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Review of UNICEF activities and structures

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of UNICEF activities and structures" (JIU/REP/86/11).

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REVIEW OF UNICEF ACTIVITIES AND STRUCTURES

by Alain Gourdou

Joint Inspection Unit

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1 - 10	4
I. THE DIALECTIC OF OBJECTIVES AND MANDATE	11 - 24	6
II. RESTRUCTURING OF HEADQUARTERS AND FIELD SERVICES	25 - 72	8
A. Headquarters reorganization	25 - 27	8
B. Unco-ordinated co-ordination	28 - 38	9
C. The IRM innovation	39 - 43	12
D. Reunification of the programming divisions	44 - 51	13
E. Reorganization of the field services	52 - 65	15
F. Public relations and outreach	66 - 72	18
III. MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION	73 - 114	20
A. Approaches to child-oriented development	73 - 78	20
B. Concentration of UNICEF resources on Africa	79 - 86	22
C. Evaluation and its limitations	87 - 93	24
D. Strengthening of auditing and monitoring	94 - 102	26
E. Standardization of the country reporting system and procedures	103 - 114	28
IV. ROLE AND WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD	115 - 139	30

/...

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
A. The key position of the Executive Board	115 - 123	30
B. Advantages of biennial Board sessions	124 - 129	32
C. Measures to complement the biennialization of Executive Board sessions	130 - 139	33
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		35
ANNEXES		39

INTRODUCTION

1. This report, which is part of the Joint Inspection Unit's 1986 work plan, is designed:

(a) To evaluate UNICEF operations in terms of the mandate conferred on it by the United Nations General Assembly, the tasks assigned to it under that mandate, and the programmes for carrying out those tasks;

(b) To study how the organization's present structures interface and to recommend reforms that should be instituted, both at headquarters and in the field;

(c) To contribute to the reorganization of its programming system at the stages of monitoring and evaluation;

(d) To redefine the working arrangements of the Executive Board and identify the documents and procedures most necessary to keep it up to date and able to make informed decisions.

2. This analysis of UNICEF activities and structures is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. Therefore, this report, which already covers considerable ground, will not touch upon problems already studied by the Joint Inspection Unit. The questions of co-ordinating tasks among the organizations of the United Nations system have already been considered by Inspectors Forde and Sohm in report JIU/REP/86/1, and there did not seem to be any point in reviewing again the contradictions underlying the resident co-ordinator's functions or the difficulties that could be created for UNICEF. Also outside the scope of this review are the logistic problems of managing UNIPAC, as the subject of storage costs was concurrently examined by Inspectors Efimov, Hennes and Kojić.

3. It also seemed premature to put forward any meaningful recommendations on the Greeting Card Operation (GCO). A study of the results obtained between 1955 and 1984 and a development plan for 1985-1990 were submitted to the Committee on Administration and Finance of the Executive Board at its 1986 session. It is obviously too early to make any statements about the anticipated recovery. Suffice it to say, from the figures at hand, that GCO - simultaneously a business enterprise, a non-profit association and an administration partially subject to United Nations regulations - will have to make considerable efforts to overcome its unwieldiness and handicaps. 1/

1/ GCO's operating expenses were \$200,000 in 1985 and gross sale proceeds were \$500,000 - a ratio of 2 to 5. In 1984, gross sale proceeds were \$48,400,000 and operating expenses were \$36,900,000. In 1986, those expenses were \$38,900,000 against gross sale proceeds of \$56,000,000. Inevitably, significant growth in turnover brings with it a disproportionate increase in overhead. The fact remains that, if the 2 to 5 ratio of 1955 had continued in 1984, operating expenses would have been \$19,360,000 and not \$36,900,000. In 1986, they would have been \$22,400,000 and not \$38,900,000. This demonstrates that, although the ratio grew better, rather than worse, between 1984 and 1986, one still cannot speak of a net recovery in the overall situation.

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4. Within this framework, the critical review will take into account both the specific and changing nature of UNICEF. Originally a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly, UNICEF started out as an institution providing humanitarian assistance to children who had been victims of war in Europe and China. It gradually became an agency which focused on the problems of children in developing nations and on the constraints of the "silent emergency". It serves simultaneously as an association for defence and support, a programme administration unit, a documentation and publicity office, and a research unit, for it joins with beneficiary Governments in designing various projects. Working horizontally, it manages to cover the whole spectrum of development and therefore meets the challenge of being multi-purpose and multi-disciplinary.

5. As an agency in the United Nations system, UNICEF must maintain very close ties with the private organizations that are its National Committees. It must also strike a delicate balance between co-operation and competition with the NGOs. A hybrid organization, flexible and decentralized, UNICEF has a very special status which is the source of both its strength and at times, its extreme vulnerability. The flexible management of which it is justifiably proud brings with it the constant and sometimes obsessive problem of self-financing and fund-raising.

6. Though public in nature and thus different from the NGOs, at no time does UNICEF dissociate humanitarian from economic and social matters. In recent years, it has managed to acquire methodologies and capabilities which have earned it some success and endowed it with the stable and firmly-rooted administration that it had long been without at certain managerial levels.

7. Inspector Bertrand's reports (1979 and 1980) undoubtedly had a decisive influence on the direction UNICEF was taking and the implementation of his recommendations was, for the most part, a positive step. The principal benefits of these recommendations to UNICEF and to its performance, seem to be, in descending order of importance:

- (a) Replacing annual budgeting by biennial budgeting;
- (b) Lengthening programme duration in order to implement projects in conjunction with the recipient Governments;
- (c) Removing the bottle-neck caused by insufficient reference materials and basic knowledge concerning the actual situation of children in developing nations;
- (d) Clarifying the problems associated with career planning and development for a highly diversified staff;
- (e) Devising a new budgetary format based no longer on the ways-and-means approach but on the functional presentation of expenditures;
- (f) Strengthening advisory capacity at headquarters.

8. It is true that, at that time, the strengthening of advisory capacity may have involved explanation rather than circumstantial justification and that the question

should be seriously reassessed today. It is also true that in 1983 the secretariat saw fit to reconsider the budgetary reforms proposed by Inspector Bertrand. The point however, is that his principal recommendations have been incorporated into UNICEF manuals and practices. No one questions biennial budgeting, the extended deadlines for programme implementation or the introduction of situation analyses to establish the validity of operational plans. There is a greater degree of professionalism, and our on-site surveys, both in Geneva and New York and in seven African countries, have convinced us of the generally high calibre of the staff. They are motivated and yet have retained their critical judgement. They combine clarity of vision with genuine dedication.

9. As it celebrates its fortieth anniversary, UNICEF seems to be at a crossroads. Three concomitant phenomena cannot help but affect its future development. The restructuring of the external relations system, the reorientation of the flows of information which give impetus to the system from within, are two reforms begun in 1986 which promise to be far-reaching. Secondly, the Fund's financial and human resources must be increasingly concentrated on an Africa engulfed in natural disasters and emergencies, shortages and armed conflicts. Lastly, the impact of the United Nations financial crisis cannot be underestimated. Given the immensity of identifiable needs, this crisis is bound to cause - whether directly or indirectly - a steep decline in UNICEF budgetary resources. Nor can the Fund solicit greater voluntary contributions by appealing to international solidarity, for that too is a market and we must realize that it cannot be made to last for ever.

10. In these conditions, this report is intended, first and foremost, as an aid to "digesting" successes and necessarily reflecting on failures; although fewer in number, the latter none the less have greater instructive value.

I. THE DIALECTIC OF OBJECTIVES AND MANDATE

11. It is not for the Joint Inspection Unit to pass value judgements on the policy of the Executive Board. However, it is competent to ascertain that the decisions taken are consistent with the mandate conferred by the United Nations General Assembly; that the Executive Board's wishes are respected by the secretariat and its recommendations are followed up; that its objectives are coherent and that there are not too many tactical errors or too many ideas that are wide of the mark.

