children

Charnow: Would you like to talk a bit about the UN technical working group on long range activities for children.

Henderson: ACC set up this group in the late 50's or early 60's because it was clear that so many different agencies were interested in children and that most of the activity seemed to be on

short-range problems (which were multitudinous and still are) in health and food supplies but that we ought to be looking at the whole child in the context of development efforts.

So much of the action was on the immediate and emergency programmes, such as the ones UNICEF would cope with, that the ACC Working Group felt that we ought to concentrate on getting both governments and UN agencies to do some longer-range planning for children. This time planning was beginning to be fashionable. So this was really an attempt to encourage some long-term planning at a national level and an international level so that our technical assistance as well as operations like UNICEF should be more effective and be able to select the priorities better. After several of those meetings, they tended to specialize with a focus around health or nutrition, social welfare, education and the administration of children's programmes. We had a series of meetings at Headquarters of different agencies.

Charnow: You were Chairman of this?

Country assessments of children's needs

Henderson: I was Chairman. And we soon decided that instead of just talking about our international activities, that the main concern was to assist countries in making asssessments in the needs of their own children.

And, of course, by this time I also had a keen interest in demographic growth and family planning which WHO was not able to concern themselves with because of opposition in their Executive Board. Our population people in Social Affairs said, "You know, it would be very useful with all this activity for children to get some better demographic data". And the demographers at the national level could get some analysis made of facts that were coming out of the 1960s censuses. So this as also an element in that long range planning.

So, we did pick out, as I remember, either six or eight countries in which all the agencies had activities which seemed to have some structure in government that would allow for planning and for the basic needs assessment. So we agreed on who would do it - who would be the organizing point for each of these missions. They were not all UN people - some of them were WHO people, some were FAO and so on who actually went to the countries to carry out these assessments. Those were made in the late 50's or early 60's with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the country concerned because the Planning Boards at that stage were not yet up to cross-sectoral analysis about children. They tended to the sectoral analysis if they were concerned with social development at all. They all started on

the economic side. They were concerned in terms of how many schools were required, or what health services were required for children - and so they tended to functional analysis. Not all the planning departments were interested by any manner of means. In some cases the health ministries were really opposed to spending any time or resources locally on this. They said, "You know, we've already put in our request for assistance and we don't see why you people are interested in us making an overall survey. Surveys are not important - we've got all kinds of studies, what we need is action". So, after that series of eight assessments, so far as I remember, that they kind of petered out.

Charnow: My impression was that UNICEF was not noticeably enthusiastic about it. Maybe there was a feeling that you were moving in on our turf.

Henderson: Well, UNICEF had not undertaken such work at that time. We had allies, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, so long as it didn't interfere with what they were doing in the field -- and that was not our intention. Our intention was to get the government to do the long-range planning. Now, here again, I think - it probably sifted through Dick Heyward's mind like the World Social Report. It probably did have some relationship to getting Iwaskiewiez and others on your staff interested in planning. And, of course, there was a lot of talk in those early sixties years about integration of social and economic development and, the importance of looking at various sectors of the population - women and children, working people, minority groups, retired people and so on. This began to be much more fashionable.

Charnow: We're getting country mission histories and in those countries where your assessments were carried out they may indicate that these assessments had important impacts. I think it's worth looking into from that point of view.

Henderson: And it would be interesting for you to ask if it had any bearing on their thinking and what then happened in UNICEF about planning. It does seem like a logical progression in time that that was picked up.

Urbanization

Charnow: Now, there was one period in which you came to the Board and tried to interest us in doing more in urbanization. We dutifully recorded your speeches on this in several paragraphs in the Board reports but nothing really moved for a while.

Henderson: By the time we did the World Social Report for 1960, I guess it was, demographic trends were very clear that there was an absolutely massive movement in the 50's towards to cities. And

in developing countries in many situations the people who came to the city because they thought they would be better off, were even worse off, and living in these fantastic slums. And our housing people, of course were very much interested in this and that pushed us in that direction and so we did a World Social Report that had a focus on urbanization, and so that was probably the main reason I talked about it at the Board.

Charnow: This illustrates a point I made earlier. We were such natural allies - you were ahead of us in some things - yet we never really connected the way we should have. Am I pushing this point too hard, do you think?

Henderson: I think you are a bit because by the very nature of things, ours was an idea job -- it was a policy job. Our only outreach was through the technical assistance programmes. We had no milk to give away, no vaccines to give away - and so it was ideas that you were planting in the heads of government people.

Charnow: And in our heads, I guess...

Henderson: I think in some ways we did, because I think it is true that you began at least to talk about community participation, although I don't know what UNICEF did about it. I expect that depended on your regional and country directors. You began to talk about planning and began to try to do something inside your own place. You began to talk about population and family planning, which did impact on your programme eventually. As you say, we were in advance on the ideas while you were still preoccupied with the very good objectives of improving child health and feeding children. And I think these did have some impact.

