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 1977 session

Report of the Special Meeting on the Situation of  
 Children in Asia with Emphasis on Basic Services,  
 Manila, 17 - 19 May 1977

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(49 p.)

### Introduction

1. The Special Meeting on the situation of children in Asia with emphasis on basic services was held in Manila, Philippines, from 17 to 19 May 1977. It was organized under the auspices of the Executive Board of UNICEF. An Inaugural Meeting was held for both the Special Meeting and the 1977 regular UNICEF Executive Board session. The keynote address was delivered by His Excellency President Ferdinand E. Marcos. A statement was made by Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos, the First Lady and Governor of Metro Manila. Other statements were also made by Dr. Antonio Ordoñez-Plaja, Chairman of the UNICEF Executive Board; the Hon. Manuel Collantes, Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs; and Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, Executive Director of UNICEF.. 1/

2. The Chairman of the Special Meeting was the Hon. Dr. Estefania Aldaba Lim, Philippine Secretary of Social Services and Development. There were four Vice-Chairmen: Dr. Zaki Hasan (Pakistan); H.E. Col. M. Haque (Bangladesh); Dasho T. Tobgyel (Bhutan); and H.E. U Kyi Maung (Burma). The agenda of the Special Meeting (E/ICEF/ASIA/1/Rev.1) is contained in annex I; a list of participants to the Special Meeting in annex II; and a list of documents distributed at the Meeting in annex III. These case studies are to be published in one volume.

3. In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General of the Special Meeting, Mr. Roberto Esguerra-Barry, UNICEF Regional Director for East Asia and Pakistan, gave background information on the objectives of the meeting and the criteria for the selection of case studies to be discussed. The main objective was to study and draw relevant conclusions from the experience gained by integrated projects and programmes already in operation for some time in Asia. The strategy of providing mutually supporting services has been tried out in different forms in various Asian countries, and contributions had been requested from individuals, who were well-known for their commitment to, and deep involvement in, the promotion of interrelated services benefiting children and women in Asia. Hence, the documents presented to the Special Meeting were of a technical nature and did not constitute position papers of the Governments concerned, unless so indicated.

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1/ The address of President Marcos is contained in an addendum to the report of the UNICEF Executive Board, Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-third session, Supplement No. 12 (E/6014/Add 1 - E/ICEF/651/Add.1). The texts of all the statements are contained in document E/ICEF/649.

4. The studies focused on three main themes: (i) delivery of services for children in urban areas; (ii) services for children in rural areas; and (iii) area development approach to delivery of services for children. The studies would be highlighted by the authors - or in their absence, as has been the case in respect of three cases, by a designated substitute. General discussions would follow, with emphasis upon questions of clarification. Then, the invited resource persons would offer analytical observations and highlight pertinent issues arising out of the studies.

#### The development situation in Asia

5. Mr. J.B.P. Maramis, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), presented a detailed and comprehensive picture of the current status of socio-economic development in the developing countries of ESCAP, especially the shortfalls in performance in the non-oil producing countries. He stated that the subject of delivery of basic services to children in Asia was of great interest to ESCAP.

6. In much of the region, the will to accelerate social development had not been matched by available means, and many social programmes represented a response to pressures exerted by high birth rates, thus making the improvement of child services a matter of urgency.

7. Governments had pursued the goal of growth with social justice, but little progress had been made in improving the lot of the bottom 40 per cent of the population, and in many developing countries poverty prevailed even among the regularly employed. The ranks of the landless were expanding, and human resources were increasingly under-utilized. Employment opportunities generated by past development efforts had not kept pace with the expansion of the labour force, and the situation could deteriorate further as a result of rapid population growth. Effective population policies would have to become an integral part of development strategies in order to secure a better future for children.

8. The overriding concern of Governments in the region was the alleviation of mass poverty which, with its associated phenomena, was a direct affront to human dignity. The extent and nature of poverty varied from country to country, and each country would have to find its own solution to the problem, but the strategy for the coming decade should have a distinct anti-poverty focus, and the United Nations system should provide co-ordinated support whenever necessary. Such

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a strategy would require an effective integrated rural development programme, and such a programme had been designated as one of the priority areas in the ESCAP programme of work. The objective of integrated rural development was to improve the quality of life of the rural poor through greater productivity and increased access to resources and services, particularly with respect to meeting basic needs. This approach would have to ensure a more equitable distribution of production assets, particularly land, promote their efficient use with the appropriate technology, and provide better access to the relevant social services for the rural poor.

#### Services benefiting the urban child

9. In relation to services benefiting children in urban areas, three documents were considered:

- (a) "Development of education and welfare programmes for children in the Klong Toey slum" (E/ICEF/ASIA/3) by Ms. Prateep Ungsongtham (Thailand);
- (b) "Face to face with poverty: the mobile creches" (E/ICEF/ASIA/5) by Ms. Meera Mahadevan (India); and
- (c) "A review of the slum improvement programme in Calcutta with special reference to services for women and children" (E/ICEF/ASIA/4) by Mr. K.C. Silvaramakrishnan (India).

