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**JOHN MANFREDI**

*John Manfredi*

**22**



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**II. MISSION AND EMERGENCIES**

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**WIDESPREAD VIEW THROUGHOUT UNICEF: THE UNDERLYING, GUIDING MISSION IS UNCLEAR TO BEGIN WITH, AND ALSO CHANGING RAPIDLY: "WHAT BUSINESS ARE WE IN - SHOULD WE BE IN?"**

- "It's true that we do flip-flop the mission from time to time. We change pace, react to conditions and move fast. We respond to the Rwandas. The National Committees say they need this. So people do get confused. But another cause of uncertainty is the timelag between the enunciation of a corporate policy and 'when the last boxcar gets moving'. We are consistent but forward moving."

Jim Grant

- "We are kidding ourselves when we say we have a clear mission. Are we committed to emergencies or are we not? Are we dedicated to national action plans or global goals? Are we supportive or competitive with NGOs? Do we stick to sustainable goals or do we change them regularly?"

High level Secretariat Member

- "UNICEF seems to want to stand alone with a mission that is getting out of control, being all things to all people."

Executive Board Delegate

- "Yes, there's the question of the Mission. But we have to ask both what mission and whose mission. There's a lot of confusion about that. For example, what, if any, is our mission in our own country? I think the time has come to take a new view about that. The National Committee might well restrict funds or retain funds for programmes right in our own country. Can you tell me the U.S. doesn't need humanitarian programmes for children?"

Key Figure in U.S.A. National Committee

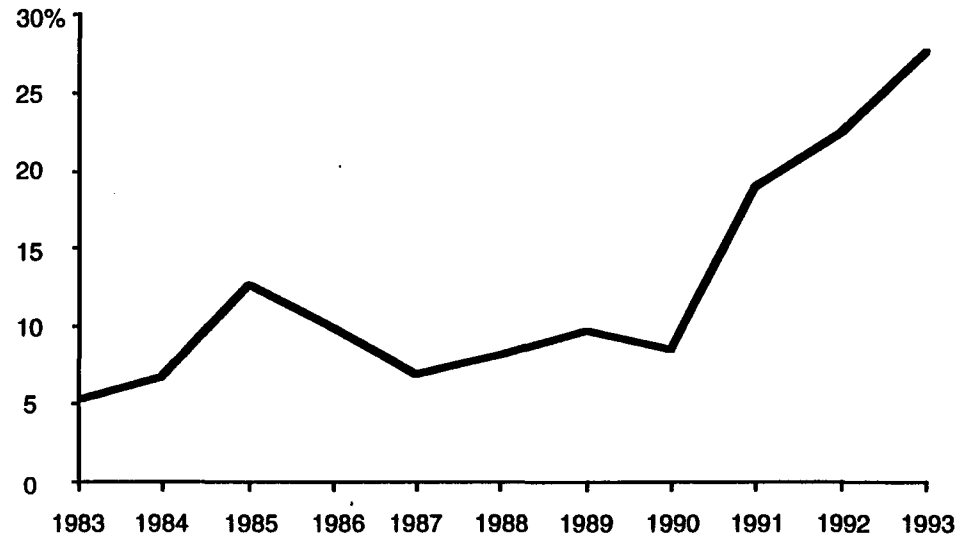
## TO ILLUSTRATE, UNICEF'S EMERGENCY MISSION IS BEING QUESTIONED THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND THE BOARD

### CONCERNS

- As a humanitarian agency, cannot just walk away from emergencies
  - Moral issue – UNICEF especially skilled at quick response
  - Also commercial issue (motivates donors)
- But excessive commitment to emergencies may change character of UNICEF: committed to development, advocacy
- Further, emergencies:
  - Are expensive
  - Defy transparency
  - Cloud accountability
  - Can be handled by others
- Meanwhile, UNICEF is building reputation, esprit de corps around emergency capability

- What is right mix, right mission?

### EMERGENCY RELIEF AS PERCENT OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES (Growth Rate=33%)



### 1993 MAJOR INTERVENTIONS

- Iraq – Basic health care, education, and heating/cooking fuels
- Sudan – Health, water and sanitation, nutrition and education
- Somalia – Survival assistance, resettlement and basic social services
- Former Yugoslavia – Essential drugs, food, educational materials, psycho-social rehabilitation
- Kenya – Health and therapeutic feeding, delivery of safe water

Source: UNICEF Annual Reports and Emergency Statistics

Emergencies/Mission...