Calibre UNICEF field staff

Charnow: Well, Julia, we were talking about the importance in the development of ideas of the orientation of staff. You were in the field a lot. I assume you've met a large number of UNICEF people in your field. What was your general impression of them, their background and how they carried out their jobs?

Henderson: I travelled on the average of three months every year. There were a great many of our people in the field - nearly all our studies were based on country experiences. Some of our people took more interest in UNICEF people than others.

I think I never made a visit to a country without being in touch with the UNICEF representative for that country. For the most part, I found them highly competent and committed people. They tended to have relief or refugee experience (often in UNRAA) in the early years as differentiated from the UNDP resident representatives who more often had diplomatic or economic backgrounds. At the same time, I would say that there

were a great many of UNICEF people that seemed to be (I would say the majority of them - in the earlier days particularly), preoccupied with supply questions. They were always extremely busy people, either trying to get something loose at the docks or get the Government to be more precise about their supply needs or sometimes complaining that there were too many advisors around. And all these I considered quite normal. I would say, if I would have to make a 1 to 10 assessment, with a 10 as the best, I think most of them would fall in the 7/8 category. You've had a good lot of people in the field.

Reputation in Third World

Charnow: Let me put to you a thought that I've had about UNICEF people. It is that there is nothing all that unusual about the people per se. However, the kind of work we did attracted certain types, and the fact that we were practical and that we were for children and, that our financing came on the basis of having to prove all the time that we were doing a good job, added something which was not present in the other agencies.

Henderson: I think it's absolutely true that UNICEF had the highest standing of all the UN agencies in most of the Third World countries, because you kept on seeing the practical results of the work. And, you had all these boxes, everywhere, with UNICEF stamped on them - whether it was dry milk or medicine or a new table for the clinic - whatever. So, it was widely known, widely appreciated, and obviously had better standing than somebody who was going to give you advice and then go away. And the fact that your people tended to stay a number of years in the same country also, I think helped the perception that your people were really helping them in a very practical way.

Now, that didn't always make for their being great idea people. That wasn't what they were there for. They were there as implementors to do a job. You have the exceptions like Sam Keeny, who was always looking at it very broadly and very much ahead, but you had far more of the Brian Jones', who were first class administrators. And, that's what you needed - that's what you attracted. I think they felt, not only that the cause was good, and that results were visible, but it also bucks up people to feel that they are esteemed in the country.

Time flexibility in delivering UNICEF aid

Charnow: Perhaps there was another element which arose out of how we operated and which, therefore, was different from some of the other agencies and bilateral aid, namely, we didn't have an annual budget in which we had to spend the money that year or we would lose it. Therefore, in assisting a project, if we

didn't spend it that year, if it wasn't going well, we held it up and said, "Okay, it's there for next year". The fiscal year didn't mean all that much to us.

Henderson: Well, I think that degree of flexibility that you had, was a very big asset in really carrying through and getting results. And it was good influence towards those governments too, because they all tended to be on annual budget which they had to spend, so that I think the fact that you were setting some model of flexibility was a very good thing.

Now, of course, you had one thing in common with other agencies, and that is, everything was done on a project basis. I think that we're coming to the end of period where that really works. Maybe it works better in some of the things that UNICEF does. I've just read a study of the North-South Institute in Canada and their bilateral aid programme, and they think that project assistance really isn't suitable for many of the objectives we're trying to achieve. Maybe for some health projects you can complete a project on malaria, and ten years later find that you've got to have some more projects on the same thing. You might have been better off to think about it as a much broader long-term programme.

Charnow: Well, of course, we later moved away to what we call "a country approach" and which there may be projects but they're within the framework of a country approach. But I think you're right - in the early days it was all a series of doing something here and something there, and maybe they're related and maybe not.

UNICEF staff

Pate

Now, I would like to add to this record a statement that you made at a special Board meeting on February 1965, about Maurice Pate at the time he had died.* It's a very eloquent statement. You emphasized his pragmatism and his simplicity, his warmth and human feeling and his ability to get to the heart of an issue. This is all a preface for my asking you to talk a little bit about the key people in the UNICEF secretariat and how you felt they fulfilled their roles.

Henderson: Well, starting with Maurice, I still believe all those things I said about his pragmatism and the simplicity and his human warmth. I never considered that Maurice was the administrator, in spite of his background in business. He did take a very pragmatic approach to what he did and, of course, his main concern had to be fundraising for the organisation, and a certain image for the organisation - and those things he obviously did extremely well. He gave the whole thing a kind of conservative cast, he wasn't going to take too many risks with what he was doing with public money and I think this also

* Reproduced in the Annex to this interview.

was very good from a fundraising point of view -- it appealed to people in governments. The fact that he could mobilize the machinery or somebody did it for him to respond quickly in emergency situations, was also one of his great assets. And that, I think, came directly out of his relief experience with Hoover.

Heyward

Now, he was, I think, extremely well complemented by Dick Heyward. Dick was such a thoughtful person and really saw the policy issues all the time, and I think, from my vantage point in Social Affairs, I always found him the best person in UNICEF to talk to.