12. In its resolution 57 of 11 December 1946, the United Nations General Assembly conferred on the newly created UNICEF the dual mandate of existing "for the benefit of" children and adolescents of countries which were victims of aggression or which had previously been receiving assistance from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) "in order to assist in their rehabilitation", and for "child health purposes generally". This mandate was supplemented in resolution 417 of 1 December 1950, which appealed to the Fund to "relieve the sufferings of children, particularly in underdeveloped countries".

13. In resolution 3408 of 28 November 1975, reaffirmed in 1976 and 1977, the General Assembly decided to concentrate solely on children in developing

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countries. It fleshed out this mandate by stressing the concept of "basic services" as applied to the fields of nutrition and maternal and child health, water supply, pre-school education and supporting services for women.

14. There has been a continuing debate within the Executive Board on whether to be more experimental, and at the same time, take greater risks, by scaling up the UNICEF programme to encompass economic development in which children were the focal point, or whether to stick to the narrower issues of child welfare and development, for fear that the organization might end up trading off its identity for its expanded role and that if it is overextended, under the cloak of horizontal and multi-purpose operations, its influence will be weakened.

15. In accordance with the mandate conferred by the United Nations General Assembly, the strategy of basic services has, since 1978, placed particular emphasis on primary health care. But little by little it has grown to comprise the strengthening of the administrative capabilities of the social ministries and the preparation of manuals on kitchen gardens for tropical regions, the training of plan administrators, and the organization of a bureau of vital statistics, not to mention courses for bank employees trained in rural credit techniques.

16. As part of social communication for project support, UNICEF has had to learn about the audio-visual media; as part of nutrition activities, it took an interest in the preservation of family food or in the dissemination of appropriate technologies. From the revamping of school curricula to the training of craftsmen, from pilot projects for nursery schools to national statistical surveys, beyond the theme of children strictly speaking, UNICEF has clarified its responsibilities, turning its attention to the social welfare of children in low-income urban areas, abandoned or handicapped children and literacy programmes for women.

17. It is true that in 1985 General Assembly resolution 40/210 placed special emphasis on child survival and development and on the need for universal immunization, by far one of the most important strategies for achieving it. But, given the wide-ranging implications of a mandate which is still conceived in very general terms, questions may arise concerning both the extent and content of the catalogue and the relatively heterogeneous inventory it embodies.

18. If human resources development is not only a tool or prerequisite but an objective of development (cf. DP/1986/10), then when the population under 15 years of age starts to account for nearly half the population in a growing number of developing countries and when women are added into the total, it is inconceivable that any economic or social sector should remain outside the scope of the Fund.

19. It is hard to know where to stop, in Africa even more than in Asia or in Latin America, when trying to provide for every need, at every level of society and of the State, in order to discharge a mandate for child welfare and development. It is impossible to compartmentalize tasks which are so overlapping and interrelated that the very concept of priority pales before a concept of simultaneity, which is as difficult to avoid as to put into practice.

20. Even with its broad-ranging and elastic mandate, UNICEF alone cannot provide most of the "basic services" to children and mothers in developing countries. The range of needs to be met, its limited staff, the relative weakness of its centres of operation do not actually confine it to a marginal role, but they do make it more of a supplementary force, a stimulus, a vehicle for experimentation, an added support, with varying degrees of success in achieving optimum multiplier effect.

21. Similarly, despite its clear objectives and the urgent need for remedies, UNICEF will sometimes have difficulty in overcoming a measure of opposition which has as much to do with the mores and customs of the recipient countries as with the cultural traditions of certain donors. Thus, only with the greatest caution will it venture to outline a birth-spacing programme which might be offensive to the donors' habits of mind and prevent some of them from providing finances.

22. Development activities are most certainly enhanced by their interrelationship and by the synergy produced by their simultaneous occurrence. Child survival and development are therefore intimately bound up with a whole set of factors. To underestimate or omit any one of them is to court disaster.

23. UNICEF's specific character should also be taken into account. Fund-raising, and the need to provide and increase funds, require imagination and varied, insightful arguments designed to woo public opinion, by definition changeable and much sought after.

24. In these conditions, the UNICEF secretariat must continue to take great care to respect the mandate conferred on it by the United Nations General Assembly. By emphasizing basic services and primary health care for children in developing countries, the United Nations has adopted the dual principle of a universal approach and synchronous action, as a guarantee that no one method will take precedence or be underrated, at the expense of any other and, hence, of all of them.

II. RESTRUCTURING OF HEADQUARTERS AND FIELD SERVICES

A. Headquarters reorganization

25. In the course of 1986, as the time approached for their move to the new premises at UNICEF House, the Fund's central services underwent a comprehensive process of reform, the impact of which cannot yet be measured. It is conceivable, however, that such a reorganization may give rise to as many problems as it solves; it may simply rename structures which remain unchanged or content itself with the redistribution of sections among existing administrative divisions in a supposedly more rational breakdown.

26. The principal innovations are, in decreasing order of magnitude:

(a) The setting up of an Information Resource Management Office (IRM), headed by a Director reporting to the Deputy Executive Director, Operations, with effect from 1 May 1986;

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(b) The establishment, with effect from the same date, of a Planning Office, headed by a Director reporting to the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes;

(c) Amalgamation of the Programme Development and Planning Division with the Programme Field Services Division, with a view to establishing a single Programme Division, headed by a Director reporting to the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes;

(d) Amalgamation of the Division of Communication and Information (DCI) with the Office on Non-Governmental Affairs (ONGA), with a view to establishing a Division of Information and Public Affairs, headed by a Director and two Deputy Directors but continuing to report to the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations;

(e) Redistribution of various sections of the former Division of Management and Budget (DMB) between the offices of the Comptroller and the Division of Personnel which, without being so named, becomes a division of administration and personnel, equipment and legal matters.

27. Despite the changes made, the administration of the Fund does not seem to have paid sufficient attention to the difficulties and disadvantages of a general system of management, whose controls are particularly difficult to operate because they affect structures that are administratively and geographically dispersed. Moreover, examination of the external relations area shows that the reforms adopted do not involve any substantial change to the overall structure dating from 1976 and, in particular, that they do not appear to have taken sufficient account of the problem of differentiation between the target populations or of the specific nature of the goals to be attained. In this connection, the analysis will deal with what appear to be the most sensitive points of the reorganization of UNICEF.

B. Unco-ordinated co-ordination

28. Unlike the specialized agencies and administrations of programmes belonging to the United Nations system, which are basically financed by mandatory government contributions, UNICEF - which also receives money from public funds - is largely dependent on private generosity and voluntary contributions by States and also engages in practices of a commercial nature in order to accomplish its tasks.

29. The Executive Director, accordingly, is obliged not only to perform the functions which are the responsibility of the head of every large United Nations agency but also to act as a supreme advocate of the children's cause, a co-ordinator of fund-raising, a company manager for the Greeting Card Operation and an ambassador with responsibility for negotiating agreements with the Governments of more than 100 developing countries. In his relations with the National Committees of UNICEF, which guard their independence jealously, he has to act both as a permanent negotiator and as the head of a federation. Placed at the centre of a whole network of NGOs with varying levels of authority and aspirations to authority, he must exercise constant care in defining the limits of his territory, maintain - in certain cases - his leadership role and - in others - take a more modest part in certain joint operations.

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30. It is obvious that field missions and long journeys further burden an already heavy schedule. It goes without saying that, at this level and in this context, problems of supervision and co-ordination assume a particular degree of importance. The Executive Director is assisted in this task by three Deputy Executive Directors for Operations, Programmes and External Relations. The Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board reports directly to him, and he has at his disposal a small staff of special assistants who constitute a sort of cabinet.