10. Ms. Prateep gave a brief outline of the history and the present status of the Klong Toey project. She emphasized the need for ensuring active participation of slum dwellers and low-cost methods of operation. Her presentation was illustrated with slides showing conditions in the slum. Afterwards, Ms. Prateep replied to questions relating to facts, figures and further clarification.

11. Since the authors of the other two papers (E/ICEF/ASIA/4 and E/ICEF/ASIA/5), could not be present to introduce them, Professor Myong-Chan Hwang presented the highlights of these projects and offered analytical observations.

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12. He pointed out that the mobile creche project, had been established, first, for the 0 to 3 age group of children of migrant construction workers and later extended to include children of the 3 to 6 and 6 to 12 age groups. The project has many interesting features, the major ones being the use of local materials; emphasis upon keeping the capital as well as recurring costs low; selection of local workers and their effective involvement in decision making; and the involvement of parents in the activities of the project.

13. Referring to the slum improvement programme in Calcutta, Prof. Hwang said that it had been difficult to launch the programme because of political instability and lack of funds. In the 1970-1971 fiscal year a comprehensive programme had been started to provide latrines, drainage, water pumps and bathroom platforms for about one million people. It had been followed by others covering nutrition, health, education and recreation. While some of those programmes were successful, maintenance costs were high.

14. An important feature of those programmes was the attempt to encourage voluntary organizations to provide comprehensive social services. Since voluntary organizations usually specialize in a particular field, a consortium had been formed, but it had proved difficult to overcome sectoral barriers and conflicts had developed. Furthermore, there had been a feeling that conventional approaches might not be relevant and so efforts had been made to establish infrastructures with a loan from the World Bank.

15. Prof. Hwang pointed out that in order to deal with a problem, it must first be defined. The role of social workers in the field appeared to be very important in that respect, as was clearly illustrated in the case of Klong Toey and of the mobile creches in Delhi. In the latter case Ms. Mahadevan had not only made the government and construction firms aware of the implications of the children's welfare but had also persuaded firms to apply the provisions of the existing law which they had previously ignored.

16. There were many sides to the problems, including religious, legal and other aspects that had their roots in social attitudes. Money did not cure all social ills. That was an important point that should be borne in mind dealing with the delivery of basic services for children. One of the key problems in the Klong Toey slum was the requirement of legal residence for enrolment in elementary schools. Ms. Prateep had decided to establish the school in the slum itself rather than try to remove the formal requirement.

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17. Programme escalation often resulted from the fact that, although solutions were proposed to deal with specific problems, the problems were more complicated than they had seemed to be at first. Escalation took two forms: increased delivery of a particular service and expansion into other related services. In due course, the programmes become comprehensive. Because of the complicated nature of the problem, an overall or integrated approach was probably most effective and thus desirable.

18. There was, of course, the question as to how far escalation could or should go. Although the Klong Toey project was on the way to becoming integrated, it was still far short of its goal, for some essential services such as water supply, garbage collection, and housing were very inadequate. Without a comprehensive slum-improvement programme that included land tenure and vocational training for present and future breadwinners, the real problem would not be solved. Expansion of programmes, however, leads to many administrative problems such as organizational conflict, shortages of trained staff and high maintenance costs.

19. Many ingredients were necessary for a programme to be effective, the most obvious one being financial resources. However, it was not too difficult to mobilize such resources once the attention of the public or of those allocating the funds had been drawn to the problems. The success of the Pattana school was due, to a large extent, to the support of the mass media and college students who influenced public opinion in Thailand. With that support it had been quite easy to obtain the necessary financing. The mobile creches had made effective use of traditional dancing and drama and cooking demonstrations to mobilize support not only from the public but also from prospective clients.

20. It was wrong to assume that clients invariably welcomed the programmes. In fact, they were sometimes suspicious of or even opposed to them. Programmes were most effective when they used indigenous materials and locally trained staff recruited from the client group itself or from a community with the same social background. That was well illustrated in the case of the Pattana schools which employed teaching assistants recruited from among teenagers in the slum area. Not only was the use of indigenous resources effective, it also lowered programme costs and could contribute to breaking down the psychological barrier which deterred potential clients from participating effectively in the programme. In the case of the mobile creches an attempt was even made to make the centers look like the huts of the urban poor by using the same materials. Training in the field was vitally important as it provided future staff with knowledge and skills relevant to the solution of the real problems, as was clear from the mobile creches programme.

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21. The most effective organizational structure for service programme seemed to be one that was not bureaucratic. The mobile creches programme had avoided the all too frequent conflict between decision-makers and field workers by allowing the latter to participate in the policy-making process. Social workers and local staff acted as a sort of linchpin and could eliminate possible psychological barriers between the clients and the organizational structure as their approach in the field was experimental. They regarded the whole process of programme planning and implementation as a learning process and were therefore not too rigid.

22. The welfare of children was, in the last analysis, the responsibility of the Government. The ultimate success of a programme in most cases depended upon recognition and financial support from the Government. The more comprehensive a programme became, the more that was true. The pattern of government response in the case of Klong Toey and the mobile creches showed that such recognition was very slow in coming. Support usually did not come until the programme had proved feasible, and there was a considerable time lag between official recognition of the problem and the taking of supportive measures.