Charnow

And I may say that without tending to give you any extra compliments, it was also true of you. Our social welfare people, I know -- and whomever it was that we had at the Board who nearly always came from the social welfare side, always said what a big asset you were in getting ideas across to individual delegations even if you couldn't influence the whole UNICEF machine sometimes in the direction that we wanted them to go.

Sinclair

And Adelaide Sinclair's appearance on the UNICEF secretariat in 1957 was helpful. She certainly was a person that we could understand. I also felt that she was the real administrator in the place. She had a sense of organisation that had been missing in the very top level because Dick, like Maurice, wasn't primarily interested in administration either. But I think that was a major concern of Adelaide's and, she also had a good sense for selecting people. I don't know to what extent Maurice was involved in the selection of the Regional Directors, for example. They were a widely varied lot certainly. And I suppose there was some combination, after Adelaide got there, of Adelaide, Dick, Maurice on the selection of Regional Representatives.

Bowles

We always found Newton Bowles a very good element too for discussing ideas and what they might mean in UNICEF.

So far as the day-by-day administration in UNICEF, I really had little or no contact with it - a little with Moltu - but more on a personal basis - we'd talk about some of the problems. I always had a very high opinion of Paul Larsen. I thought he was an excellent field man, had his heart in it, he was broader in his interests than some of the others.

Egger

It's hard for me to know how to comment about Charles Egger. Of course, as long as he was in Europe, in Paris, I really didn't have a lot of contact with him since he came to headquarters in 1967 after Adelaide retired. I had already moved to Technical Assistance by the time Charles took over Adelaide's job. When he was in India, I used to see him there and I appreciated what he was doing. He obviously made quite a niche for himself and the programme was running well, so I must assume he was a good administrator in the field. The contacts I had with him after he took Adelaide's job were really from the IPPF side, maybe we'll come back to that later.

Family Planning and UNICEF

Charnow: Well, as long as you're on it, let's discuss how you saw UNICEF's work in family planning? Were you much of an observer of the debate in the Board in which we broke into the field of family planning?

Henderson: In 1966 in Nairobi. Well, of course, I knew Shushila Nayar, the Indian Minister of Health, very well. I was in Technical Assistance at that time, and I followed that Board session with great interest. Because, by this time, we had dealt with population problems from the demographic point of view for a long time and Shushila called on UN Technical Assistance for a review and evaluation of their national family planning programme in 1964 and I got my wrists thoroughly slapped for sending that mission -- so I kept in very close touch with Indian programme. I knew what she thought of UNICEF and WHO. She was very annoyed that both were reluctant to get into it in the early 60s so I was not at all surprised that she really carried the ball in 1966 to get a more positive attitude and some action to promote family planning both in WHO and in UNICEF. I remember her taking Charles Egger to task and the WHO Representative, when I was at a luncheon in 1964 in India at her house. She was also a member of the Social Commission and so I got to know her from several points of view, and she really gave them "what for" about not helping India more on its family planning. It seemed to be that it was terribly important for UNICEF to get more deeply involved and I realized its problems because of the WHO position. But since you were so extensively supporting the child health projects, everything from the training of dayas, to the equipment at the clinics, training of personnel and so on -- that this was an ideal combination for UNICEF to get more involved in family planning.

Charnow: Of course we were bound by the conservative members of our Board. However we finally became an important factor, I believe, in pushing WHO into it.

Henderson: Yes. Just as you did primary health care.

Charnow: Well, that's a very interesting comment. For a while in the UNICEF literature we kept using the term "catalyst" - to such an extent that it lost its value and we stopped using it. I confess that I was the major culprit. In our literature, however, we were referring to being a catalyst for national programmes and for government involvement. But I think that we certainly were for the agencies also, probably more for WHO than say, for FAO, which didn't fight as much for the turf and just let us take over in some respects. I want to document this as we go along in the History Project. I'll count you as being an aye vote on our being a catalyst with the agencies. I'm not talking, however, about Social Affairs.

Henderson: No, I know. We're talking about family planning now. As a matter of fact, it seemed to me that, if I could jump ahead a minute, that your people who were dealing with these projects on the ground - maternal and child health - you and most of your people in the field understood, and of course, Sam Keeny, more than most, the importance of the family planning element in maternal and child health, and were annoyed that WHO didn't move faster on this.

But when UNFPA came along (and that was not until 1969) they began to push the agencies much more. Of course, by this time we had the General Assembly resolutions, ECOSOC resolutions, even WHO resolutions and a couple of other agencies saying they should all cooperate in this field and that rapid population growth is really a serious problem almost everywhere, and so on. After UNFPA came in, UNICEF's role actually fell back a bit. I don't know if that was because you felt that, "Well, now there's a special agency for this, we don't have to be as active", or whether you just naturally fell into a supply role rather than a promotional role. What was the cause of that? Since I've been on many missions for UNFPA and talking to UNICEF people, I find them less involved than they were before.

