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EMERGENCY FUND



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THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND

by John J. Charnow

Children have been the most tragic victims of the wholesale destruction of modern war and its inevitable aftermath. Of all the problems confronting the United Nations, the acute needs of children in countries devastated by the war and the serious inadequacy of the facilities currently available to meet these needs has been least subject to debate. The article below discusses the creation of the International Children's Emergency Fund by the United Nations.

The establishment of the International Children's Emergency Fund last December by the United Nations General Assembly constitutes a highly significant development in the international social field. Structurally, it illustrates the flexibility of the Charter in allowing for the development of new organizational forms to meet emerging needs in the social field. Functionally, it establishes the role of the United Nations beyond that of information, research, and advisory services to what the Temporary Social Commission in its report last June called "practical help" in promoting solutions of international social problems.¹

In its report recommending the establishment of an International Children's Emergency Fund, the Third Committee of the General Assembly pointed out:

"The children of Europe and China were not only deprived of food for several cruel years, but lived in a constant state of terror, witnesses of the massacre of civilians and of the horrors of scientific warfare, and exposed to the progressive lowering of standards of social conduct. The

¹ *Journal of the Economic and Social Council*, no. 25, June 13, 1946, p. 364.

² *Establishment of an International Children's Emergency Fund, Report of the Third Committee*, doc. A/230, Dec. 9, 1946, pp. 3 and 4.

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations made public on Feb. 5, 1947 a list of 27 items submitted by the Department of State for Senate consideration. Of the 10 urgent items listed in order of priority, "legislation for Children's Fund from UNRRA liquidation" was listed fifth.

urgent problem facing the United Nations is how to ensure the survival of these children. Millions of adults have emerged from the war less fit to meet the grave problems of the day than in 1939. The hope of the world rests in the coming generations. . . . Undernourishment and nutritional and social diseases are rampant among children and adolescents. Infant mortality has doubled or trebled in many areas. Millions of orphans are being cared for under the most deplorable conditions; crippled children in untold thousands are left with the scantiest care or no care at all."²

Steps Leading to the Creation of the Fund

The proposal for the establishment of an International Children's Emergency Fund originated at the Geneva session of the UNRRA Council last August. The impending liquidation of UNRRA operations, of which child feeding constituted an important part, led to the suggestion that the residual assets of UNRRA be utilized for the benefit of children and adolescents, and that to these assets be added gifts from governments, voluntary agencies, individuals, and other sources. Initiative in developing the proposal was taken by Dr. Ludwik Rajchman of Poland, a physician who for 18 years had been Director of the health organization of the League of Nations.

The proposal received unanimous support in the UNRRA Council. The United States representative, C. Tyler Wood, expressed the general sentiment of the Council when he stated:

" . . . this proposal is very much in line with what we have all stood for here, namely, that this is not a liquidation of UNRRA, but the chang-

ing of some of its functions, a casting of the mantle, let us say, of UNRRA, or pieces of that mantle, upon others who can carry on and develop, as needs and conditions indicate and require, those fine things which UNRRA began. UNRRA has helped and aided the children of the world to an inestimable degree, and it is a fine thing to consider here the drawing up of plans or a recommendation to the United Nations and its various agencies that plans be drawn up designed to carry on that work."³

The UNRRA Council established a Standing Committee to prepare recommendations, in agreement with the Economic and Social Council and after consultation with appropriate specialized agencies of the United Nations and voluntary agencies.

The UNRRA Council action was brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council at its third session in September 1946 by Director General La Guardia. The Economic and Social Council unanimously passed a resolution recommending that the General Assembly create an International Children's Emergency Fund subject to the control of the Economic and Social Council. The resolution also provided that the Secretary-General prepare for the General Assembly in consultation with the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Director General of UNRRA, and the Standing Committee of UNRRA a draft resolution creating the fund.⁴

Much of the work in preparing the draft resolution was delegated to a committee composed of representatives of Brazil, China, France, Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, and the United States. When the General Assembly met in October 1946 for the second part of its first session, the Secretary-General's draft resolution creating the International Children's Emergency Fund was referred to the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Questions). That resolution was considered in some detail in a subcommittee where the chief issues were (1) eligibility of countries for the benefits of the Fund, (2) membership on the Executive Board, and (3) relationship of the U. N. Secretariat to the staff and facilities needed by the Fund.

Following unanimous approval in the Third Committee, the resolution⁵ was approved by the

General Assembly on December 11, 1946 under authority of article 55 of the Charter, which provides that the United Nations "With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations" shall promote "solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems". From the point of view of the flexibility of the Charter, it is interesting to note that the International Children's Emergency Fund constitutes the first instance of the creation of a grant-in-aid program for material assistance and an organizational form in the social field not specifically envisaged in the Charter.