23. Another resource person, Dr. Stephen Yeh, observed that, apart from the intrinsic value of individual projects, the question arose as to what light they shed upon broader policy considerations. All the papers related to one aspect of the urban problem, namely urban slums or squatter areas. Accordingly the most crucial centre from which to attack the problem of urban poverty was in the areas where it existed. The reason was evident from the fact that the over-all rate of population increase in the region was about 2.5 to 3 per cent annually, that the rate for the urban population was between 4 and 6 per cent annually, that the population of the main cities of south-east Asia was expanding at a rate of 5 to 6 per cent annually and that the increase in the urban squatter population was staggering. As an example he cited the case of Manila: whereas the population of Metro Manila was rising at an annual rate of 6 per cent, that of the slums was growing at an annual rate of 12 per cent.

24. It was therefore clear, when speaking of the concentration of the urban poor, including the problems of women and children, that the spatial target must be the slum areas. However, that raised problems, because Government attitudes to slum dwellers had passed through three stages. Initially, when slums were viewed as a disease that must be eradicated through the construction of new housing, the attitude was one of hostility. The second stage, which was one of tolerance and neglect,

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came when the government realized the magnitude of the problem and the limited nature of its resources. The third and present stage was reached when the Government became aware that the housing problem had an impact on social and political conditions and that action was needed. In Thailand, for instance, the housing authorities were beginning to see that the slum colonies would be there for some time to come and that, in the interest of social development, action must be taken. The approach then chosen was that of upgrading the slums. That was an important development, for it showed that the Government realized that it must provide basic services for the slum dwellers.

25. There was a possibility that material and other social services could be delivered and managed through a single agency. One of the difficulties of planning, evident in the Klong Toey project, was that the planners did not fully understand their clients. It would be interesting to hear from Ms. Prateep what the people thought of the government and what they felt the Government thought of them.

26. One of the prevailing myths concerned community participation. It was too often assumed that most slum communities automatically had some cohesion and that the community could therefore be mobilized to perform wonders. However, to judge from some of the site and service projects of the World Bank, two things were clear. Firstly, it was not safe to assume that community cohesion existed in all low-income areas: that depended upon the size, density and ethnic composition of the population. Secondly, even assuming that there was some cohesion and a willingness to participate, it did not follow that community participation would automatically be in the direction desired by the Government: there might quite possibly be a conflict of objectives. It was clear from the Calcutta paper (E/ICEF/ASIA/4) that confusion existed between means and ends. It was meaningless to say that more funds should be allocated. A far more effective method was to decide first what objectives were desired and then determine the means of achieving them.

27. Finally, referring to children in the slums, he expressed concern at the problem of the abandoned child, for abandonment was a form of unconscious infanticide. It was not only poverty and fertility that led to a weakening of the family structure; urbanization was also a contributing factor. Child abuse and abandonment, while not peculiar to the developing countries, were problems that deserved close attention.

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28. A general discussion followed on various aspects of delivery of services for children in urban areas. Some of the recurring and most emphasized points were as follows. The case studies have highlighted the dimensions of the problem and the acute misery in the urban areas. However, the Pattana project of Bangkok and the mobile creche of Delhi had vividly indicated the scope for improvement through active and continuous participation of people. The Klong Toey project has provided UNICEF with an additional role, namely, that of a persuasive broker between the Government and the project.

29. While these studies suggest some of the ways in which small scale projects can be effective in the delivery of services, the larger question of the replicability of successful methods must always be kept in view. In addition, it must be realized that national policies and nation-wide programmes will be required to tackle effectively the problems of poverty in urban areas. In this context, every effort should be made to encourage and actively involve voluntary agencies, even with government's administrative and financial support as cited in the case of one country.

#### Services benefiting the rural child

30. Three case studies dealing with delivery of services in rural areas were discussed:

- (a) "Integrated Health services project, Miraj, India" (E/ICEF/ASIA/6) by Dr. Eric R. Ram (India);
- (b) "Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement for Social Development in Sri Lanka" (E/ICEF/ASIA/8) by A.T. Ariyaratne (Sri Lanka);
- (c) "Basic Services Delivery in Underdeveloped countries - A view from Gonosshasthaya Kendra" (E/ICEF/ASIA/9) by Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury (Bangladesh).

31. Dr. Eric Ram presented the highlights of Miraj project, which aimed to provide basic health and medical care through co-ordination of government efforts and community resources. A total of 186 village birth attendants (Dais) have been trained to give a better midwifery service. Each Dai is provided with a small kit costing only \$US 5 cents each. Dr. Ram demonstrated a few kits to the participants at the meeting. In the last three years, infant mortality has fallen from 67.6 to 23.1 per 1,000, intestinal infections have declined by over 60 per cent and BCG vaccinations have gone up from 6 per cent to 55 per cent. The Government of the State of Maharashtra has decided to extend the Miraj type primary health care system in 10 districts of the State.

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32. Mr. Ariyaratne highlighted the main features of Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka. Emphasizing that it was a non-governmental, non-profit, people's movement founded in 1958, he stressed that it aimed at the "well-being of all by the mutual sharing of one's time, thought and energy". He also indicated Sarvodaya programmes for children especially community kitchen programmes for nutrition, community health programme, pre-school education, children's libraries and day-care centres. He illustrated his presentation with slides and a movie.

33. Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury introduced his case study by emphasizing the need for reducing poverty in rural areas. Since manpower was the most important resource available in the developing countries, the active involvement of people - especially women - was the only effective approach to delivery of services. In his project, a group of doctors had decided to set up a para-medical programme with the emphasis upon involvement of women in the delivery of health care. Young village women with up to 10 years of education were trained in basic health and hygiene, immunization, pre- and post-natal care, normal delivery of babies and family planning. In the absence of people's active participation many water pumps remained inoperative. It was, therefore, essential to teach one of the local villagers the technology of pump maintenance.

34. The resource person, Mr. Ali bin Esa, said that the three case studies which had been presented (E/ICEF/ASIA/6, 8 and 9) reflected the disparate efforts of conscientious development planners to devise suitable new models and strategies for improving the quality of life of specific target populations, especially the poor in rural areas. In each of the three studies, reference was made to the inadequacy of basic services coverage in rural communities. The causes had been identified as poverty, hunger, malnutrition, over-population, rural capitalism, disease, landlessness, illiteracy, non-functional education, cultural attitudes that were unfavorable to women and children, an over-centralized and unco-ordinated administration, and a lack of motivation on the part of public administrators and extension workers. Furthermore, all three projects stressed the importance of community participation and the "integrated approach" and they were concerned with improving the implementation of development projects.

35. Each of the projects described in the three case studies had apparently been successful in its own right. The problem for development planners was to determine how those projects might be expanded or adopted to other countries and situations.

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36. In his paper (E/ICEF/ASIA/9), Mr. Chowdhury dealt not only with health services but also with the inter-relation between health and other sectors, especially agriculture and education, in rural community development. Mr. Chowdhury emphasized better delivery of basic services through the careful selection of health personnel, including paramedics. Great importance was attached to the "sense of belonging" in the community centre. Mr. Chowdhury also stressed the need for greater co-ordination between the United Nations and other funding agencies in carrying out projects and programmes. In that connection, Malaysia's experience in launching its applied nutrition programme and the "Green Revolution" was perhaps relevant. The original plan had been to implement each programme separately; it had been realized, however, that close co-ordination between the two was imperative.

37. In his paper (E/ICEF/ASIA/6), Dr. Eric Ram focused on the co-ordination of health services only. Such an approach, although restrictive, was perhaps the most pragmatic first step which could be taken in any given sector, bearing in mind the multitude of agencies concerned with development. One of the problems Malaysia had encountered in carrying out the "Green Revolution" had been to ensure co-ordination among the many agencies concerned, each of which had its own identity and independent source of funding. The Miraj project described in Dr. Ram's paper aimed at ensuring co-ordination through training, a revised workload, an improved functional work system and better supervision. An attempt was also made to provide a detailed outline of duties for administrators at the village level and an evaluation of the project's impact had already been undertaken.

38. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka constituted proof that a development project would be successful only when there was community commitment, involvement and participation. The Movement focused on basic services and stressed self-reliance and wholesome personality development; to that end, it made extensive use of the existing religious institutions. In an era of conflicting cultures in Asia, such an approach should be given more serious consideration by other countries and by the funding agencies.

39. How then could the experience derived from those three projects be used to improve the planning and formulation of implementation strategies? Firstly, in view of the complexity and elusiveness of development gains, both short-term and long-term plans must be formulated. Long-term plans should be designed to fight poverty and promote meaningful education, while short-term plans should cater for the basic needs of women and

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children so that they could enjoy physical and material well-being. Those basic needs could be met by providing such services as those described in the UNICEF booklet "A Strategy for Basic Services" and those advocated by the Sarvodaya Movement, both of which must be given top priority.

40. In operational terms, priority meant political and administrative commitment implying the need to review overall planning strategy on a regular basis, to review financial allocation and, finally, to review personnel management in terms of staff ratios, the content of staff training programmes, and staff security and remuneration. Such a review also involved the reorientation of senior officials in the central agencies. In that connexion, Mr. Ali bin Esa was extremely concerned at the rigid specialization of such officials and at the lack of inter-sectoral co-ordination which was not clearly demonstrated by meetings of the specialized agencies, where participants were always drawn from only one specific area of development planning.

41. In setting priorities for basic needs, national Governments must also have access to the necessary basic information and data in order to plan and implement their programmes. Such information was not always readily available. Similarly, effective co-ordination machinery was required in order to monitor the progress of individual programmes. In Malaysia, for example, district action committee comprising elected representatives of the people and heads of departments co-ordinated project implementation at the district level. All programmes had to be referred to these committees.

42. A number of specific questions and pertinent observations emerged from the general discussion. Several questions were raised about the midwifery kit, specially with regard to the nature and appropriateness of UNICEF supplied kits. One delegate asked the extent and nature of UNICEF participation and support to Dr. Ram's project. The non-operational hand-pumps in Bangladesh were viewed with disquiet by a few delegates. While there was unanimous appreciation of the methods and approaches developed in all the three projects, there was an emphasis on extracting relevant and replicable elements from these projects for their incorporation in the wider national policies. The necessity to relate services for children in rural areas within the framework of economic and institutional reforms (i.e. land reform) was widely supported by the delegates and the observers.