IPPF

When I was with IPPF Charles Egger was entirely sympathetic and Titi Memet drew up some kind of agreement with us. We already had agreements with WHO, ILO and various parts of the UN, and she proposed we have an agreement with UNICEF which Charles certainly worked on himself -- obviously, because it was not exactly Titi's cup of tea. And I remember that we did sign an agreement with UNICEF which had Charles' signature on it.

Charnow: Was the agreement as implemented as satisfactory as you would have liked it to have been?

Henderson: No.

Charnow: Why?

Henderson: Well, I think at one stage they undoubtedly sent a copy of the agreement to the field or informed them in some way that the agreement had been reached. But for us this meant that the family planning associations should have access to the UNICEF offices as well as to their own ministries of health and education. A number of them tried that. They were eager to have relationships which could involve them - non-governmental agencies -- in some of the projects. But by this time, of course, UNICEF's pattern of work was very firmly established and everything had to be done with the Government. So, unless the Government would ask that the family planning association should be involved -- and most bureaucrats are not interested in bringing in NGOs into projects for which they were getting assistance from outside, or for anything else for that matter. So that really, the outcome of the agreement, in my view, was not much. I think one could count on one's hands cases in which the family planning association got involved.

Charnow: Was part of the problem the fact that your National Family Planning Associations were not all that strong or were not all that capable that it wasn't all a problem on our side?

Henderson: Certainly IPPF definitely encouraged the Family Planning Associations to work with UNICEF. I remember sending the letters and I know we sent all the FPAs the agreement that we arrived at with Charles. It's obviously true that some of them are strong, some are weak, some are medium and that some of them have better relations with the government than others so whether or not the government was willing to involve the NGO sometimes just depended on the kind of personal relationships that existed between the head of the Family Planning Association and the people in the Ministry of Health.

I travelled nearly four months a year when I was with IPPF, sometimes for fundraising purposes and sometimes for other reasons, since I had to raise my own payroll. By the way, we increased the budget of IPPF when I was there from $8 million when I came to $48 million, by the time I left. And, it had become a much bigger business and covered more countries. One of my standard rounds whenever I visited a country, was to go with the head of the FPA to see the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Social Affairs, Development Planning (if it existed), and to the international agencies -- to UNDP and to UNICEF. So, I've had many talks with UNICEF people in that connection. I always found them cordial, welcoming people. I don't think I ever ran into any

opposition. They usually made nice noises about NGOs - but I never had the feeling that it really amounted to much in practical terms. Maybe it just wasn't followed through, the UNICEF office was busy, or the FPA maybe didn't know how.

UNICEF advisers

Charnow: One of the objectives of History Project is to look at current concerns in the light of past history. I do hope that in the IPPF discussions with the new UNICEF headquarters team, they try to get some analysis of what may have been the factors which kept them unnecessarily apart and overcome them in the future. It is really up to our field people. On some issues we can send out all kinds of communications from headquarters but it doesn't seem to make much difference with some of them, unless we also have active people whose responsibility it is to get out to the field to look at it, to consult with the field people, to advise and support them, to be an advocate.

The problem for many years as I observed it on a number of issues in the past was that having decided on an approach or a policy, there was no one person whose responsibility it was, from headquarters or the regional offices, to follow up for a period of time until it got well integrated into our way of thinking or mode of operations. I believe that some things moved much slower because of this and probably some innovative ideas were never really tested.

Henderson: Am I right that Titi Memet was your Family Planning Officer at headquarters?

Charnow: She started in 1974. In 1976 her title was changed to Advisor on Family Welfare.

Henderson: I know she was certainly the person that we most often had contact with. I met her again in Pakistan after she'd been sent out there and I was doing a post-retirement mission for IPPF. I retired as Secretary-General in 1978. I did about 8 missions for UNFPA over the next three years including Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Again, I always had contact the UNICEF people in these cases.

Charnow: In the assessment that IPPF is now making of its work, perhaps it would be useful if it could look into - in some depth - the relations with UNICEF and some analysis of what worked and what didn't.

Henderson: As a matter of fact, it would be a very good case study, Jack. This Tanzania mission I am about to undertake for IPPF -- Mrs. Christina Nsekele, the Executive of the Family Planning

Association, is a very active woman, and her husband was High Commissioner in England for a long time. He was Cabinet-Secretary for Nyerere. There's no problem between the Government and the Family Planning Association.

Charnow: Within a couple of years after the Board approved our work in family planning, we began talking about the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and promoting changes in attitude. As you will recall, the UNICEF approach to family planning, beginning with Dick's justification paper to the Board in 1966 at the time we were considering the policy, was mostly related to MCH. I guess that the IPPF under your leadership had a similar evolution.

Henderson: Yes, absolutely. We considered it not only a medical issue because the basic problem (and it still is in countries like Tanzania) is education of people. Of course, it's so much tied up with the status of women and so much tied up with the possibilities of education for girls, so much tied up with the cultural attitudes toward the large family and the men's perception that the more children you have the better off you are economically, and the need for social security if you live beyond your capacity to work, etc.