**BOARD AND SECRETARIAT INTERVIEWEES AGREE: TIMELY TO RECONSIDER OVERALL MISSION AND RE-EXAMINE EMERGENCIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OVERALL MISSION**

- Overall mission in light of:
  - Changing environment
  - UN reform
  
- Commitment to emergencies in light of:
  - UN mandate
  - Updated UNICEF mission
  - Increase in emergency situations
  - Economic implications
  - Some internal doubts, issues of conviction
  - UNICEF capabilities and track record
  
- Operational response to emergencies
  - Preparedness
  - Staff deployment
  - Cost and accountability management

Mission...

**MEANWHILE, MOST UNICEF MANAGERS AGREE THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS INTERPRETING ITS MANDATE IN THE BROADEST SENSE**

**UNICEF  
ACTIVITIES**

"TO HELP PROTECT THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND PROMOTE THEIR DEVELOPMENT" (WHAT UNICEF IS AND DOES, 1987)											
Functions	Both direct assistance and advocacy										
Objectives	Both long-term development ("silent emergencies") and crisis response										
Sectors	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Health</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Environment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nutrition</td> <td>Women</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Water and Sanitation</td> <td>Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education</td> <td>Child Monitoring</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Global Communication</td> </tr> </table>	Health	Environment	Nutrition	Women	Water and Sanitation	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances	Education	Child Monitoring		Global Communication
Health	Environment										
Nutrition	Women										
Water and Sanitation	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances										
Education	Child Monitoring										
	Global Communication										
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN agencies: UNDP, UNHCR, WHO, FAO, UNESCO, ILO, UNEP</li> <li>• Over 30 inter-governmental organizations (IGOs)</li> <li>• Over 150 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)</li> <li>• Plus countless local NGOs</li> </ul>										
Geographies Targeted	<p><u>Assistance and Advocacy</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">• Africa</td> <td style="width: 33%;">• Latin America and Caribbean</td> <td style="width: 33%;">• Central and Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Asia</td> <td>• Middle East</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Advocacy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrialized countries</li> </ul>	• Africa	• Latin America and Caribbean	• Central and Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States	• Asia	• Middle East					
• Africa	• Latin America and Caribbean	• Central and Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States									
• Asia	• Middle East										



Mission...

## WE OBSERVE A TREND TOWARD SEIZING ON THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AS “DE FACTO” MISSION STATEMENTS

MID-DECADE GOALS	DECADE GOALS	CONVENTION RIGHTS
<p>Agreed by UNICEF, WHO and Governments As Necessary Steps Toward The Decade Goals</p>	<p>Agreed At World Summit, September 1990: Major Goals For Child Survival, Development And Protection Between 1990 And The Year 2000</p>	<p>Adopted by General Assembly of the UN in November 1989</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase immunization coverage to 80% or more of children in all countries</li> <li>2. Eliminate neonatal tetanus</li> <li>3. Reduce measles deaths by 95% and measles cases by 90%</li> <li>4. Eliminate polio in selected countries and regions</li> <li>5. Achieve 80% usage of oral rehydration therapy to help control diarrhoeal diseases</li> <li>6. Make all hospital and maternity centres 'baby-friendly' by supporting breast feeding</li> <li>7. Achieve universal iodization of salt</li> <li>8. Eliminate vitamin A deficiency</li> <li>9. Eradicate dracunculiasis (guinea worm disease)</li> <li>10. Achieve universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate by one third or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births respectively, whichever is less</li> <li>2. Reduction of maternal mortality rate by half</li> <li>3. Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half</li> <li>4. Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal</li> <li>5. Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children</li> <li>6. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level with emphasis on female literacy</li> <li>7. Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ... Every child has the inherent right to life. ... Ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child</li> <li>• ... Respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion ...</li> <li>• ... Protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation ...</li> <li>• ... A mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance ...</li> <li>• ... The right ... to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development ...</li> <li>• ... The right ... to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities ... and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts ...</li> <li>• ... Protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development ...</li> <li>• ... Ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities ...</li> </ul>

Source: *World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. September 1990.*  
*Keeping the Promise to Children. Goals for 1995. UNICEF December 1993.*  
*Convention on the Rights of the Child. November 1989.*

Mission...

**SOME DELEGATIONS POINT TO DANGERS IN USING THE CONVENTION AS A GUIDING MISSION STATEMENT:**

"We agree that UNICEF should stake off the areas where they are particularly effective... the CORE activities that they can do well and defend well. They need that to justify their role in the face of moves toward UN consolidation. But their adoption of the Conference on the Rights of the Child is not the answer. The Convention is too broad, too philosophical, and even controversial in places. What's more, a lot of people don't even understand the Convention. We say yes to core defensible programs and no to using the Convention as a rallying cry."