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43. With regard to the specific questions on the midwifery kit, water-pumps and sanitation programmes, Mr. E.J.R. Heyward, Senior Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, said that UNICEF can and does support, subject to Government agreement, experimental, innovative projects, such as those being discussed by the Special Meeting. UNICEF support to such programmes has to be viewed from two main angles: (a) support to an experiment and (b) extension of the successful results on a wider, national scale. The latter has to be undertaken by the Government of a given country and UNICEF is always happy to assist and collaborate with Governments of the developing countries in this regard. With respect to the Miraj project in India, UNICEF assistance has been indirect. UNICEF assisted the Government of India with vaccines, part of which was transmitted through the Ministry of Health to the State of Maharashtra, which in turn provided these vaccines to Miraj.

44. With respect to kits, as already explained by the colleague from WHO, there are many kinds of kits supplied by UNICEF for use by different categories of workers, auxiliary nurse-midwife kit, basic health workers kit, midwifery kit, etc. Secondly, there is a continuous process of experimentation and adaptation of these kits taking into account the changing requirements of specific categories of health personnel. In addition, the list of items in a kit is also reviewed and changed from time to time. There is no ground to feel that UNICEF-supplied kits have not been useful.

45. With respect to tube wells in Bangladesh, the question of location of the well is always a little complex in a densely populated country. In Bangladesh, the UNICEF District Representatives try to ensure that the pump is located to service at least 10 families. The breakdown of pumps is no more than 20 per cent which, according to technical opinion, is not a bad state of affairs. However, UNICEF should and would try to reduce it further by a more effective system of maintenance.

46. The latrine construction programme has been troubled with problems in almost all countries except in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. It is an experimental programme and construction has been undertaken on a very limited scale. The cultural and familial factors have to be taken into account in sanitation programmes.

47. Mention was made about science teaching programmes in Bangladesh and India being assisted by UNICEF under which local materials available in the villages are used to impart scientific knowledge.

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Area development approach for children's services

48. There were three papers considered on the area development approach to delivery of services for children:

- (a) "Development in West Sumatra, Indonesia" (E/ICEF/ASIA/7) by Governor Harun Zain (Indonesia);
- (b) "The need for an integrated approach to social development in under-developed countries -- A look at Project Compassion (E/ICEF/ASIA/2) by Mr. Ramon P. Binamira (Philippines);
- (c) Case study by the Commite Central de Protection de la Mere et l'Enfant (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam).

49. In the absence of Governor Zain, Mr. Hendra Esmara, a resource person, presented the case study on West Sumatra, Indonesia.

50. Through the use of slides, Mr. Esmara underlined the geographical, economic and social problems of the province. He indicated the efforts made by the Government to actively involve people at different levels - villagers, officials, religious chiefs, students, and the chiefs of clans. The Regional Planning Board is the main co-ordinating agency involved in the mobilization of all resources available at the provincial level. The national Government allocates development budget funds to the local government in the form of INPRES grants which are used at the discretion of local development councils.

51. Mr. Binamira introduced his study on "Project Compassion" and explained that it sought to enable people to help themselves. In his opinion some problems were more important than others and, therefore, these could be called "breeder problems". Project Compassion aimed at removing the breeder problems and, thus, improving food production, nutrition and family planning. In a little less than two years, the project has covered 1.3 million families organized in groups of twenty. Each group chooses its own leader who is responsible for a house to house survey of twenty families. Mr. Binamira illustrated his presentation of the case study with the slides.

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52. Introducing the document of the Central Council for the Protection of Mother and Child (E/ICEF/ASIA/12), Mrs. Le Thi Tam said that this institution was the main agency responsible for programmes of maternal and child welfare in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. It was responsible for co-ordinating services geared to children, with, for example, Ministry of Health concerning immunization. The Council was formed in 1963 for children in the age group 0-5 and the study presented to the Special Meeting dealt with this age group. For monitoring and health surveillance, this group is divided into 3 sub-groups: 2-10 months, 11-18 months and 19-35 months. Mrs. Tam described various programmes and activities undertaken by the council.

53. Mr. Ralph Diaz said that the paper (E/ICEF/ASIA/7) prepared by Governor Harun Zain of West Sumatra emphasized planning practices and the importance of present and future informal leaders. Objectively measured, progress in the development of West Sumatra was impressive: Governor Zain's statement that planning was still at the "trial and error stage" should be interpreted as meaning that he viewed the planning not as a mere technical exercise involving allocations of scarce resources by planners recruited from universities but rather as a dynamic political process in which the Governor played a central role and which involved a wide range of leaders from all groups and levels. West Sumatra's in Indonesia. Thus, the problem for West Sumatra was not the use of planning techniques but the promotion of planning-mindedness at the local level in order to ensure greater success in the implementation of plans. Planning was part of a dialectical process of dialogue through appropriate institutional channels. Governor Zain had unduly played down the role of the local level in the formulation of plans. The experience of a group of Indonesian planners in Yogyakarta province indicated that the participation of Kabupaten staff in devising a planning framework for their own area was essential, and it was only a matter of time before that staff would have their own regular and appropriate planning groups. The conditions for more effective planning at the local level existed in Indonesia, especially in the form of direct budget allocations to local governmental levels. Without appropriate delegation of authority to the local levels, however, the inputs of the central Government would fail to improve the welfare of village and urban communities. UNICEF policy-makers for their part, had come to the realization in recent years that supporting and initiating projects directly benefiting children without taking into account the governing apparatus resulted in isolated sectoral approaches, even in those projects described as "integrated". That apparatus served to co-ordinate the activities of sectoral agencies, and hence, any attempt to provide basic services in an integrated manner must involve the local government apparatus directly. Thus, serious consideration needed to be given to strengthening the development administration capabilities of local government.