UNFPA effect

Charnow: One of the things I have wondered about is how much the creation of UNFPA was a factor in our withdrawing rather too much from activity in this field.

Henderson: Yes, that would be an interesting question. Part of it was that UNFPA money was going into all the agencies, building up staffs on family planning activity. They called on UNICEF for supplies, and so, I think you naturally fell back into the supply role.

Primary Health Care

Now, I'm sure that's not the whole picture because, for example, on the Alma Ata Conference, I think there's no doubt that UNICEF's influence was to make family planning an integral part of primary health care.

The implementation was something else. I was head of a team in India a month after Alma Ata (1978). In fact, we had Roger Bernard of WHO, who'd been at Alma Ata, on our team. As soon as you got out 100 miles from New Delhi, what Primary Health Care actually meant at that time, was one young doctor for 100 thousand people and the doctor mostly wasn't there, and six beds that in some cases weren't used at all and in other cases

people packed in because there wasn't any other health facility. The idea that the doctor who was charged with it could spend any time giving a woman advice on this subject even though it was strong government policy, for the most part didn't happen because he was constantly dealing with emergencies and treatment.

Primary health care and the ways it's being carried out in most countries, in order to make a big contribution to family planning very much needs NGOs to act as a kind of watchdog. If they have active local groups who insist on attention to family planning, that puts some pressure on primary health care systems. And by the way, we've tried all the time at IPPF to show a concern for the welfare of the children who are already here, because we think the infant mortality question is so important to us because of its motivational impact, negative or positive upon on attitudes toward family planning.

Charnow: As you may know, the IMR has become more important in UNICEF recently. It is now one of the measures on deciding on the amount of aid to be given to a country.

NGO's and UNICEF

On the question of NGOs generally I guess that I have been more responsible than anybody in UNICEF for our literature over the years about the value of co-operation of NGOs -- their flexibility, their potential for innovation services, their advocacy, their monitoring potential, and so on. On the other hand, one needs to be realistic about the limitations of many of them. You can't lump all the NGOs together and I would like you to comment a little bit about the things we ought to be careful about when we work with NGOs.

Henderson: Well, I haven't really thought about that question. Some of the big ones tend to get almost as bureaucratic as officialdom does, but that's not the usual pattern. I think there is still a bit more flexibility, even though in IPPF contributions from the U.S. are now about 25% and as a result the financial reporting requirements get more complicated. The Red Cross has a different pattern, it doesn't have a lot of central money for grants to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Organizations. The Red Cross and IPPF are the two largest non-governmental organisations in the world, in terms of number of countries, resources applied, and so on. I would be interested to what extent has UNICEF worked with Red Cross?

Charnow: Well, not as much as we should, considering the fact that Red Cross has moved into a broader approach toward health. We've had some discussions with Henrik Beer, when he was Secretary

General, and other people on his central staff, about them influencing their people to get in touch with our people so they can work together at the grass-roots level. But at least when I was responsible for NGO Liaison we hadn't followed through enough, and like with UNFPA, I don't think we have really analyzed in depth where are the obstacles that we could overcome. We certainly ought to be working much closer with them.

Henderson: Now, one of the things that's obvious to anyone who's been involved in this NGO field, is that where you have all these national chapters or Family Planning Associations, they are normally headed by volunteers from the elite class, and these are urban-based people. And the whole effort to work in the rural areas through NGOs is fraught with problems. A number of them have satellite clinics, whether it's Red Cross or IPPF or some of the other big ones -- but they never get too far from their urban base and they certainly don't get too far from their ways of thinking. Those volunteers who determine the policy of the organisation and the extent to which it cooperates with others, sometimes have elite attitudes toward the poor. This has changed to some extent as more and more professionals have been drawn into these national organizations both as volunteers and staff. Obviously, they vary a lot, again, according to the personalities of people because they have to deal with the poor -- its a question of the kind of spirit they deal with the poor. Whether or not they consider themselves to have any important bearing on social reform is a question one has to watch out for. Of course, the very fact that they come from the influential classes in their societies means that they have more influence with politicians and government officials.

Henderson to succeed Pate?

Charnow: Julia, as part of the UNICEF history, I've been very much interested in the process of selecting the Executive Directors of UNICEF. We haven't had that much experience. I had heard rumours at the time when it seemed that Maurice was going to retire before too long, that you were a candidate. Would you like to comment on that?