Purpose and General Scope of Activities

The International Children's Emergency Fund is based upon the fundamental concept that primary responsibility for child-welfare programs lies with the national governments. Within each country the responsibility for child welfare rests with the appropriate governmental authorities, voluntary agencies, and individual citizens. The purpose of the International Children's Emergency Fund is conceived of as being essentially one of providing sufficient supplementary assistance, where needed, to make national programs of child welfare a reality.

Assistance from the Fund may be used for extremely broad purposes by governments. The resolution states only that the resources of the Fund are to be used "for the benefit" of children and adolescents and "to assist in their rehabilitation" and "for child health purposes generally".

Despite the broad purposes possible under the Fund, discussions at the UNRRA Council, in the General Assembly, and in the Executive Board of the Fund make clear that certain child-welfare problems, because of their urgency, will have immediate call upon the resources of the Fund. The most urgent problem is that of securing for children at least the minimum nutritional supplement necessary to stave off the worst ravages of malnutrition. The Third Committee in its report to the General Assembly pointed out:

³ UNRRA Council V, doc. 183, Ad Hoc/P 49, Aug. 16, 1946, pp. 9-10.

⁴ Resolution on the International Children's Emergency Fund, doc. E/235, Oct. 9, 1946.

⁵ Journal of the General Assembly, no. 75, supp. A-64, Add. 1, p. 852-855.

"Tragically enough, the home production from which the bulk of the food must come is manifestly insufficient. . . . A desirable objective for each government is to ensure one square meal a day to children that can be easily reached; i.e., those in schools and institutions and the children of families receiving social security assistance. A meal of 700 calories a day would cost \$20.00 per year per child. As indicated above, much of the food would come from home production, the proportion of the \$20.00 that must be imported from overseas sources varying, from country to country, from one-fifth, to one-third, one-half, or even more. Unless the overseas supplies are secured, it is idle to expect the rising generation to build on a sound foundation the world of tomorrow."⁶

In addition to food, cod-liver oil and medical supplies are greatly needed. Lack of clothing and shoes in some countries constitutes almost as serious a threat to child health as lack of food.

The second urgent problem which has been emphasized is the necessity of aiding in the reestablishment of children's institutions and services destroyed by the war as a matter of prime importance in the rehabilitation of homeless and suffering children.

A third urgent problem which received emphasis is the need for facilities to train the personnel necessary in implementing national programs. Encouragement of the training of personnel for child-health and child-welfare work is an essential part of a children's program in view of the serious personnel shortages resulting from the war. It is hoped that assistance for training fellowships in child health and welfare can be obtained from the Interim Commission of the World Health Organization and from the United Nations Secretariat under the resolution of the General Assembly relating to the United Nations' assumption of certain advisory social-welfare services performed by UNRRA.

The Economic and Social Council resolution limited the scope of the Fund to children and adolescents of countries which were victims of aggression. As a result of United States initiative

⁶ *Establishment of an International Children's Emergency Fund, Report of the Third Committee, doc. A/230, Dec. 9, 1946, p. 4.*

⁷ *Journal of the General Assembly, no. 75, supp. A-64, Add. 1, p. 852.*

in the Third Committee, the scope of the Fund was broadened to include children of countries receiving UNRRA aid and children in all countries "for child health purposes generally", with high priority to be given to children of countries victims of aggression.⁷

Finances

The effective operation of the Fund will be dependent upon the financial resources which will be available. The Executive Board of the Fund has decided not to begin operations before sufficient resources are available to carry on worthwhile projects.

In reviewing the possibilities for financing, from contributions by UNRRA, voluntary agencies, individuals, and governments, the Executive Board of the Fund has reached the conclusion, with reservations expressed by certain members, that the major part of the resources of the Fund must come at first from contributions made directly by governments. The Executive Board has expressed the hope that all nations will contribute, in accordance with their circumstances, and it is expected that nations receiving assistance from the Fund will furnish local supplies and services which they will be able to make available to the Fund.

Voluntary relief agencies, with their own established programs, are not likely to prove a large source of contribution to the Fund. It is hoped that voluntary agencies in each country will be willing to assume such responsibilities for specific parts of the program as may be assigned to them under a coordinated plan.

Committees of the Executive Board of the Fund and the staff of the Secretary-General are exploring other special means of raising funds. It is the policy of the Fund that all fund-raising activities will be planned and carried out by appropriate organizations in each country, with the consent of the government concerned, and will not be undertaken directly by the Fund. Thorough and long-range planning, with the full cooperation of existing voluntary agencies, is recommended by the Fund before appeals are launched within any country, in order not to disturb the present and future work of various voluntary relief agencies.