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54. Political development at the community level was a prerequisite for the effective provision of basic services, particularly to the younger age groups, and could be accelerated through a system of supporting input at the higher levels of government. However, no plan was perfect and it was necessary to proceed, as Governor Zain had written, on a trial-and-error basis, although it was to be hoped that the lessons of past errors could provide a basis for improving provincial administration activities. In that connexion, the role of local leaders was crucial. A closed administrative system had no capacity for improvement, while an administrative system which elicited the opinions of local leaders would be better able to reflect the needs of the people. Governor Zain had taken the initiative in establishing and institutionalizing a dialogue with local leaders by creating, inter alia, the Association of Minangkabau-Clan Chiefs. Through such organizations, government policies could be clarified to prevent misunderstandings and potential conflicts of interests avoided. Furthermore, unless local leaders were involved in development projects, they would most likely be disinclined to maintain them. That had been proved by the attitude of villagers in a number of Asian countries who viewed schools, for example, as government-sponsored institutions alien to their culture and community, and who, as a result, failed to support them.

55. The striking feature of "Project Compassion" described in document E/ICEF/ASIA/2 was the central role played by the volunteer unit leader, supported by a "doorstep" delivery system. The vital importance of fostering a development-oriented local leadership, effectively supported by a higher-level structure which provided technical and where necessary, material inputs, and integrated various sectoral approaches, had been convincingly illustrated by the activities of the project. Mr. Binamira was not a newcomer to community work and his past experience was an asset in guiding the development-oriented force of government and private leaders mobilized in the project. However, the implementation of integrated projects was an uncharted journey in which patience was the valuable asset of the project manager and his staff. How could an integrated project with objectives attainable only in the long run effectively work with budget appropriations made on a yearly basis? How could a project achieve long-range objectives unless it was converted into a permanent programme?

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56. The centres of decision-making at the various levels of government were factors in delivering services to the "doorstep" of the poor. The shift from project to programme required the strengthening of local institutions to sustain permanently the gains made in project-based development efforts. It was precisely in attempting to effect the transition from project to programme that complications arose; to neglect family and community institutions in favour of administrative institutions in plan formulation and implementation would result in neglecting the real needs of the target community. Involving family and community institutions, however, was not the same as involving sectoral and local government institutions. Hence, the strategic importance of the volunteer unit leader. It was interesting to note that "Project Compassion" had settled on a ratio of volunteer leaders to households which was virtually identical to the chosen in Thailand for village health-care volunteers. In Thailand, the experience of health-care workers had been that health could not be narrowly defined and they had consequently expanded their activities to include family and community development aspects; in so doing, they had paved the way for an integrated village development approach. The success of several health volunteers' projects in Thailand had led the Government to establish a nation-wide programme provided for the training of over 24,000 health volunteers between 1977 and 1981.

57. It was somewhat contradictory, however, to adopt a rigid target for the number of rural health workers to be trained in a given period if such workers were truly to be "volunteers". To the extent that leaders were volunteers it was they who should set the targets. The blame for the lack of the participation should be placed primarily on the shortcomings, both structural and behavioural, of sectoral agencies and local authorities and not on the people themselves.

58. Development consisted in effecting changes in a people's quality of life, with quantitative changes being instrumental in bringing about the change in quality. As to qualitative changes, it was particularly important to spread integrated approaches through villagers and urban dwellers themselves. A training strategy was needed through which the volunteer unit leaders gradually became trainers at the local level with a view to encouraging self-sustaining improvements in the community's capacity for self-development.

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59. The test of community development was whether there was a difference between those communities affected by the project and those that were not, and whether other surrounding communities could see changes in the project areas and then proceed to adopt the examples set as viable means of improving their own conditions. The first test, therefore, was that of impact; the second, that of replicability. An approach entailing the channelling of development inputs through local institutions and leaders to the fullest extent possible differed from a nationally conceived strategy of rate of coverage. In the former approach, the timing of the diffusion of new ideas was set by the communities themselves, whereas in the latter that determination was made at the top with strong emphasis placed on budget limitations in terms of the kind and amount of technical and material assistance to be provided per time unit, usually a fiscal year. In that respect, UNICEF would have to continue to set the pace in project development through longer-term commitments, avoiding the fallacy of measuring success in terms of quick results and enabling local leadership and technical competence to play a central role in the formulation and implementation of projects. Furthermore, such an approach provided a challenge to UNICEF to use indigenous materials to the maximum in its material support of projects.