Executive Board Delegation

Mission...

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AGREES THAT THE CONVENTION IS NOT ADEQUATE AS A MISSION:**

"Further, I agree with the proposition that the Convention is an inspiration to us, but it is too broad to be our Mission. Our Mission must address UNICEF strengths in particular, and must not be generic... something that any humanitarian person or group could relate to. We need to define UNICEF's exclusive terrain... the things we do with a uniquely high order of excellence – the capabilities that justify and underpin our very existence. That is more important than ever now, because we want to have a distinctive role that will ensure that we will be both unique and supportive among UN agencies and funds. We want to LEAD in our areas of particular competence; but we want to be supportive team players in a coordinated UN system of humanitarian service."

James P. Grant  
24 August 1994

## **CLARIFYING UNICEF'S MISSION, APPROPRIATE IN ANY CASE, BECOMES EVEN MORE IMPERATIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF UN REFORM**

- The Secretary General's objective for reform is either consolidation or coordination, and his designee for assisting this exercise is the Administrator of UNDP
- The recent Ford Foundation report, "Renewing the UN System" considers collapsing UNICEF into DHA (emergency response) and UNDP (long-term development)
- We believe that maintaining a standalone identity will require that UNICEF help reformers understand UNICEF's unique capabilities and its unique mission. Knowledgeable UN authorities insist that the current, broad-based approach is unlikely to be sustainable
  - They believe that positioning UNICEF as "the agency that gets things done" for others such as WHO could be a counterproductive argument
  - To presume that UNICEF can "sell" this argument may be to underestimate the new determination to specialize and coordinate – or consolidate

Mission...

**THE SECRETARY GENERAL RELEASED HIS STATEMENT ON REFORM JUST SIX MONTHS  
AGO...**

"The Secretary-General has ... decided to request the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist him in ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination within the United Nations itself, in particular among headquarters departments, the regional commissions and the funds and programmes of the Organization. The Secretary-General has further decided to entrust the Administrator of the UNDP with overall responsibility for assisting him in improving the coordination of operational activities for development, including the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. "

United Nations SG/SM/5380 DEV/2026 27 July 1994

"The question of UN agency integration: The false ideal of one organization but different branches adopting certain specializations (children, population, etc) would be destructive, in my opinion, because part of the problem is the rigidity of government ... in promoting development innovations. Formally integrating the UN agencies at the field level would simply backfire by making the organization more rigid, bureaucratic and tightly bound to governments. Rather, what should be encouraged is a "family of UN agencies" where pluralism, diversity, and (yes) even a little competition would reward performance and penalize low productivity."

International Authority, Population and Development Studies

Mission...

**BASED ON OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS OF UNICEF AT WORK, WE HAVE REACHED THIS CONCLUSION:**

- It would be a major loss to both UNICEF and the UN at large to consolidate UNICEF into a single UN entity at country level and/or Headquarters as proposed by Childers/Urquhart and others.
- Several concerns led to this position:
  - Consolidation abandons the distinctive capabilities and know-how that have produced unusual success among humanitarian development and service organizations
  - It pushes UNICEF down to the level of "most common denominator" in an environment where other agencies have not acquired comparable skills or effectiveness.
  - It runs counter to attitudes we demonstrated in early results from staff research. We believe it would have widespread negative impact on staff motivation.
  - Booz•Allen experience with the marketing of "generics" and the marketing of "brands" also suggests that UNICEF effectiveness would suffer if the agency were "lumped" into an aggregate pack of UN activities.
  - Agency performance already shows the negative impact of excessive complexity within the agencies. There is little evidence to support the proposition that the agencies and funds would be easier to manage, less bureaucratic or more effective if they all became submerged into a single national UN unit.

**"I'M CONVINCED WE WOULD GIVE UP A LOT. I'D HATE TO SEE THAT HAPPEN!"**

**KEY MEMBER OF A TOP DONOR DELEGATION TO EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Mission...

**UNICEF OVERLAPS TOPICALLY WITH OTHER UN AGENCIES, MAKING A UNIQUE POSITION DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY; SOME ARGUE THAT THE “SPECIALTY” IS FIELD MOBILIZATION**