31. Nevertheless, it appears that the chosen manner of co-ordination of this "Front Office" accords a little too much importance to a system of collegial administration which, while enjoying the advantages of a certain administrative conviviality, also suffers from all the drawbacks of a widespread proliferation of bodies. Because of their numbers and the uninterrupted succession of their meetings, the administrative boards and committees seem to take up an undue amount of the time of UNICEF senior officials. "Meeting-itis" is a disease which is well known to administrations but, when it reaches a critical level, there are grounds for concern that it may produce a "brainstorm" rather than in-depth thought, that discussion encroaches on the time allowed for decision-making and that the desire for consensus tends to constitute rather too much of an obstacle to maintenance of the necessary momentum.

32. If one refers to document E/ICEF/Misc.158/Rev.5 of 9 May 1983, which deals with the organization of the secretariat of the Fund and which, although partly overtaken by events, does not appear to have been the subject of any more recent updating, it will be noted that the Executive Director is in normal circumstances supposed each week to preside over two meetings of the Deputy Executive Directors and a third Executive Staff meeting. He is also supposed to preside once each month over a meeting of the Senior Staff Review Committee. In addition, he chairs the meetings twice each year, of the regional directors and, once each year, of the Finance Advisory Committee and the administrative board of the Greeting Card Operation. It will be recalled that the sessions of the Executive Board take up a further three weeks of his time each year, not to mention the meetings in various different parts of the world which may require his chairmanship.

33. A reading of the aforementioned document shows that the Deputy Executive Director, Operations, has no less heavy a schedule. Entrusted with the time-consuming task of managing or co-ordinating the activities of the Comptroller's and Supply Divisions and the Division of Personnel, as well as those of the new IRM, plus the three weekly meetings of the Deputies and the Executive Staff and the monthly meeting of the Senior Staff Review Committee, of which he is a member, he also has to preside each month over a meeting of the pertinent Functional Management Committee and to attend, ex officio, the two regional directors' meetings and those of the Finance Advisory Committee and the administrative board of the Greeting Card Operation. He also has to take part in the annual sessions of the Executive Board and chair the Internal Audit and Budget Review Committees. Without even counting the meetings - official or otherwise - conducted during missions abroad, one would thus arrive at a total of 186 meetings each year at which the presence of the Deputy Executive Director, Operations, is mandatory. The obligations of the two other Deputy Executive Directors are only very slightly less onerous.

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34. There is no need to dwell on the purely theoretical or completely impracticable features of this system of collegial administration. Although it is not the responsibility of the Joint Inspection Unit to provide advice on organization of work, note must, however, be taken of the harm done to administrative management by the misuse of more or less institutionalized meetings at which some officials simply put in an appearance and others take - or do not take - care to assign their colleagues in their stead and which in any event attract very uneven levels of attention and interest. Even supposing that the system outlined in the 1983 document was intended simply as a statement of the ideal or that it has been somewhat simplified since that time, much could still be done to bring about more consistent spacing between these meetings, which cannot help but give rise to discussions too numerous to yield concise decisions on each occasion.
35. Apart from a rationalization of the more or less institutionalized Directors' meetings calendar, certain other measures should help to ease the demands on the senior Front Office staff and allow them more time for the pondering and formulation of decisions, which are not so much facilitated as made more problematic by the rapid succession of missions abroad, too frequent meetings at headquarters or in the field and constant discussions with National Committees, NGOs and the other specialized agencies of the United Nations.
36. The formation of a team of a half dozen individuals, which would constitute the nucleus of an inspection unit for the organization, could thus be very useful to the Executive Director or even to his Deputies; through these delegates or "emissaries from on high", the senior officials could be in places where they do not always have the time or resources to be. With the task of carrying out an overall evaluation of difficulties and results, they could also perform the special missions required in the case of an urgent or serious situation which had not been foreseen. It goes without saying that such functions could not be carried out, even marginally or partially, by the Office of Internal Audit and the Planning Office, which will perform radically different tasks with regard both to forecasting and monitoring and to methodology and performance.
37. This very small inspection unit would be made up of international civil servants who, while enjoying the personal trust of the Executive Director and/or his Deputies, would be endowed with administrative rather than technical matters, as well as having proven experience in the field of economic and social development. It would be the function of these inspectors to provide information at a high level and to contribute to the overall view of the Front Office. They could benefit from the opinions of certain experts in the performance of their duties, but only in exceptional cases or in extremely technical areas. In this connection, the use of temporary consultants also appears to be distinctly preferable to the recruitment of permanent advisers.
38. The use of such an inspection unit would seem, in any event, to be more likely to lead to the formulation of guidelines, for which the Front Office is responsible, than would the use of specialized technical advisers whose opinions, being too fragmented to be practical, accumulate without being linked to each other and result more often in decisions being deferred than in their being taken. Apart

from this inspection unit geared to leadership and action, it would be useful to form a very leanly staffed permanent forecasting and analysis group, whose task it would be to elaborate long-term plans, strategies and studies for UNICEF. This think-tank should combine the skills of different generations and, working on the assumption that a generalist is a specialist who has been able to outgrow his own field of specialization, its members should act more as generalists than as specialists. Following its transfer from Geneva to New York, the journal Assignment Children will serve as a natural extension of this think-tank with respect to research on development for children.

C. The IRM innovation

39. It is obviously too soon to pass judgement on the creation of this new office, which meets the definite need for an improvement of the flow of information within the system and for a better adaptation of "software" which often, through redundancy or lack of clarity, is incompatible with the "hardware" of which UNICEF is justifiably proud. One cannot help but welcome the expressed desire to structure the processing of information put out or received in a more comprehensive and logical manner. One should, however, ask oneself certain questions, with a view either to perfecting the mechanism or simply calling for it to be handled with some care.

40. The reforms which have affected various sections at headquarters have been carried out at a fairly rapid pace since 1983, indicating the uncertainties of the Front Office rather than its qualities of flexibility. Originally, the Data Processing Services Section reported to the Comptroller. Since 1983, it has been an important component of the newly established Division of Management and Budget (DMB), which grew out of the Organization and Management Services Unit, while inheriting the Budget Section, which was separated for that purpose from the then Division of Personnel and Administration. Since 1986, DMB has disappeared and its responsibilities have been redistributed between IRM and the Division of Personnel. The latter Division is responsible for staff development and training, but the Budget Section has been permanently transferred to the Comptroller. The Comptroller has not regained the data-processing responsibility which was transferred to IRM.

41. One may question the relevance of the methodology behind the establishment of IRM, in so far as it seems quite dangerous to accord greater importance to solutions described as or appearing to be independent of "divisional and parochial interests" without giving sufficient consideration to the fact that only imaginary problems have ideal solutions. The simple fact that the IBM system known as "Business Systems Planning" is used by some 500 firms, including the World Bank, does not mean that it can efficiently be transposed into the framework of UNICEF.

42. It is true that the Fund has at its disposal a sophisticated remote data-processing network and operates, to some degree, like an industrial and commercial firm. It remains, however, subject to administrative and financial regulations which may be bent but not abolished. It also has to face the constraints arising from management of an international staff as well as those of a

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particular socio-political environment. In other words, the adopted reform may needlessly complicate the general organizational problems of the information and data-processing services, if one has to argue about functions and instruments rather than principles and objectives. By attending to ends as well as means, one not only runs the risk of confusing them and mistaking one for the other, but also creates an excessive imbalance between the amount of information accumulated or its relative sophistication on the one hand and, on the other, the much more modest, if not more rudimentary, demands of action in the field.

