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DEVELOPMENT OF UNICEF PROGRAMME POLICY*

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The tremendous outpouring of messages of condolence when Mr. Pate died, ranging from heads of State to school children, was a tribute not only to a very remarkable man, but also to the instrument which was so largely his handiwork. UNICEF has been called the U.N. agency with a soul; certainly it is an agency which has evoked special feelings on the part of people all over the world. There is a strong sense of commitment and cause associated with UNICEF's work at all levels.

When UNICEF began, it had ready-made assets of good will; interest in children is universal and transcends political and other differences; the work is concrete, readily understood, and a symbol of the larger purposes of the U.N. It is appealing to people who want to give tangible support to the U.N.

But these assets would not have lasted if UNICEF had not had a sound basic approach, coupled with a readiness to change with the times. A predominant characteristic of UNICEF has been its spirit of self-criticism, its willingness to learn from experience, and its deep sense of trusteeship for the funds contributed to it.

An illustration of how UNICEF has changed with the times is its role in the Development Decade. It is being increasingly recognized that people must have the health, skills, and motivation if they are to contribute to the progress of their society. This insight into the nature of national growth gives UNICEF a new perspective in its programme emphasis. The rising generation will not automatically be prepared to make its contribution by economic measures alone. Special attention must be given to the needs of children and youth, not only to protect them but also to prepare them.

While UNICEF is influenced by the Development Decade, it also is in a position to exert its own influence. In a number of different ways UNICEF is seeking to make planners, developing countries, and sources of outside aid, aware of the importance of providing for the younger generation and of making programmes for the benefit of children an integral part of national development plans.

* Summary of a statement by Mr. Charnow to the annual workshop of the State Representatives of the U.S. Committee for UNICEF, May 1965.

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UNICEF at present has only some \$35 million a year to spend, and this has to be spread among some 115 countries. Nevertheless, because of its sound basic approach, it has been able to make a strong impact. It uses its aid as a catalyzer, encouraging and stimulating efforts by the countries themselves in behalf of their children. In every country there are government officials, people in the professions, private agencies, various voluntary groups, and individuals who want to do more to improve the lot of children. UNICEF aid can be used by them as a lever for mobilizing local resources on behalf of children - not only to meet immediate needs, but to set in motion chain-reactions which establish permanent services, soundly conceived and gradually expanding in coverage and improving in quality.

This goal, however, requires sound project preparation. Before UNICEF aid is given for a project the Government has to develop a "plan of operations" spelling out in detail the objectives; what is proposed to be done; how it is proposed to be done; where it is to be done; who in the Government is to be responsible; the amount and sources of local financing; the administrative organization; the time-table; and so on. Supply requirements need to be worked out and agreed upon. The plan also spells out the commitments of UNICEF and the co-operating U.N. technical agencies. In the case of UNICEF, these commitments are mainly in the form of supplies, but with local costs, mainly for training, covered if necessary to make a project viable. The technical agencies in the United Nations family (the U.N. Bureau of Social Affairs, WHO, FAO, UNESCO, and ILO) provide advice and experts to the country as required. The UNICEF Executive Board does not approve aid for a project until it has the technical approval of the U.N. agency, or agencies concerned.

All this may take many months, and sometimes several years, to work out, and requires a great deal of informal consultation among all parties concerned. The UNICEF field staff plays a very active role in helping the government departments involved develop this plan, and to modify it on the basis of experience when new UNICEF allocations are required for the next stage. But the responsibility is that of the aided governments; financially this has been reflected in their putting up, on the average, two and one-half times what they ask for from UNICEF.

The first stage in the evolution of UNICEF programme policy was an emphasis on meeting emergency post-war needs; in the second stage, attention was shifted to long-term projects in the developing countries, first in the fields of health and nutrition, and then later in social services, education, and vocational training. In the present stage a gradual shift is taking place from primarily

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a "project" approach to an emphasis on helping countries assess overall needs, set priorities, and formulate comprehensive multi-sided programmes involving a number of elements which supplement and reinforce each other, (for example combining health, education, applied nutrition, and social services for children).

This will ultimately lead to a "country" approach for the benefit of children. It will encourage governments to take a comprehensive view of children's problems; to establish a national policy for children; to ensure that each government department in its own work gives due attention to what can be done for children; and to establish an across-the-boards co-ordination, involving all the various independent services affecting the child, both governmental and private, to achieve the most effective mobilization of resources. It will ensure that certain age-groups, or children in certain situations, are not neglected because of a gap between where one governmental service ends and another begins (for example, the child from one to six; the out-of-school youth; and children in the rapidly growing shanty-towns).

One of the perennial problems in devising projects is to determine the scope of UNICEF's aid. Help for children cannot be regarded in isolation and must be related to the improvement of conditions in the family, the community, and the nation. But how far is it appropriate for UNICEF, a children's agency, to go? It is now generally agreed by the UNICEF Board that if the hazard is a major one for children and if it can only be tackled by services to the family as a whole or the community, then the interest of the children justify UNICEF's participation.

An important factor influencing UNICEF programme policy is the recognition of the pivotal importance of trained national staff. Training of staff is now a key element in most UNICEF-aided projects, and about one third of UNICEF aid now goes for training.

UNICEF has been a pioneer in many ways, and its programme policy is characterised by considerable flexibility. It can be credited with a large number of substantial achievements. Perhaps the greatest achievement, however, is that it has focused attention, as never before, on the lot of children. It has a great and historic responsibility, in the words of the Chairman of the UNICEF Board, to be the "restless conscience" of the world.

* Copy in Mr. Charnow's office.

*Strategy for Children - Booklet reproduction of landmark document (revised) prepared
for 1967 Board session (Heyward)