	<b>MAJOR UN AGENCY ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>EMERGENCIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHA</li> <li>• UNDP</li> <li>• UNICEF (non-food aid including health, water sanitation, education and special support for children, including psychosocial support)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR</li> <li>• WFP</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH/POPULATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Bank</li> <li>• World Health</li> <li>• UN Population Fund</li> <li>• UNICEF (child and maternal health, adolescent sexuality and AIDS prevention and (with UNFPA) family planning)</li> </ul>	
<b>NUTRITION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and Agriculture Organization</li> <li>• <i>International Fund for Agricultural Development</i></li> <li>• World Food Programme</li> <li>• UNICEF (micro-nutrient support, child nutrition promotion and community mobilization, breastfeeding advocacy)</li> <li>• WHO</li> </ul>	
<b>WATER/SANITATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF (hardware installation, health education, social mobilization)</li> <li>• UNDP</li> <li>• WHO</li> <li>• World Bank</li> </ul>	
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNESCO</li> <li>• UNICEF (primary education, literacy and early childhood education)</li> </ul>	
<b>CHILDREN IN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Labor Organization</li> <li>• UNHCR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• UNICEF (street children, orphaned children, children in war)</li> </ul>

Mission...

**WE BELIEVE THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND SECRETARIAT LEADERSHIP MUST WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE NEW FUNDAMENTAL JUDGMENTS ABOUT UNICEF'S MISSION**

- What differentiates UNICEF from the rest of the UN system?
- What is the full spectrum of humanitarian need?
- What are UNICEF's core strengths?
- What does the above imply for optimal UNICEF positioning:
  - Balance between direct assistance and advocacy?
  - Balance between emergencies and long-term development?
  - Sectors of intervention (e.g., health, environment, etc.)?
  - Geographies (e.g., developing countries, industrialized countries in emergency situations)?
  - Special contemporary issues (child labor, AIDS babies, street children, etc.)?
  - Coordinating agencies (within the UN, IGOs, NGOs)
- The Delphi Panel makes a useful contribution to these issues

**CONVICTION ABOUT UNICEF'S TOTAL MISSION IS INDISPENSIBLE TO RESOLVING QUESTIONS ABOUT UNICEF'S EMERGENCY ROLE**



Emergency Mission...

**TURNING TO EMERGENCIES, NO ONE – EVEN THE MOST CONCERNED DOUBTER – IS SUGGESTING THAT UNICEF WALK AWAY FROM THESE SITUATIONS**

- “We are duty bound to respond where children are involved.”  
Regional Director
- “Morally, UNICEF has to respond. But maintain a mobilized staff? Stockpile supplies? That sounds inconsistent. This should be worked out with the other agencies. The UN must have a joint capacity available in this case.”  
Delphi Panel Member
- “Emergencies can sap the energy and resources of UNICEF, unless dealt with as activities that are additions and supplements to long-term programs. When they are very necessary, they should have special budgets and defined periods of commitment.”  
Delphi Panel Member
- “Emergencies are never self-contained. They are part of a linkage of causes and effects. Thus the priorities should be perceived in a “continuum.”  
Delphi Panel Member
- “In spite of what is likely to be ever-greater demand, UNICEF should not increase its involvement in emergency situations. To the extent that it does become involved in emergency work, UNICEF should give priority to supporting efforts to clarify the division of labor within the UN system and enhancing the ability of the system to respond.”  
Head of Leading International NGO

## **DELINEATING UNICEF'S ROLE IN EMERGENCIES COULD BE ACHIEVED BY A NUMBER OF METHODS**

- An agreed “cap” on emergency investment averaged over a three or four-year period
  - Percentage to be agreed among Board and Secretariat; today’s spending level of about 30% provides a starting point for discussion
  - Cap applied over multi-year period, to allow flexibility in the event of a particularly high-emergency year
- A clearly defined role in all emergencies – “niche” strategy
  - The most commonly suggested role, given UNICEF’s unique strength, is water/sanitation – although some resist becoming “plumbers to the UN”
  - In the broader UN context, UNICEF could be assigned a role; the organization may not have the opportunity to select

- A “backup” role to lead agencies, focusing on the particular issues facing children:

“...one could conceive UNICEF acting as a kind of efficient and intelligent fire brigade, providing whatever help would be required during a first emergency period. Thereafter, it should increasingly call upon the other members of the UN, bilateral aid, NGOs, etc. to take on the more long-term rehabilitation and redevelopment task, while expecting the UNICEF regular programme to contribute its share to the long haul affecting mothers and children. A lead-agency role, however attractive it may be... has a tendency to distract from the main tasks of a long-term nature.”  
High level UNICEF veteran

Emergency Operations...

**ONCE UNICEF HAS DEFINED ITS COMMITMENT TO EMERGENCIES, OPERATIONAL RESPONSES MUST BE ADDRESSED**

- Preparedness
- Staff deployment
- Support to countries
- Efficient use of resources

**INCREASED PREPAREDNESS, LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE, IS IN ORDER – PARTICULARLY SINCE DELPHI PANEL VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUSLY PREDICTS WORSENING WORLD CRISES**

- “In Africa alone, there are now over 30 individual national crises. There is no evidence that we will see relief in this situation in the next 5-10 years.”