43. Whatever choice is made, it is to be hoped that the establishment of IRM, as the interactive memory of UNICEF, will lead to a better use of information acquired in the field and transmitted through the reports of Field Services and Internal Audit officials and certain major studies. It also appears useful to note, given the volume of the accumulated documentation, that priority should be accorded to combating the surfeit of documents and weeding out the unnecessary ones. It is a definite fact that an excess of information makes its retention correspondingly more difficult and that it is already intellectually and physically impossible for Fund officials to absorb the entirety of the texts produced for them by headquarters.

D. Reunification of the programming divisions

44. The merger of the two divisions dealing with programmes is a reform long overdue, given the nature of things. Only a special combination of circumstances made the original separation necessary; it was thought that it might help to consolidate the position of the executive by expanding the advisory capacity which had been segregated, rather artificially, into geographical programme-support sections. The Scandinavian Institute for Administrative Research (SIAR) also commented on the unsatisfactory nature of a system which squandered talent and allowed undeniable overlapping at headquarters, undue delays in the transmission of information and irritating interference in established relations with the field.

45. As it solves one problem, however, the restructuring of the two programme divisions creates new ones. It has been accompanied by the establishment of a "Planning Office" which is supposed to have a clearer view of administrative or financial responsibilities, thus enabling them to be evaluated effectively, while it also spells out objectives, sequences and deadlines, identifying strategies or operational plans and helping to improve output in the overall management of finance, staff and physical resources.

46. There is no need to dwell on the patent inconvenience of assigning disparate planning, evaluation, methodological and organizational functions to a single Planning Office, attaching it administratively to the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, but making it a service that operates under the close supervision of the Executive Director. The arrangement suggested earlier, which distinguishes between inspection and long-term forecasting functions and betrays no inclination, voluntary or other, to resurrect the old Programme Development and Planning Division under a new name, would appear preferable. The point to emphasize, at all events, is the overlapping and duplication which may henceforth result from the existence of both the Planning Office and IRM.

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47. IRM, reporting to the Deputy Executive Director, Operations, seems to have so exalted and extensive a view of its powers that it is increasingly hard to see what purpose the Planning Office, and possibly even the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, may serve. Among the subjects which the Director of IRM considers to fall within his competence (cf. letter dated 16 May 1986 addressed to the UNICEF Regional Director in Colombia) are the identification of information resources needed in programme planning, monitoring and execution, and background knowledge of the status of children in the countries under consideration. There are also the feeding back to headquarters of evaluations, the processing of those evaluations to produce summaries to guide the work of the field services, and the establishment of model data systems in related areas.

48. Challenging as such a model may be, there is no denying that it poses serious dangers. There is a risk that the same task may be done two or three times over. For the Executive Director it will be no easy task to reconcile differences between the directors of IRM, the Planning Office and the Programme Division, whose tasks intersect and, on occasion, overlap, while the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, cannot but find himself in the very awkward position of a co-ordinator lacking any authority to arbitrate.

49. For the unification of the Programme Division to have a positive outcome in spite of the possible encroachments and competition, the arrangement that is preferred should in any event give special status to the system of geographical sections from the former Division of Programme Field Services, inasmuch as the officials in charge of those sections are the usual contacts with the field services and remain in direct touch with UNICEF country representatives. A geographical apportionment of the work-load should be accompanied by a redistribution of tasks between sections to take more account of the quantities of money and resources they wield. Nor should it be forgotten that, with the new course the Fund has charted, operations on the African continent alone will in future account for greater sums than those in all other areas of the world where UNICEF is at work.

50. Reunification of the Programme Division should therefore be used to concentrate the reorganization effort around the geographical sections of the former Programme Development and Planning Division, abolishing the technical sections and substantially trimming the advisory capacity which, at the headquarters level, has no function beyond trivial or abstract matters. The staff of these technical sections should be either reassigned to the geographical sections or selectively transferred to the field through regional redeployment; alternatively, they may have to be affected by certain reductions justified by the financial crisis in the United Nations no less than by the interests of UNICEF (cf. paras. 58-60).

51. In the light of the foregoing observations, the following may be recommended:

(a) Scheduling directors' meetings at longer intervals and simplifying the existing collegial system;

(b) Setting up a very small UNICEF inspection unit with the powers mentioned above;

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(c) Setting up a forecasting and analysis unit with specific responsibility for study and reflection; this could to advantage replace the Planning Office, whose utility and cohesiveness are open to question;

(d) Transferring responsibility for Assignment Children to that unit, to serve as a medium for illustration and publicity in the academic and research world;

(e) Reorganizing the new Programme Division around the geographical sections;

(f) Abolishing the technical sections of the former Programme Development and Planning Division and reassigning the staff to the geographical sections of the Programme Division and the field services, or eliminating posts by attrition;

(g) Clarifying the role of IRM vis-à-vis the new Programme Division, and giving priority to selecting and limiting the flow of internal information.

E. Reorganization of the field services

52. In contrast to a number of United Nations agencies which set up their field services after building a solid central apparatus, UNICEF was obliged to organize its central services around child-oriented activities in developing nations, which took on importance and meaning only in the field. Its adoption of the fundamental, fertile principle of a country-by-country approach, the decentralization of responsibility among its co-operation staff and its horizontal rather than vertical management structure have only served to strengthen the initial position. Its system of direct, bilateral relations between representatives in the country offices and headquarters, without the need to go through an intermediary at the regional level, further accentuates the originality of the UNICEF machinery and its operation.

53. No one is about to challenge the functions and purposes of the country offices, whose chiefs are empowered to communicate directly with headquarters and play a preponderant role in programme preparation, but the retention of a regional administrative tier continues to be an issue. Over the 40 years of UNICEF's existence, advocates and opponents of the abolition or strengthening of the regional tier have constantly disagreed and, depending on the circumstances or opportunities of the moment, have each thought to be carrying the day. Clearly modern telecommunications and transport - telex, aircraft and the combination of computers with telephones - furnish substantial arguments to those who see the regional tier as an impediment, an unnecessary ornament or "belt and braces". On the other hand, if one leaves aside the particular problems posed by the configuration of nations - continents or small island territories - there is no disputing that the regional offices, having to cover vast geographical areas with a huge variety of official languages and political régimes, economic levels and needs, are less well equipped than country offices to specific problems on the spot.

54. It was against this background that, as early as 1975, the SIAR report was forthright in calling for the responsibilities of the regional offices to be cut back sharply. Seeing troubled waters ahead, the offices were apt to invent new

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tasks for themselves or to try to capitalize on their particular strengths. They pointed to the need for programme co-ordination on a human scale, the cost-effectiveness of shared logistical support, the desirability of offering advisory and auditing capacity in a tailor-made setting, and the importance of handling external relations with the Governments of recipient countries with an appropriate degree of dignity. Thus there arose, and has persisted, with changing fortunes, a two-pronged contest: firstly, between the geographical sections of the Programme Division and the regional offices, which have always claimed greater autonomy and, secondly, between the technical sections of the programme sector and the same regional offices, which sought to consolidate the advisory capacity at their level.

55. Experience seems to have shown even more emphatically than theoretical proof the value of maintaining a regional structure with a chief who, although lacking any hierarchical authority over the representatives in the country offices, carries the magisterial weight that his seniority betokens. Provided that he need not cover too large a geographical area, therefore, the regional office director should continue to function as the person who "makes the programme fit", the overseer of audit and advisory capacity and the roving ambassador to beneficiary Governments. In addition to co-ordinating logistics, statistics and human resources management, he should continue to serve as a senior public relations officer with responsibility for fund-raising and for maintaining necessary contacts with the national committees in his region, NGOs and other donors.

56. A regional office at the appropriate level, being where the currents charted from practical experience by the representatives in country offices, from forecasts of academic research, from flows of outside information and from national programming exercises intersect, is a convenient point at which to share accumulated knowledge about child-oriented development. It can and should provide a more flexible response to emergencies; it can and should also help to define long-term prospects, which determine UNICEF operations, and support the analyses and studies, evaluation and monitoring exercises which must of necessity work through it. It affords a more suitable setting than headquarters or the country offices for dealing with problems related to the assignment and mobility of staff with some practical experience and capable of using working languages other than English.