Henderson: Well, I was not a candidate in the sense that I was seeking the job. It never occurred to me to take Maurice's place and I was extremely happy in my Bureau of Social Affairs job after Hammarskjold had made his re-organisation and brought housing and population, as well as my social policy, social welfare, etc. together. I had a period that I considered enormous personal growth in learning to work with these new professional groups and it just suited me in terms of having a broad concept

of social development and its relationship to economic development. I had a very good team, so, I was not looking for another job in 1964. However, I had been twelve years in Social Affairs by that time and, when I went to Geneva that summer, to ECOSOC, U Thant called me one day. And, to my surprise, said, "Julia, we've been thinking about Maurice Pate's replacement - he's going to retire soon and we've decided to ascertain whether you're interested in that. I would like for you to have the responsibility of that organisation. I think you've proved that you would do an excellent job there." Of course, I thanked him but said I was not ready to make up my mind. It would involve much more fund-raising and a larger staff. On the positive side, it tied in with some ideas I had on social development as well as ideas on management, and its high reputation in the countries was a great attraction. While I was still in Geneva, on the fourth day, I went back to U Thant and said that, yes, indeed -- if I were offered the appointment I would accept it. He said he was very happy about that, of course there were some consultations necessary still in New York but he thought I should consider that that was. I would be the next Executive Director of UNICEF.

So, I began thinking a lot about the job and getting more enthusiastic about the idea. Among other things, I thought it would be great thing for the status of women since there were no women ASG's in the UN at that time. However, after I got back and maybe a month elapsed, C.V. Narisiman, who was then the Chef de Cabinet for U Thant, called me one day and in a somewhat embarrassed fashion said that he had to tell me that the Secretary-General's offer about making me the UNICEF Executive Director would have to be withdrawn. I expressed some surprise about this and he said, "Well, Mr. Pate has been talking to the Secretary-General about it and he feels that you have insufficient experience in fund-raising. This is a vital part of the Executive Director's role, and he thinks that they can find candidates with more experience. So, that was the end of that conversation. And, I must say, it seemed to me to be pretty bad way to handle senior personnel -- to offer them a job and then take it away. I didn't have any feeling about Maurice, as such, in fact I was not even surprised because my fund raising experience had been limited. My fund raising for the International School had worked alright but I knew that this was a completely different kettle of fish. Then when it was announced that Harry Labouisse would become the new Executive Director, I was a little puzzled, I must say, since I knew that he was a diplomat. He had had experience as AID Administrator, and I guess I assumed that because of his role at AID, (in fact, he'd known many of the Congressmen there)

that this was probably the reason. He obviously had more backing from Washington. So, I had put this behind me and was soon offered another change of job to be an Associate Commissioner for Technical Assistance. So, that's the story as I remember it.

Charnow: Yes. Did you have any sense that there was an official U.S. government candidate that this was discussed at all within the Government?

Henderson: I assumed that there had been discussion and I assumed that when U Thant made the offer to me that he had probably already consulted the Government. I think he had not. I think he just thought that I was deserving of a promotion and he couldn't make me an ASG in Social Affairs, and he had personal confidence in me, I know. We worked together a great deal about the International School and I had a good reputation in the organisation as a manager. I think he not only had confidence in me but felt that this would be a reward and a way to make me an ASG.

Charnow: The interesting thing about the process is the definition of what constitutes "consultation" by the Secretary-General with the Board. Does he make his decision first and then consult, or does he get views and then make his decision?

Henderson: I may say, in those four days when I was thinking about it, it was not only the prospect of leaving my well-beloved colleagues in Social Affairs, but I also had a bit of concern about whether I would be accepted by the senior staff in UNICEF who had been there long time. They were extremely able people and, if somebody was going to be promoted from the inside, I thought they might well resent that I was brought over from Social Affairs. But I overcame that feeling.

Reflections on UNICEF

Charnow: Well, your willingness to accept it, indicated a feeling about the usefulness of UNICEF as an agency. Could you trace something about your perception of UNICEF from the very early days? What would you say would be the major strengths of UNICEF, its major weaknesses, the things that we ought to emphasize more that have given UNICEF a good name, things that we ought to guard ourselves against?

Henderson: I must say it's one of those $64 questions.

Charnow: I do have a tendency to wrap up everything in one question.

Early development

Henderson: Yes, my answer might profit from some time for special reflection by me because I hadn't anticipated it. I think that UNICEF started out on questions of such obvious needs, first in Europe and then in the Third World, as they now say, that it would be impossible to pick out any faults with the objectives of UNICEF in the early period.

Staffing: I think, as you have said too, Jack, that the kind of people who were attracted work in it were, very largely, people who had UNRRA experience or other kinds of relief experience - that went all the way from Maurice to many UNRRA people who were available at the beginning. You did attract a particular kind of people who had this sense of urgency about getting this kind of practical work done.

Tie to WHO: I think, as I've perceived it, over the period of the 50's, as you were dealing more and more with long range problems, that one of the characteristics of UNICEF was certainly to be very much the handmaiden of the WHO. Now, this was partly because the health problems were very obvious. There were many doctors on the Board of UNICEF as country representatives. You had also your Joint Committee with WHO. In so many cases, your links with the Government was with the Ministry of Health. I could quite understand the reasons but it did seem to me that you got yourselves into a position in the 50s of not being able to do anything that with which WHO was not in agreement, which was a real constraint. Clever regional directors, country representatives, of course, found ways of working with WHO that didn't give them too much trouble and there were the normal tendencies of action for people who had the money. So, that it couldn't be entirely WHO by any manner of means. WHO was just as dependent on you as you were on WHO.