The Fund now has \$550,000 made available by UNRRA from the Emergency Food Collection, to which voluntary agencies and private individuals had contributed in the summer of 1946. These

funds are available only for food, and no part of them can be used for administration. In addition, arrangements have been made with UNRRA for the loan of 12 to 20 members of its staff to work with the Fund until June 30, 1947. UNRRA is also prepared to provide other services and facilities, including office space.

It is not possible at the present time to estimate the amount of money, if any, which will be available from UNRRA assets after UNRRA operations are terminated. Such funds probably will not be available before the end of 1947.

The Fund has estimated that to bring the standards for children of war-affected countries to a pre-war level in food and to provide clothing, shoes, and other supplies would cost a very large sum, perhaps several billion dollars. Estimates indicate that at least 30,000,000 children are in need in European countries and an equal or greater number in China and the Philippines. The Fund has reached the conclusion, therefore, that it can cover only a part of the need and has set a goal of \$450,000,000.

Of this amount, \$400,000,000 will be needed for supplementary feeding of 700 calories a day to infants, children, and expectant and nursing mothers. At an estimated average cost of 6¢ a person a day, or \$20 a year, approximately 20 million persons could be fed. The food to be provided from overseas would be mainly the kind of greatest importance to children; such as milk, cod-liver oil, and certain high-protein foods not available in sufficient quantities from the basic ration.

It is estimated that approximately one third of the children reached will need clothing, estimated at \$6 a year for each child to supply a pair of shoes, warm stockings, and an overcoat or warm jersey. Medical supplies and certain other items would also be required. The total cost for clothing, shoes, and other items is estimated at \$50,000,000.

It is hoped that of the total estimated budget \$200,000,000 will be forthcoming from governments of recipient countries in the form of local foodstuffs, transport, warehousing, and other services. It is hoped that \$200,000,000 will be forthcoming from donor governments and \$50,000,000 from voluntary contributions.

Relationship to Basic Relief Programs

The Fund has recognized that supplying sufficient assistance to enable countries to provide a basic ration of 2,300 calories for all persons (as

estimated in the report of the United Nations Special Technical Committee on Relief Needs After Termination of UNRRA).⁸ is of vital importance. The Fund does not intend to duplicate any assistance provided under bilateral relief programs. Its operations, as a matter of fact, would be greatly handicapped if food imports sufficient to maintain a basic ration were not available.

Administration

The Executive Director of the Fund, Maurice Pate, was appointed on January 8, 1947 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after consultation with the Executive Board of the Fund. Mr. Pate, an American businessman, was wartime director of the Prisoners of War Relief Section of the American Red Cross and accompanied Herbert Hoover on his missions to Europe after both World Wars.

Mr. Pate will administer the Fund under policies, including the determination of programs and the allocation of funds, established by a 25-nation Executive Board. The composition of the Executive Board, which the United States originally had suggested be limited to the 18 countries members of the Social Commission of the Economic and Social Council, was expanded by the General Assembly resolution to include the four countries of the UNRRA Standing Committee on Children which are not members of the Social Commission and, in addition, Argentina, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and Sweden.⁹ On recommendation of the Board, the Economic and Social Council may designate other governments as members of the Board. Membership may be changed by the General Assembly, on recommendation of the Economic and Social Council, at any time after the first three years of the Fund's existence. As occasions arise the Board may invite representatives of specialized agencies for consultation. The Chairman of the Board, elected unanimously, is Dr. Rajchman of Poland. Miss Kath-

⁸ A/Conf/Relief/1, Jan. 24, 1947, p. 8.

⁹ The nations represented on the Executive Board are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, China, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Greece, Iraq, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, United States, and Yugoslavia. The addition of Switzerland has recently been recommended to the Economic and Social Council (*ibid.* p. 853).

arine F. Lenroot, Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency, was designated as United States representative on the Board in view of her outstanding ability and distinguished international reputation in the field of social welfare.

A program committee of the Executive Board has been established composed of the Governments of Brazil, Canada, China, France, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Among its functions, the Committee has the task of reviewing the needs of governments which may be applicants for assistance from the Fund, and of making reports to the Board as to the programs which will be required.

Although established by the General Assembly and having its activities subject to review by the Assembly, the International Children's Emergency Fund is more closely linked to the Economic and Social Council than to the General Assembly. The resolution provides that the policies established by the Board must be in accordance with such principles as may be laid down by the Economic and Social Council and its Social Commission.