57. Many more examples of varying relevance could be given to illustrate the uses to which the intermediate tier can be put. During the reorganization of the regional offices, however, it seems more necessary - apart from clarifying and enlarging some of their traditional tasks - to focus on redefining their advisory capacity and recruitment conditions for local staff, and on redrawing the boundaries of certain administrative regions.

58. The distribution of advisory functions between headquarters and the field seems all the less efficient because the Front Office does not seem to have given sufficient thought to the ultimate purposes or practical details of offering an advisory service - always very difficult if attempted too far from the fund of experience available in the field services. All too often the Programme Division's technical sections have been required to spend too much money and use too many

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staff redoing technical work by FAO, WHO or UNESCO under the pretext of giving advice, when a direct contact could have been set up between those agencies and the geographical sections of the same Division, with back-up from a particular specialist or technician. UNICEF seems to have realized this recently, and should press ahead with the corrective action it has so far just begun.

59. It will also be noted that the community or multidisciplinary approach of some integrated projects detracts substantially from their value in the technical estimation of advisers who are given only a partial or over-restricted view of the whole. Education, health, nutrition and sanitation problems do not stand in isolation; they cannot be divorced from their political, military or cultural setting. In many developing countries, especially the socio-cultural dimension of economic questions would seem to be paramount. If an advisory capacity is to be retained, therefore, it needs to be anchored in the regional office and must meet certain standards of intellectual fitness and sensible management.

60. The health or education adviser, like the specialist in social statistics or nutrition, should constantly be able to enrich his analyses and opinions with experience acquired in the field. He should also be able to temper the outlook he has acquired from his specialist training with the generalist's approach needed by the staff on the ground. He will, in his journeys around the region, avoid favouring any one country over another or always visiting the same places. He will, above all, take care not to confuse his advisory function with that of a service inspector, which forms no part of his duties. On occasion he may also provide back-up support for the sub-offices, where officials must cope with a wide variety of demands and would thus find temporary relief in the collaboration of an adviser who briefly dons an "officer" hat.

61. Although the regional office is best suited to the provision of advisory services, it could also serve as the framework for some parts of the operational-staff recruitment process. In a report on career development for Professional staff in UNICEF (JIU/Note/82/1), Inspector Bertrand commented that, in the case of programme officers, it was fundamental to determine whether or not the concept of professionalism involved that of geographical specialization. He concluded that it was appropriate for at least the majority to specialize, "arranging for their posts to be rotated in the same continent and perhaps encouraging them to return, at least once in the course of their career, to the same country (at different grade levels)".

62. Whether in the case of staff with international appointments or national project staff who do not have permanent posts, whether in the case of programmes or social communication, this is a possibility which, without being extended to the core staff, merits consideration and could, where appropriate, be put into effect in the regional office setting. The advantage of this reform would be to allow staff to be rotated more effectively while affording an opportunity to depoliticize or, better yet, to "multiculturalize" certain kinds of appointment.

63. The above suggestions and proposals would make most sense if accompanied by a change in the pattern of regional offices. Leaving the two regional offices for Asia and the Pacific and for Latin America, based respectively in Bangkok and

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Bogotá, in their present state is not a problem. It would be desirable, on the other hand, for a regional office for the Maghreb, the Mashreq and the Middle East to cover the countries at present assigned to the Middle East regional office with the addition of Pakistan, but excluding the Sudan and Djibouti, which would go to the regional office for Eastern Africa.

64. The expansion of UNICEF operations in Africa requires some more serious reorganization, and should result in the creation of a regional office for southern Africa. The new office, which might be based in Harare, would cover seven countries currently assigned to the Eastern Africa office (Mozambique, Malawi, Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Zambia) and two currently assigned to the regional office for the West Africa (Angola, Sao Tome and Principe). Apart from the transfer of the two countries mentioned, the regional office for West Africa should not, at least for now, undergo any change.

65. Reorganization of the field services and, more specifically, the regional offices, suggests the following recommendations:

(a) Retaining the regional-office echelon within the boundaries created by the principles of seniority and the two-tier structure;

(b) Replacing the system of six-monthly regional meetings attended by all country representatives and a number of officials or advisers by a less ceremonial, more informal system of meetings which will permit real exchanges between regional office directors and groups of three or four country representatives at a time;

(c) Reallocating the advisory function to the regional offices and cutting back on the residual technical sections in the Programme Division;

(d) Issuing an addendum to the UNICEF programme manual, prepared by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, detailing the functions of regional-level technical advisers as indicated above, stressing the need to avoid confusing these functions with those of an inspector and emphasizing the back-up role that advisers may be called upon to play in the sub-offices;

(e) Reviewing the methods and procedures applicable to certain kinds of appointment in a regional context;

(f) Redrawing the boundaries of the areas covered by certain regional offices; and

(g) Setting up a new regional office for southern Africa.

F. Public relations and outreach

66. The Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, is now responsible for two divisions: the very important Programme Funding Office, which enjoys considerable autonomy in its fund-raising efforts, and the Division of Information, which has just been merged with the Office of Non-Governmental Affairs. It should also be

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noted that the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, who has long served as Chairman of the advisory committee on the Greeting Card Operation, will now be Vice-Chairman of the GCO Board of Directors under the direct authority of the Executive Director.

67. It is unfortunate that relations with NGOs should have been merged with the new Division of Information. Although NGOs have closely related legal beginnings and convergent ends, although their charitable concerns and non-profit-making nature give them a common calling, the concept of a non-governmental organization actually embraces widely differing socio-cultural entities, according as it relates to international-type organizations on the Western model or the national organizations and mass movements at work in developing nations.

68. In the case of the industrialized countries, UNICEF's relations with NGOs bear a strong resemblance to its relations with the national committees. In developing countries, the activities of national NGOs focus on the execution of programmes and projects. It would undoubtedly have been better, therefore, to assign relations with NGOs on the Western model to the Geneva office, which is best placed to deal with them and, indeed, is already doing so to a greater or lesser degree. Relations with national NGOs could then come under the authority of the Programme Division. Without wishing to make recommendation on this matter, the author wishes to offer food for thought and remind the reader that, in administrative matters, it is often advisable to allow pragmatic to prevail over legalistic considerations.

69. Without going into detail, which would require a special report on a subject already covered by the studies commissioned in 1982 from Martin Ennals and E. J. B. Rose, it must be emphasized that UNICEF ought never to forget that it has cast its nets wide, and its information services deal with a wide variety of subjects. Just as information for the staff and the Executive Board should be distinguished to some extent from material intended for national committees and NGOs, public advocacy activities need to be custom-made to suit the target audience. The information package needed for Governments receiving child-oriented aid is not the same as for donor Governments, the academic world or the media. Moreover, project support communication, which is intended to promote outreach efforts among donor populations, is a specific activity in itself which lies as much within the purview of the programming services as of the services responsible for external relations.

70. Whether it is dealing with audio-visual materials or working papers, tracts or posters, pamphlets or more substantial publications, the Division of Information should take especial care to adhere strictly to separate product identities: its various presentations should be distinctive but not contradictory, appropriate but not untruthful, and above all, designed very clearly for their specific end-users. Education is not the same as publicity; advocacy and fund-raising need to be set somewhat apart from factual information. Similarly, the Fund's contacts with the printed and broadcast press should not be the same as its communications with its staff, who invariably need to be precisely informed, motivated and kept up to date. Such points are doubtless obvious, but in an institutional framework they are all the easier to lose sight of for being, on occasion, less than easy to put into practice.