60. Document E/ICEF/ASIA/12 illustrated the experience of a different ideological and political system. Viet Nam had suffered much in the course of a long war and was currently engaged in physical, economic and social rehabilitation. The work of saving the country's children, however, could not wait and the Central Committee had been given a major role for that purpose. In providing basic services to mothers and children the Central Committee made full use of indigenous materials and talents. Provincial units were given full authority to implement their own programmes with clear guidelines and support from the Central Committee. In the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam centralization need not lead to a weakening of local initiative if what it entailed was aggregating and synthesizing local demands, interests and conditions within a national framework.

61. One of the interesting items mentioned in the paper was the establishment of centres for supplying and distributing mother's milk for the feeding of young children when their mothers were absent. That was a novel idea regarding which further information would be welcomed.

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62. Another interesting point was the organization and management of the creche which represented a radical departure from the traditional baby-sitting approach to the care of pre-school children. There was ample evidence that the pre-school years were formative and the Vietnamese approach to pre-school care was a pace-setter for Asian countries. UNICEF should, therefore, assist in disseminating that Vietnamese experience to other developing countries. Viet Nam had been following basic services approach for many years before the concept had been discussed in international conference circles.

63. Mr. Shoaib Sultan Kham said that as a rural development specialist, he did not view the situation of children in isolation but rather as an important facet of the over-all poverty problem. Thus, until UNICEF aid became part of a comprehensive strategy for the eradication of poverty, its activities would have no significant impact. It was a well-known fact that many aid programmes did not succeed in reaching the poorest sectors. To remedy that situation, it would be necessary to devise suitable strategies. If the poor were to make proper use of the necessary services provided, their ability to take advantage of them must be improved. Furthermore, it was necessary, to organize the poor, for without organization development, activities could never be more than sporadic. Experience indicated that the poor did not organize effectively around such institutions as schools or dispensaries but around productive, income-producing activities. It was an error for Governments to think that they could reach the poor and promote rural development with an army of functionaries; such government officials, even low-level experts, were generally unwilling to live in the rural areas and were remote from the people's concerns. There was a need, therefore, to create rural cadres of local inhabitants whose skills and expertise had been upgraded.

64. Greater emphasis should be placed on productive services at the local level, particularly since needs differed considerably from village to village, which made it virtually impossible for outside planners to assess and appreciate the genuine needs of villagers. Thus, until the Government began to allocate sufficient resources to activities aimed at ascertaining the wishes of local populations, all their development plans would come to nought. Governments must choose between implementing large-scale projects in a few places or small-scale projects in a great many places. The latter alternative was obviously preferable.

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65. A general discussion followed the review and analysis of all the case studies. The following were some of the main points that emerged from the general debate: (a) it was encouraging to note that important initiatives had been taken with respect to adapting services to local needs; (b) an integrated approach was desirable; however, the papers submitted to the Special Meeting showed the need for a gradual sequence of integration based on specific conditions; (c) effectiveness of the services for children depended on the active involvement of, and participation by, communities; (d) the most important question was the cleavage between developing and developed countries. While upgrading of slums was an urgent matter requiring immediate action, it was nevertheless, only part of a much larger problem; (e) efforts should be made to remove communication gaps within countries and between agencies; and (f) while there were many similarities between the African and Asian regions, there were also differences which must be taken into account. Population control is an example. Priorities must be established and resources - both human and material - must be channelled towards social development.

#### Concluding remarks

66. Following the general debate, Mr. Esguerra-Barry, Secretary-General of the Special Meeting, said that plans for the provision of basic services must take account of local differences, and the most important factor was the will of the community concerned. The main dangers facing any basic services programme were a lack of real participation in the initial planning stages, a lack of political will at any level, or a lack of expected supporting services. The Meeting had indicated the need to mobilize the international community. It had also demonstrated that the situation of children could give rise to both hope and bitterness; hope, because children represented the future, and bitterness because of the poverty and lack of services which were all too evident. It was to be hoped that those attending the meeting had been convinced of the need for revolutionary ideas and aggressive action.

67. In his closing remarks, Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, Executive Director, UNICEF, pointed out that the concept of basic services with community participation required government support. UNICEF dealt with Governments and not individual groups, and made every effort to encourage Governments to support projects like those discussed. He fully agreed that it was important to make maximum use of local resources, and UNICEF was increasingly purchasing more supplies and equipment and employing more staff from the

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developing countries themselves. It had been suggested that UNICEF should publicize the basic services programmes of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and it would certainly do so. It had also been suggested that UNICEF activities should be centred around productive enterprises. While it was extremely difficult to move away from the traditional ideas of development, progress was nevertheless being made in that respect. Policy changes introduced by the World Bank, ILO and UNESCO, as well as recent declarations by the non-aligned countries, had demonstrated that social development was beginning to receive a higher priority. It had been suggested that UNICEF should integrate the work of the various agencies; while that was not possible, it would make every effort to promote co-operation with the agencies concerned. In the final analysis, however, responsibility for co-ordinating programmes lay with Governments.