Limited focus: This, I felt, and I think that Social Affairs generally felt, meant that you did not wake up as soon as you might have to some of the broader issues about children. You didn't concern yourself with legislation about children, you didn't work in any practical way on strengthening the family as the major point of care for children, and this is partly because you had a distinct mandate and your clientele were children. While you included the mothers - you considered them primarily as the bearers of the children. You didn't consider the family as such which would have taken you into much broader fields.

As we talked about earlier, I think your connection with Social Development, generally, and planning for social development was a bit halting and many of your senior staff as well as your delegates didn't see much need for that. UNICEF did come along, as you said, in the late 50s and early 60s, to accept many of these ideas such as community development which I consider basic to really self-sustaining programmes that don't collapse at the end of the skim milk or at the end of the vaccine. UNICEF showed relatively little interest in this. With such a heavy emphasis and on all this money spent on supplies its pretty difficult to see what UNICEF could have done to connect itself more with community development programmes.

31 July 1983

Missed opportunity, education of girls

Henderson: I have been thinking about the options that UNICEF might have taken, as against this total immersion in health, including feeding. There is the question of education, for example. One might wonder if you had put the same kind of emphasis in the 50's and 60's on education of girls in the schools, which would have meant training more women teachers in third world countries, and would have meant providing more school space with special efforts to convince families to let the girls stay in school -- whether you wouldn't have had a greater impact on child health as well as in general development.

Because of postponing the age of marriage, because of having mothers who were better equipped to look after their children, a lot of things would have flowed from that kind of approach. But I suspect that you never even considered this option seriously, probably because like the discussion that we had on Social Affairs and how much impact it had, UNESCO too didn't have much impact. They had not developed a strong emphasis on primary education, their interest in education of girls was quite late in coming, so that they weren't a good competitor with WHO for your attention. You had very few people out of the educational side on your Board too, and none in your staff, as far as I know. So, it was never really considered.

Surplus skimmed milk

And then, this takes us back to another problem that I was concerned about a good many times, and that is, is your feeding programme. I don't remember how many years you pursued that on the basis of sending surplus skimmed milk. But this I know is a problem that has been debated many times from a policy point of view and, of course, you eventually turned over to being more concerned about weaning foods, other things that could be

done locally and, nutrition education. That was a little late in coming because there, of course, you had so much pressure from the governments with surplus milk to get rid of. So you suffered the same kinds of problems the World Food Programme suffers. Now, those are all general policy points, and I suppose the fact that you had the kind of staff you did, it was more congenial for them to work on health questions and feeding questions because of their own backgrounds than it would have to make a big case themselves from inside UNICEF for other options. Tell me, did Dick ever get concerned about that?

Charnow: Oh, yes.

Henderson: And Adelaide too?

Charnow: I don't know about Adelaide but certainly Dick was the major force for broadening our whole approach toward nutrition. That has been a concern of his for many years. Even though he wasn't in a programme position, this was considered to be his bailiwick.

Non-political aura

Let me ask you a general question about UNICEF. I have always had a feeling that one reason that UNICEF had been considered to be so much more of a success than the other U.N. agencies, was that it was difficult to become political over children. However, somebody that I recently interviewed, has not accepted that idea. She believed that the reason why we have been so non-political is that we were such small potatoes in the international scene. That what we had done was never considered by the countries which had political differences to be a pace setter or to have much influence. That was a new thought to me and I would be interested to have your comments.

Henderson: Well, I certainly wouldn't have thought of saying that because, after all, you controlled more resources for assistance to governments in the social field, than any single UN agency. Not as much as UNDP for the total programme but in the U.N. situation, you were among the big boys. And certainly, when it can be concentrated on a few types of projects, you certainly were the big partner for WHO.

As to whether or not UNICEF is "small potatoes" or not, I would maintain that the facts show that you were a big boy in the U.N. system, and I should say, in terms of social development resources. In terms of economic development resources, of course, it was the World Bank that was the big boy and UNDP, next in order. And, of course, IMF having its important financial functions that related to the stability of the World Monetary system and to national stability as well.

Challenge for the future

Charnow: For those of us who have been dealing with *UNICEF* literature, sometimes when we go back twenty, twenty-five years and then look at the issues we were discussing then and those we are discussing now, we sometimes wonder if we should get discouraged at the pace of progress. What would be your comment on that?

Henderson: I hate to advise anybody to be discouraged, but on the other hand, I think we have to see realistically, what we have accomplished in the past, what we can accomplish with the resources now available for these programmes. And, in addition to the perspective in which we need to put UNICEF so far as U.N. activities is concerned, I think we need to look at it in terms of the needs also in the world! The needs of children of which UNICEF has spoken very eloquently, sometimes in a highly public form such as Sam Keeny's book on Half The World's Children, and sometimes in more officialese in connection with your State of the World's Children that has just come out.