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71. It will also be noted that the recent reforms in external relations were not intended to reduce the authority of the Deputy Executive Director concerned, but did so none the less. The Programme Funding Office is headed by a full director but is attached, more for form's sake than in practice, to the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations; it is specified, however, that the Office assists the Executive Director in his fund-raising activities. Likewise, the new Division of Information and Public Affairs, in particular since it was assigned to handle "special events", looks more and more like an appendage of the Office of the Executive Director. There can be no doubt, moreover, that the Deputy Executive Director's authority over the Geneva office is more a formality than a reality. Meanwhile, the techniques and methods of the Greeting Card Operation, which is a separate undertaking, imply a degree of autonomy for which no suitable legal framework has yet been designed.

72. There would be no difficulty, therefore, in doing away with those features which now lend only a false symmetry. In view of the financial crisis and the current need to cut back on posts which, while not altogether unnecessary, are not of the first importance, thought should be given to the abolition of the Under-Secretary-General-level post for external relations. The reforms of 1986, by inking in what formerly was only sketched, make certain conclusions more inevitable. On the understanding that a special assistant of the Executive Director would be given more specific authority to deal with problems handled by the two services dealing with external relations and provide the necessary co-ordination, it is recommended that:

(a) Authority to oversee the two services dealing with external relations be assigned to a special assistant of the Executive Director;

(b) The Under-Secretary-General-level post for external relations be eliminated by attrition.

III. MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

A. Approaches to child-oriented development

73. Faced with choosing between a policy in which the least disadvantaged of the poorer countries would be designated as magnets for development, in the hope that they would serve as models and spread development by example, and one which would put humanitarian concerns above economic ones, emergency above medium-term efficiency, UNICEF has opted for the latter. Accordingly, the least developed and smaller countries will receive three times as much aid per child as countries which receive so-called "normal" assistance. The criteria used to determine the amount of aid for children will include not only the value of GNP and the infant mortality rate, but also any particularly serious economic or other crisis.

74. In order to attain its goals, UNICEF concludes with recipient Governments agreements which determine the relations between, and the obligations of, the parties and stipulate, inter alia, that the assistance provided will be used or distributed without distinction as to race, religion, nationality or political

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opinion, a fact which is not readily accepted in certain countries and continents. Although based on a model text, the agreements contain as many variations as there are regions and Governments. Within this framework of co-operation, UNICEF takes advantage of the fact that Governments delegate authority to regional or local communities for joint tasks. In addition, with the blessing of those same Governments, it collaborates on the spot with various NGOs.

75. Since it is necessary to take an intersectoral approach to problems involving children, UNICEF country offices generally have to co-operate with several ministries, usually the Ministries of Health, Education or Planning, Social Affairs, Community Development or Information, and sometimes the Ministry of Agriculture. It will be noted - although this is not a cause for satisfaction - that, notwithstanding the major role it plays in financing the local expenditure component of programmes with which the Fund is co-operating, the Ministry of Finance seldom figures in this list. Moreover, although regional or local officials have considerable influence on the co-ordination of tasks undertaken in conjunction with UNICEF, the Fund's relations with Ministries of the Interior - to which these officials are answerable - are not as close as one might wish. No matter how many or which ministries UNICEF interacts with, the problem of interministerial co-ordination always arises and usually is solved solely through UNICEF's initiative.

76. In this connection, it will be noted that the recommendations made by Inspector Bertrand in 1980 have been followed and, as a result, the major deficiencies that existed in UNICEF programme management have been corrected. The systematization of guidelines relating to overall programming has resulted in a manual that not only is clear and usable but that also contains all necessary details. The major deficiency - lack of any analysis of the situation of children - has been dealt with; such analyses have been completed, although it has not always been possible to assess the reliability of the information provided and the validity of the scanty or fragmentary statistics thus remains unconfirmed.

77. In addition, the programming cycle has been changed. Plans of operations now cover longer periods than before. The effect of this is to avoid a lot of over-compartmentalized preparatory work, to ease the task of the staff and in that connection to enable them to concentrate on more specific work in the field, while at the same time preserving programme efficiency. Some recommendations proved rather difficult to implement. For example, while it was suggested that "UNICEF should systematically encourage efforts to secure popular participation in the planning, execution and evaluation of projects", this proved to be wishful thinking as the necessary infrastructure was lacking. Although it was stated that the period covered by plans of operations should coincide with that covered by development plans where such plans existed, it was discovered that even when such plans did exist - which was by no means always the case - that did not necessarily mean that any steps had been taken to implement them.

78. The experience to which Inspector Bertrand was referring related to the context of Asia and the Middle East rather than to the African context, since UNICEF activities at that time made their first impact in those regions. Often countries such as India or Indonesia were involved, with a well-developed planning

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machinery, a well-structured civil service and/or an elaborate community development system. Accordingly, area or regional programmes could be based on well-developed provincial or local administrations or on universities, statistical centres and research institutes. The fact that the administrative personnel of the recipient countries were highly qualified made it possible for them to undertake joint operations with the Fund. This made it easier to determine goals and projects jointly and to assess the feasibility of projects and to monitor them.

B. Concentration of UNICEF resources on Africa

79. Once the centre of gravity of UNICEF operations shifted from the Far or Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa and to countries whose administrative structures and planning or statistical machinery were not very highly developed, the overall situation changed radically. Programming, of course, continues to be necessary, co-operation with Governments will be equally desirable and the country approach will retain its operational value, but there is no doubt that the recipients - who are expected to keep the initiative in respect of the formulation of programmes for the welfare of children - will probably often have considerable difficulty in finalizing them if they rely on their own capacities alone.

80. The principles put forward by Inspector Bertrand contained in the programming manual are as relevant today as they were when they were first formulated. However, it seems that the African situation calls for a more pragmatic, less theoretical, approach to overall programming. Either there is no national plan - and, if there is one, it is unlikely to cover the same period as the UNICEF programme - or insecurity and subversion reduce the plan to a mere academic exercise or reference tool. Thus, while in theory it is the Governments which initiate programmes, in most cases Governments will simply be rubber-stamping proposals which, although supposedly the product of joint decisions, have in fact been formulated by UNICEF.

81. Whether or not there is a national plan, whether it is an indicative plan or simply a set of guidelines, the problem will be not so much how to adjust it formally to the UNICEF plan of operations as how to present, in language appropriate to co-operation, projects which, particularly in the African context, owe most of their substance to UNICEF programme officers even though it is the recipient Government that, in the final analysis, will accept or reject them. The important thing therefore is not so much to prepare very comprehensive and detailed plans of operations but to build up a network of close personal relations in government circles.

82. The physical, political, economic and military, demographic and socio-cultural constraints weighing on the sub-Saharan African countries are not comparable to those that hamper implementation of programmes in Asia and the Middle East where UNICEF carried out its first activities. While allocating an increasing share of its resources to Africa, UNICEF must not neglect situation analyses or medium-term programming, but it will have to put even greater emphasis on issues of supervision monitoring, and maintenance which are all the more pressing in this new context.

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83. Situation analyses will have to be undertaken in those countries where this has not yet been done or updated, in order to identify needs and obstacles. Account will have to be taken of the chronic shortage of statistical instruments and the scanty or outdated nature of information and censuses. Incorrect extrapolations based on figures that are no longer current or on compartmentalized monographs will have to be avoided; the analyses must not look like or have the format of excessively voluminous doctoral theses. Inadequate information is one problem. It can be solved by gathering more data. However, to go to the other extreme and to indiscriminately accumulate huge masses of figures and facts would simply create another kind of problem. The commendable concern not to formulate projects for which there is no justification must not delay implementation or lead to exhaustive studies of very limited operational interest.

