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## Title

**Report of the Alma Ata Conference 06-12 September 1978, signed by E.J.R. Heyward.  
Cover memo to Regional Directors and Representatives**

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Notes

Document Details Record has no document attached.

had attached final Report of conference; opening addresses by Exec Dir of UNICEF, Labouisse, and Dir Gen of WHO, Mahler,

Print Name of Person Submit Image

Signature of Person Submit

Number of images without cover

## MEMORANDUM

From E. J. R. Heyward

To UNICEF Regional Directors Date 12 September 1978  
and Representatives  
Attention

Our ref.

Your ref.

Originator

Subject Report of the Alma Ata Conference  
6-12 September 1978

This memorandum is for  
information

Many developing countries committed themselves to primary health care by their statements in the plenary, either by saying that they were applying primary health care approach, or intended to do so. Thus, the conference recognized a general approval of the fundamentals of primary health care; that is community participation and control, and accessibility to all. That primary health care is part of development, and that many other sectors in addition to health are involved, was well brought out.

The reports that UNICEF helped countries to produce were well circulated. Delegates speeches contained quite a number of appreciative references to UNICEF support of programmes. Informally many delegates expressed appreciation of the support given by UNICEF offices to their preparation for the conference.

Mr. Labouisse informed the conference that "UNICEF stands ready to intensify its cooperation to the very limits of available resources" in agreement with each country (address para. 11). UNICEF offices should continue their work with countries to introduce or extend primary health care.

WHO/UNICEF headquarters are having informal discussions next week about concerting and strengthening the support of the two organizations, with particular emphasis on support at the country level. Soon a report and recommendations have to be prepared for the JCHP and our Boards. You will be advised about what comes out of these discussions.

The conference endorsed the joint WHO/UNICEF report (Declaration, article IX). This may be the best working instrument to use for advocacy with countries. Attached is a copy of the Final Report of the Conference. It is labelled "Draft", but this draft was adopted in the final plenary. The opening addresses of Dr. Mahler and Mr. Labouisse are also attached. As a result of the conference process, the primary health care approach is in some cases somewhat diluted in the final report by the addition of ideas and details, often good in themselves, but somewhat reducing the impact of the report.

As was to be expected ministries of health were much more represented than other ministries. Nevertheless the representation of other sectors especially from Africa was something of a breakthrough, which I believe was often due to the explanations of the UNICEF office given in the country. Many recommendatio-

show the need to take account of other sectors (recommendations 1, 3, 4, 9, 19, 15, 18). Professor Hassouna, Egypt, pointed out that health people in addition to addressing other sectors about their "health related" activities, should also be willing to listen to other sectors about how they saw certain aspects of health needs and programme possibilities.

Among all the health people present, the delegations from Soviet and Eastern European countries seemed to hold the views that primary health care was almost wholly the affair of the ministry of health, and possibly the Red Cross; and that primary health care should be delivered by physicians (although quite a lot of Feldscher posts were shown to delegations on the week-end tours). The Eastern European model works for countries in their income level, and the delegations from these countries tended to put it forward as the only model. This view has crept into some phrases of the Declaration of Alma Ata.

A number of delegations said that they found the statements about community participation and delegation of authority to intermediate and community levels too weak. They found that the tone of the report stresses too much the handing down of services, and not enough dialogue with the community, accountability to the people, and community management and evaluation of services being rendered.

Many of the recommendations contain very thoughtful material (i.e. Recs. 6-11).

There is some repetition, particularly recommendations 18 and 19 are very close to recommendations 1 and 2. Recommendations 3 and 4 are also very close. These recommendations were prepared in three committees, and limitations of time prevented the general committee from consolidating them.

Recommendation 22 concerning the role of WHO/UNICEF in supporting primary health care has the support of the Director-General of WHO and the Executive Director of UNICEF. Note particularly the emphasis on support of national strategies and plans.