68. Mr. Ordonez-Plaja, Chairman of the Executive Board, said that the Special Meeting had shown that even in a computerized and technology-oriented world, it was possible for man to do things for man, and to make technology the servant of mankind and not the reverse.

69. In closing the Special Meeting, the Chairman said that the meeting had achieved its objective. While some views put forward had seemed heretical, the heresy of today was the truth of tomorrow. History would judge the work done at the Special Meeting by the programmes and policy changes put into effect as a result of its work.

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Annex I

Agenda of the Special Meeting on  
the Situation of Children in Asia  
with Emphasis on Basic Services\*

Philippine International Convention Center  
17-19 May 1977, Manila

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Services benefiting children in urban areas:
  - (a) "Development of Education and Welfare Programmes for Children in the Klong Toey Slum" (E/ICEF/ASIA/3) by Ms. Prateep Ungsongtham (Thailand);
  - (b) "Face to Face with Poverty: The Mobile Creches" (E/ICEF/ASIA/5) by Ms. Meera Mahadevan (India);
  - (c) "A Review of the Slum Improvement Programme in Calcutta with Special Reference to Services for Women and Children" (E/ICEF/ASIA/4) by Mr. K.C. Sivaramakrishnan (India);
  - (d) Analytical comments by Dr. Stephen Yeh and Professor Myong-Chan Hwang;
  - (e) General discussion by participants.
4. Services benefiting children in rural areas:
  - (a) "Integrated Health Services Project, Miraj, India" (E/ICEF/ASIA/6) by Dr. Eric R. Ram (India);
  - (b) "Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement for Social Development in Sri Lanka (E/ICEF/ASIA/8) by Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne (Sri Lanka);
  - (c) "Basic Services Delivery in Underdeveloping Countries: A view from Gonoshasthaya Kendra" (E/ICEF/ASIA/9) by Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury (Bangladesh);
  - (d) Analytical comments by Mr. Ali bin Esa;
  - (e) General discussion by participants.

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\* The case studies listed on this agenda are to be published in one volume.



5. Area development approach to delivery of basic services for children:
  - (a) "Development in West Sumatra, Indonesia" (E/ICEF/ASIA/7) by Governor Harun Zain (Indonesia);
  - (b) "The Need for an Integrated Approach to Social Development in Underdeveloped Countries -- A Look at Project Compassion" (E/ICEF/ASIA/2) by Mr. Ramon P. Binamira (Philippines);
  - (c) Case Study by the Comité Central de Protection de la Mère et de l'Enfant (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam);
  - (d) Analytical comments by Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan and Mr. Ralph Diaz;
  - (e) General discussion by participants.
6. Concluding discussion on the situation of children in Asia:
  - (a) Overview of the previous discussions by Dr. Stephen Yeh and Mr. Ralph Diaz;
  - (b) General discussion by participants.
7. Closing of the meeting

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Annex II

ATTENDANCE LIST

Special Meeting on the Situation of Children in Asia  
with Emphasis on Basic Services  
held at the Philippine International Convention Center  
Manila, 17 - 19 May 1977

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a/ Also member of Government delegation at session.

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Mr. Roberto Esguerra-Barry	Director for East Asia and Pakistan Regional Office
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Mr. Wah Wong	UNICEF Representative, Manila Office

Annex III

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS

Special Meeting on the Situation of Children in  
Asia with Emphasis on Basic Services  
17-19 May 1977

E/ICEF/ASIA

- 1/Rev.1\*      Agenda of the Special Meeting
- 2              The need for an integrated approach to social development  
in underdeveloped countries - a look at Project Compassion,  
Philippines - working paper prepared by Mr. Ramon P. Binamira
- 3              Development of education and welfare programmes for children  
in Klong Toey Slum, Bangkok, Thailand - working paper  
prepared by Ms. Prateep Ungsongtham
- 4\*             A review of the slum improvement programme in Calcutta with  
special reference to services for women and children,  
India - working paper prepared by Mr. K.C. Sivaramakrishnan
- 5\*             Face to face with poverty - the mobile creches, India -  
working paper prepared by Ms. Meera Mahadevan
- 6\*             Integrated health services project, Miraj India - working  
paper prepared by Dr. Eric R. Ram  
Corr.1
- 7\*             Development in West Sumatra, Indonesia - working paper  
prepared by Governor Harun Zain
- 8\*             Sarvodaya Sharmadana movement for social development in  
Sri Lanka - working paper prepared by Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne
- 9\*             Basic services delivery in underdeveloping countries - a  
view from Gonoshasthaya Kendra, Bangladesh - working paper  
by Zafrullah Chowdhury
- 10             Digest of UNICEF-assisted programmes in Asia Region
- 11/Rev.1\*      UNICEF in Asia
- 12             Case study by the Comite Central de Protection de la Mere  
et de l'Enfant, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
- 13\*             Checklist of documents for the Special Meeting
- 14/Rev.1\*      Report of the Special Meeting on the Situation of Children in  
(E/ICEF/650/Rev.1) Asia with Emphasis on Basic Services, Manila, 17-19 May, 1977

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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
ON THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN ASIA

UNICEF

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