84. The plan of operations in sub-Saharan African countries retains an indicative value and provides a framework for action and reflection. However, smooth implementation of projects must not depend on too meticulous planning, for it is not uncommon to find that an important parameter has been overlooked or to encounter difficulty which was not and could not have been foreseen. It is also good to remember that in many circumstances the very concept of programming loses much of its meaning if programming phases and processes cannot be rooted in economic and social reality. 2/

85. The specificity of the African situation makes it necessary to modify certain aspects of situation analyses and plans of operations and some of their meaning is lost when people's lives - particularly those of women and children, who are the main victims - are regularly touched by famine, epidemics and war. In some countries, the effects of drought, floods and a cyclone may be compounded by subversion and widespread insecurity. In others, a massive brain drain, internal migration to urban areas and large-scale military operations may prevent any sustained activity to benefit children in rural areas. In one region, malnutrition and agricultural disasters may render young people particularly prone to contagious diseases, while transport difficulties and the distances involved may make it very hard to take preventive measures even if there are very well-run programmes. In another, the lack of skilled technicians, frequent changes of expatriate specialists, and inadequate training may be accompanied by transport dislocations, shortages of petrol and spare parts, breaks in the cold chain, inadequate port facilities and lengthy customs formalities, making it impossible to carry out even the smallest project in the short term.

2/ In this connection, a report made in 1985 by the UNICEF representative in a country covered by the regional office for West and Central Africa stated that anything done on behalf of women and children constitutes an achievement. The report concerning a country covered by the regional office for East and Southern Africa stated: "Thus at present programming for child survival and development is a mixture of planning and opportunism".

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86. Even when a respectable infrastructure and communications system exists, unequal health coverage, drastic reductions in educational and social budgets and inability to deal with certain recurrent expenses may prevent what remains of UNICEF programmes from achieving their full effect and often may reduce investment in agricultural irrigation or drainage and in appropriate technology to the state of an unfulfilled hope and a fruitless attempt. In these circumstances, the concept of child-oriented development inevitably has to come to terms with that of chronic emergency. It is also inevitable, when the programmatic context is so uncertain, because of the need to leave ample room for flexibility so as to be able to make adjustments along the way and to redirect activities quickly when major crises occur, that oversight of the few activities which can be completed should become so important. This oversight must be considered in its three aspects: evaluation, audit and monitoring.

C. Evaluation and its limitations

87. UNICEF's policy until now has always been to associate recipient Governments ever more closely with the task of evaluation, defined as a process aimed at determining as objectively and systematically as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of an activity in terms of its goals, regardless of whether the activity has been completed. Inspector Bertrand had already recommended that selective plans be drawn up by the national services of recipient countries in collaboration with UNICEF for the purpose of designating which programmes should be evaluated as a matter of priority.

88. Replying to a report of the Board of Auditors concerning operations in 1983, the Executive Director of UNICEF pointed out that, in accordance with the instructions he had issued on 27 July 1983, all activities which were part of new projects had to include a provisional time table for evaluation and to provide for yearly programme reviews, to be conducted jointly with Governments.

89. It will be noted first of all that it is impossible to set too general rules for evaluations since the complexity of an evaluation depends on its subject. While it is relatively easy to evaluate an expanded programme of immunization, to measure the rate of health care delivery and to correct any deficiencies which may have been discovered in the cold chain, it is more difficult to point out the advantages and disadvantages of a primary-school curriculum and even more difficult to determine the effectiveness of a training programme for health inspectors by considering whether their services have improved at the village level.

90. In certain cases, evaluation will provide only very scanty information. Nursery schools play a crucial role in the development of human resources but we do not need an evaluation to tell us that child development involves much higher costs than does child survival and that the expected beneficial effects will be seen only in the long run. If, moreover, one tries ex post facto to evaluate an improvement in child health achieved through a variety of complementary programmes, it will be impossible to determine how much of that improvement is attributable to any given project and whether it is attributable more to a sanitation project than to the adoption of appropriate technologies for the purpose of improving nutrition. The

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more important the element, the less tangible it will be; the less tangible it is, the more sophisticated - and therefore more costly - the evaluation must be so that the benefit of the action becomes less evident given the cost sometimes involved.

91. In the African context, evaluation soon runs up against limitations, due less to the reality of the evaluation than to the environment. The officials required to assist in the proposed evaluation in co-operation with UNICEF do not have the statistical and reference tools needed to measure the progress made against the standards set. Even though the methods developed by certain Governments are as soundly based on theory and as strict as those outlined in the UNICEF programming manual, the officials stationed in rural areas or acting as intermediaries will none the less have the utmost difficulty in doing their work. The inadequacy of subsistence and mission allowances, the complicated format of the reports required, the fear of raising issues which are of no interest to senior officials or which, if too closely examined, might adversely affect a person's career, are all obstacles to the implementation of evaluations. Accordingly, while much lip service is paid to evaluations, these exercises are not part of manual administrative practice.

92. In view of the experience acquired by UNICEF staff in this subject and of the rather formal nature of the annual programme evaluation reviews, it is recommended that the following principles be adopted:

(a) Key programmes should be selected in each region; no attempt should be made to evaluate all projects (in 1986, there were 322 projects for the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office alone), for that would be tedious, repetitious and not very enlightening.

(b) Major evaluations should be reserved for exceptional situations - for example, if it is a virtual certainty that decisive progress or a breakthrough might be possible in a given field - but it should be remembered that the cost of a truly scientific evaluation is never less than several hundred thousand dollars.

(c) Rapid preliminary evaluations of the relevance and potential value of a future activity should be avoided. Such exercises require teams or consultants from abroad and, although their services are not very expensive, their real cost may be quite high considering the limited nature of the findings.

(d) Responsibility for the execution and follow-up of evaluation activities should be clearly given to the regional offices. At headquarters, it would be difficult to avoid the twin dangers of econometric reasoning and vague thinking, whereas the country offices are not sufficiently far removed to be able to guarantee the critical impartiality of the person conducting the evaluation.

(e) The evaluation capabilities of recipient Governments should be enhanced by strengthening national statistical machinery, training specialists and, where appropriate, co-operating with research institutes similar to those in Kenya, the Sudan and Korea.

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93. With regard to this last recommendation, there is no denying that is a very lengthy task and that it will bear fruit only in the very long term. It is also obvious that here UNICEF will have to work very closely with the United Nations Statistical Office.

D. Strengthening of auditing and monitoring

94. In 1980, Inspector Bertrand decided that it was time for the organization of programme and project monitoring to enter an active phase and expressed the view that national services should be assisted, at their request, in developing their monitoring system and in establishing "project implementation control charts", by project and by objective, and in "keeping them up to date". It was also recommended that summaries of the charts should be annexed every two years to the reports sent by the field offices to headquarters. These proposals made three doubtful assumptions: first, that in most cases Governments will really want to perform this monitoring function; second, that their authorities definitely intend to assume it; third, and most important, that they will have the techniques and capabilities to perform it satisfactorily.

95. It seems preferable to move in a different direction. Although monitoring can be expected to be more useful than evaluation, particularly in the African context, it will have to take three distinct forms. Firstly, it will resemble an audit, covering programmes as well as accounts. Secondly, it will involve supervision of heavy equipment made available to Governments and checking on its maintenance. Last, but not least, it will have to ensure the day-to-day checks which are the only way to ascertain whether needles and syringes are being properly used, whether there is excess wastage and accumulation, and whether the rudimentary production machinery entrusted to the village communities is working properly, in addition to examining the progress made in the drilling of a well or the methods of storing the basic drugs supplied to a health unit in a remote rural area.

96. The role of the internal audit at the regional level is well known; it is the approach that should be changed. Not only should financial auditing, which is concerned with respect for regulations and correctness of expenditure, never be dissociated from auditing of programmes and of their integration with programmes of other United Nations agencies, but the process should be automatic. The audit should not be made only after the event, when wrongdoing is discovered or an impasse identified. Its purpose in the field should be perceived not as persecution but as essential routine. At the outset, it would not imply the least suspicion of irregularity. The internal auditor should act as much as an adviser as an auditor and perform at regular intervals, in the regional context which is his domain, a real economic and financial check-up.