Delphi Panel Member

- “More crises, because: 1) End of the cold war; 2) End of surrogate superpower control; 3) press and media revolution; 4) underlying economic and ethnic tensions.”

Delphi Panel Member

- “The audit reports on emergencies have been highlighting the same issues for years. But the organization has not changed its practices. We don’t need any more studies or reports, we need to address the issues identified.”

Senior UNICEF Manager

- “When an emergency team is en route to the field, they lack basic equipment to do their jobs. They look for computers, fax machines and the like – and sometimes they don’t find them. The “office-in-a-box” concept is one simple possibility.”

Internal Audit Staff Member

- “The Terms of Reference for a Rapid Response Team have been developed to pull out some experienced people from their offices at the outbreak of an emergency until permanent staff is hired.”

Senior Emergency Operations Officer

**FINDING STAFF TO CONDUCT EMERGENCY MISSIONS IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR UNICEF**

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF STAFF	CHALLENGE FOR EMERGENCY DEPLOYMENT
UNICEF staff in country already	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not have emergency experience</li> <li>• Emergencies occurring primarily in Africa, but most senior, experienced UNICEF people are in Asia and Latin America, many with little interest in returning to Africa</li> </ul>
UNICEF staff from other offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to get country representatives to agree to release staff; typically they argue that the person is indispensable for operation of ongoing programmes, preparing Global Goals reports, etc.</li> <li>• There may not be enough people in UNICEF with the relevant emergency background, given the number and severity of emergencies today</li> </ul>
External hires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF employs temporary and consultant staff in emergency situations</li> <li>• Headquarters emergency unit prefers using experienced UNICEF staff</li> <li>• Finding and screening such hires is time consuming, in part because this is handled on an as-needed basis – there is no list of qualified candidates maintained</li> </ul>

## **TACTICAL GUIDANCE FROM THOSE WHO HAVE “BEEN THERE” IS NOT ALWAYS FORTHCOMING**

- Today’s Emergency Operations office is focused more on monitoring emergency programmes, coordinating within HQ and with other UN agencies than on direct support to emergency staff
- Experienced staff counsel is not always available to staff before being dispatched to emergency situations – consultants without prior UNICEF experience can be sent directly to the emergency from home cities
- Senior staff may travel to advise emergency staff, but they do so individually, on an ad-hoc basis
  - Country staff have to integrate the best counsel from the various inputs they receive
  - Some within the organization are suggesting a “team management” approach, drawing upon the most experienced emergency staff to work together on-site during demanding phases of emergencies
- So not unfair to ask, “Who’s in charge here?”

Emergency Operations...

**EMERGENCIES ARE EXPENSIVE OPERATIONS – THE NEED FOR URGENT ACTION CAN DIMINISH CONCERN ABOUT COSTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Emergencies require an additional set of costs not incurred in regular country programmes
  - Air transport for supplies, when roads are not usable
  - Staff security, etc.
- Speed of change and general confusion surrounding an emergency situation make planning difficult – many unpredictable factors, no clear time horizon
- Overworked and often inexperienced staff are more prone to making mistakes which can have cost implications
- UNICEF often finds it difficult to end emergency operations, in part due to supplemental donations; this means sustaining high-cost projects

## UNICEF CAN TAKE SEVERAL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ITS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

ISSUE	ACTIONS
<b>PREPAREDNESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct more scenario analysis; develop specific “battle plans” for common categories of emergencies, including civil war, earthquake, and famine</li> <li>• Introduce “office-in-a-box” for quick setup of emergency office facilities</li> </ul>
<b>STAFFING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop country representatives blocking deployment of signed-on staff</li> <li>• Require basic briefing of all non-UNICEF staff before sending to an emergency</li> </ul>
<b>COUNTRY SUPPORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more tactical support from HQ to unprepared country staff faced with an emergency – ideally by emergency setup specialists                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coping with the country situation</li> <li>– Handling larger budgets than typically available</li> <li>– Setting up operational tracking, including monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>COST MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce reasonable “due process:” planning, control procedures, accountability – uncertainties and high costs make accountability more important, not less, by contrast with regular programmes</li> <li>• Test idea of assigning trained financial “unit managers” to major emergency projects</li> <li>• Consider criteria for exiting emergency activities as part of the initial planning process; factor into staff contract terms</li> </ul>