However one looks at it, the needs have not diminished in these years of UNICEF operation. You have indeed, touched millions of children but you have to compare that with the literally billions of children who are growing up in the world -- probably more than three quarters of them now, in the Third World countries. The Third World will probably include more than two-thirds of the world's population by the end of the century. In every one of the countries we look at in the Third World, the children make up something between 45 and sometimes as high as 55% of the population.

So the growth problem has really gotten far beyond the scope of all of our international programmes and governmental programmes put together. We continue to see very high infant mortality rates in many countries, particularly in Africa, but also in Central America and a number of other countries in the Caribbean and even some Asian countries. Though they've been making headway, you still have very high rates by our standards. So, there's much to be done to be saving lives.

And, of course, a great deal more to be done towards the health of the mothers both by reducing the fertility rates and getting a better spacing for children. These are unmet needs and I feel they are far greater than the needs that have been and are being met.

When we look at that picture and we look at what kinds of resources are being applied, we have to acknowledge that while the contributions have been increasing at a slow steady rate,

the inflation and cost, particularly the cost of personnel to man these programmes, have increased far faster than the dollar resources. So, I guess if we take a good look at what we're doing in terms of provision of real services and goods, we have not made much progress in recent years. I remember Rafael Salas (Executive Director of UNFPA) in Sri Lanka, when he talked about the population problems and tried to look at the future for five or ten years ahead, said, by the end of five years we should have a billion dollars in resources with the governments and the international agencies together to apply to unmet needs of the population field. Many people gasped at that or thought it was unrealistic. In fact, because of this kind of vision and the fact that he's gone around preaching this around the world to every government he visits, has meant that people began to look at it with a different kind of appreciation. Because of the economic recession in both developed and developing countries, we are far from achieving that goal.

But correspondingly, the Third World governments themselves have been applying more resources to family planning programmes and I think that this billion dollars may well be reached within the next few years. I don't know what kind of target Mr. Grant is shooting for or how much progress he's made in the past two or three years, but I do think it is very important to continually remind people who have surpluses to give, that we're far from the goal of reaching the needs, even of the most desperately poor people, and most desperately underprivileged children. So, I just wanted to make that little addendum.

Charnow: Would you also say, on the positive side, however, that we have learned, or in the process of learning - and we are certainly seeking how to develop more effective programmes at a lower cost, and that part of the resources - a very important part of the resources, are now being developed in terms of the trained and committed people in the countries themselves and their own experience and their own approaches to finding solutions which may be more effective than what the international agencies have thought would be the path.

Henderson: I haven't been close enough to the operation to have any cost-effectiveness data in terms of the resources that are being directly applied by the international agencies. But I do completely agree with the implication of your last statement - that is, that because we've put so much emphasis on training, and this has been true, I think, both in the UNICEF programme and the UNDP programme, we now have a vast resource in trained people, both at front-level and supervisory levels in the Third World countries. And one of the very obvious things now, when you go to many of these countries, (I have travelled extensively since retiring, in Asia particularly and to a

lesser extent in Africa and Latin America), and you see the UNICEF office, the UNDP office - those offices are all manned by local people with the exception of one or two people at the top in each office. They're very knowledgeable and, of course, can operate more effectively in their own countries. Then, you also see that when you get out and look at what's actually going on in the projects, well trained local people running them, and that gives you confidence and optimism that they can carry on, even when the international resources dwindle for any particular project. So, this is really the best investment we've made, I think. I remember the first time I went to Thailand in the early 50s. They had some engineers -- but so far as economic planners, designers, cost control people - they simply didn't exist in this society. Ten years later practically all the people doing those jobs were Thais.

Charnow: Well I wondered if what you've just said also doesn't add a somewhat better note to our earlier discussion about the relationship of UNICEF and Social Affairs where we said that we had really not worked together as effectively as theoretically we could have. But maybe we were both working different sides of the street and it is coming together where it counts - in the country itself.

Henderson: Well, I think maybe that's optimistic but I'm sure there's some truth in it, just as I said yesterday, that in community development which UNICEF didn't pick up immediately, (though now I understand you have someone especially designated to work on community participation which is essentially the same thing), and, I think we said then and I'll repeat, that the influence of the UN Social Affairs programme was on the governments. There were thirty governments that inaugurated community development programmes in the 50s and most of them continued through the 60s, some of them have been undone or absorbed in other outreach programmes. I'm sure that has run along the same lines that UNICEF was advising and working with ministries of health for a child's health and welfare programmes. So they're bound to impact on one another and I think we've had no essential differences in goals. I'm optimistic about the interaction or the -- what's the modern word -- the "synergistic" effects of these programmes.

Charnow: Julia, among your very many great qualities I've always valued, and so has everybody else, is the balance you have had between optimism and vision and a sense of realism. So I want to express my great gratitude to you for giving us this perspective for the UNICEF History Project. Thank you very much.

Henderson: Thank you very much Jack, I've enjoyed it.