At its recently concluded first session, the Social Commission developed certain principles of operation for the Fund which it recommended that the Economic and Social Council adopt. These relate to priorities as to types of assistance to be given by the Fund; the development of emergency measures in such a manner as to strengthen the permanent child-health and child-welfare programs; the relations of the Fund with other relief programs and with other United Nations activities; the relations of the Fund with governments; the provision of a technical staff to assure effective operation of the Fund; the information to be required from governments submitting proposals; and the submission of reports by the Fund to the Economic and Social Council.¹⁰ These suggested principles will undoubtedly be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its fourth session currently in progress.

The General Assembly resolution establishing the Fund provides that staff and facilities required for the administration of the Fund shall be provided by the Secretary-General without charge

¹⁰ *Social Commission, General Report*, doc. E/260, Feb. 11, 1947, pp. 12-13.

so long as these can be provided from the established services of the Secretariat and within the limits of the United Nations budget. If additional funds are necessary, money for such purposes shall be provided by the Fund. As has been noted above, the Fund is also authorized to utilize staff and facilities from UNRRA. The effect of these provisions is to establish the operations of the Fund within the framework of the United Nations, with the Executive Director functioning within the United Nations on administrative matters but being responsible to the Executive Board on policy questions.

The Board of the Fund contemplates inviting representatives of specialized agencies for consultation and utilizing the staff and technical assistance of the specialized agencies, particularly the World Health Organization, to the maximum extent feasible.

Headquarters of the Fund have been established at Lake Success; an office is also maintained in Washington.

Safeguards and Requirements

Proposals from governments must give assurances that provision will be made for equitable and efficient distribution of assistance on the basis of need, without discrimination because of race, creed, nationality status, or political belief, and that reports will be made for such periods and contain such information as the Fund may require. It is contemplated by the Fund that the governments will submit evidence of need, including information on production and import programs, deficits, assistance available from foreign sources, the state of health, nutrition, and welfare of the children, the channels for distribution of supplies, the availability of institutions and agencies for children, both official and voluntary, and the provisions for the coordination of the services of all agencies utilized in the program. With the assistance of its technical personnel and its program committee, the Executive Board will screen, analyze, and pass on requests for assistance. If requests exceed the amounts available, priorities will necessarily have to be established by the Board on the basis of the greatest need. Representatives of the Fund will probably be assigned to each recipient country to consult with the government, to act as liaison with the headquarters staff of the Fund, to assure, in

full cooperation with the government, that the principles for the operation of the Fund are faithfully fulfilled, and to gather material regarding the need for continued assistance.¹¹

The following policies have already been accepted by the Program Committee of the Fund:

(a) The basic policy of the ICEF should be one of the highest trusteeship between the donor and the beneficiary. From the moment of receiving a contribution until the child obtains its relief, the ICEF will diligently and conscientiously follow step by step the conversion of money to relief supplies and the eventual utilization of these supplies.

(b) To this end the ICEF will either effect its own procurement and shipment of relief supplies or make adequate arrangements with governmental agencies which handle these activities in trust.

(c) Furthermore, as the trustee of the donor the ICEF will maintain title to its relief supplies until consumed by the ultimate recipient. From the time of receipt at a country's frontier until dispensation to the child, the ICEF may in trusteeship delegate the transport and distribution of these goods to a government or relief organization mutually acceptable to the government and the Fund. The government or relief organization to whom this

¹¹ *Report of the International Children's Emergency Fund to the Social Commission, E/CN.5/8/Add. 1, Jan. 21, 1947, p. 8.*

¹² *Ibid.*, Annex 3, p. 27.

trusteeship is delegated, however, should maintain the same standards of responsibility as the donor expects of the ICEF.

In January 1947, the Secretary-General transmitted to member nations an appeal for contributions from the Executive Board of the Fund, outlining the need, the methods of operation, and the administrative organization of the Fund. In discussing the financing of the Fund the memorandum stated:

"All these plans and projects [of the Fund] will be mere empty gestures, however, unless the Fund is provided with the resources it will need for its operations. The General Assembly, relying upon the full sympathy and cooperation which can be expected from the Governments and peoples of the world, established no fixed standard for contributions. Instead it closed the Resolution creating the Fund by calling upon governments, voluntary agencies, and private individuals to give to the Fund their generous support. The provision of necessary resources, pursuant to this appeal, made with the full voice and authority of the United Nations, is a matter of the utmost urgency if the lives and future of the rising generation are to be safeguarded."¹²

Only to the extent that that hope of the General Assembly is realized will the International Children's Emergency Fund become a reality for millions of children who are suffering as a result of the destruction and dislocation of the war.