97. Since he will probably not be so well equipped to deal with programmes as with finances, the internal auditor could, depending on the needs and projects which he identifies, seek the advice of a particular specialized regional adviser or expert consultant. The procedure may vary; the point is to institutionalize and regularize the process and above all, through team work, to avoid excessive intellectual taylorism as well as the over-compartmentalized, and therefore too partial, approach which it might produce.

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98. In addition to such economic and financial monitoring, which simply needs to be strengthened and conducted at set intervals, there should also be room for technical monitoring, which seems so far to have been lacking but which is especially necessary in an African context. Under the agreements concluded by UNICEF with Governments, the Fund is responsible for procurement and dispatch of equipment, but after being unloaded in port the equipment becomes the property of the assisted States. The States assume responsibility for warehousing and storage in a safe place and for the use and maintenance of such equipment, while it is sometimes difficult for them to meet this commitment. There is no question of States not acquiring ownership, but it would be expedient for UNICEF to retain a certain right of inspection, in order to ensure the proper maintenance of equipment and orderly stock accounting of auxiliary supplies and spare parts.

99. Despite the absence of any explicit provision on this subject in the agreements concluded, certain Governments allow Fund technicians to check on the use and maintenance of equipment of which their State has become the legal owner. Others are much more reluctant. Some additional arrangement therefore seems necessary, which in certain countries would regularize the existing situation and in others would make it possible to impose what is tolerated and sometimes refused. Even more than misappropriation for personal use, excessive wear and tear on machinery or its rapid breakdown are matters of concern. Indeed, this textual improvement would be meaningless unless provision were made for the on-site services of a mechanic, in all important projects involving large items of equipment.

100. In order for the technical monitoring arrangements to be complete, they should not rely on certain checks doomed, for many reasons, to remain theoretical. The agreements entrust the monitoring of progress to officials of the assisted countries. The system provides for a whole series of written reports, meetings, analyses, visits to the field and exchanges of information which is, to say the least, difficult to implement and unlikely to succeed.

101. For day-to-day checks, it would be better to make more consistent and more widespread use not only of junior officers but also of the volunteers provided by various co-operation agencies. For this type of monitoring, it does seem that the best course would be to rely on young and motivated field staff, who would find an excellent outlet for their energy in tiring and often repetitive, but quite indispensable, tasks and in constant travelling, thus enabling UNICEF to base its tactics on reliable information.

102. Since, in the task of checking on programme implementation, monitoring should take precedence over evaluation, which will be used only in specific cases, recommendations will be made for:

(a) Institutionalization of internal auditing, at the level of the regional office, so that programmes and accounts will be audited on a regular, rather than a sporadic or exceptional, basis;

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(b) Establishment of a system of supervision and technical control over equipment supplied which, while respecting the sovereignty and the ownership of the assisted countries, gives the fund a right to inspect use and maintenance, with a view to improved economic management;

(c) Intensive use of junior officers and, in particular, of volunteers capable of performing the day-to-day verification tasks which, particularly in an African context, are modest but essential.

E. Standardization of the country reporting system
and procedures

103. The Board of Auditors felt obliged to point out in 1983 that UNICEF headquarters had not received the reports and statements required from the field offices in a timely or regular manner. Some field offices were even criticized for not having made the prescribed annual surveys, jointly with the Governments of the assisted countries. Although the situation was subsequently corrected, the fact remains that the annual country reports are of somewhat uneven quality and above all that, if they are to be usable, there should be some standardization as regards both content and format.

104. Of course, the annual report will never be a perfect reflection of the general situation in a particular country. An excellent manager does not always have the drafting skills that would enable him, to present his achievements in the most flattering light, while an official who is less effective in the field but who has a better academic background will be better able to dress up the facts and to give the mediocrity of certain results the appearance of a resounding success. In any case, it would be beneficial to impose a stricter framework for the presentation of the country reports and to standardize their content, which should be both less wordy and less vague, better defined and better quantified.

105. Without attempting to establish too precisely a list of documents and information which it should be compulsory to include in country reports, destined to be one of the most valuable tools of IRM, one can identify the main gaps to be filled, indicating the advantage of certain analyses over others. Apart from the modifications or supplementary data that it may be desirable to introduce, all annual reports should comprise a certain number of documents and facts which should always follow each other in the same order (see annex I).

106. Some of these are usually already provided, but could be improved or made more specific. The statistical summaries relating to economic and social indicators should indicate the sources used and, in cases where no information is available, the reason for this lack or insufficiency should be explained. It would be advisable for the presentation of socio-political and economic developments in the assisted country over the past year to be briefer and to contain less narrative and more figures. It would be updated, but repeated from year to year, in order to take into account the rotation of the staff required to study it.

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107. The analysis of programme delivery trends should be given by main headings (birth spacing, health, nutrition, sanitation and water engineering, education, appropriate technology, etc.) and should always follow the same sequential order. This analysis should not be too descriptive. It should emphasize assets and constraints, successes and failures and the reasons for them. In addition, certain tables should be supplemented, such as the list of advances to Governments, external consultations, the manning table and the organizational chart of the field office.

108. Three tables which so far, despite their importance, do not seem to have been annexed to the annual reports should be drawn up. There should be a statement of funds obligated and unencumbered balances which would show more clearly the reasons why they were not used - either because the programme is spread over several years and is executed according to a certain schedule, or because it has not been implemented by the date specified or has been abandoned. A second table should outline the rates of financial delivery under the main headings listed above and show the ratio of actual to planned expenses. A third table would give a breakdown of actual expenses, whether financed from general resources, supplementary funding or emergency assistance, which would give a clearer picture of the actual costs of programmes and support operations, which are separate. This breakdown, which should be sufficiently comprehensive without being too detailed, would make it easier to see what amounts to value added or to real input, to direct intellectual or material investment, and what constitutes a series of indirect costs (freight, on-site transport, evaluation, remuneration of support staff, etc.).

109. By providing an extremely instructive overall picture, these three tables would obviate the need for numerous evaluations which can be quite expensive. If one can see at a glance the rates of financial delivery and see that for a particular country actual expenses for PSC and community development considerably exceeded the amounts envisaged, whereas there are serious delays in regard to child development or basic services, one can immediately see where redirection and rectification are required.

110. A special report in the form of a confidential note should be annexed to the annual report. This special report would be considered as an internal administrative document and, unlike the annual report, would not be transmitted to the Executive Board or to donors. It could provide headquarters with better information on certain sensitive matters and present observations and criticisms that are possible only on a confidential basis. The copies of this note, with very restricted distribution, would be carefully numbered.

111. The standardization of annual reports should go hand in hand with a simplification of procedures regarding the individual reports transmitted to donors. In recent years, the amount of supplementary funding has constantly increased in comparison with the amount of general resources, since donors increasingly prefer to finance operations which they wished to sponsor. The donors' desire to participate in the operations undertaken has therefore become increasingly apparent.

112. In these circumstances, programmes have had to undergo if not an overhaul at least a readaptation, which has not always been entirely successful and which has, above all, obliged the staff of local offices to devote far too much of their time to rather tiresome rapporteur-type work. The benefactor agencies, being motivated by a just concern that the funds provided should be correctly used, undoubtedly do not always realize what the women and children whom they want to help are losing in the reporting exercise, which should be kept within strict limits.

113. A good example is provided by a country in southern Africa, which in 1986 benefited from the attentions of 40 donors acting through UNICEF. While some donors require only one annual report, two of them require biannual reports and one even demands quarterly reports. A small minority of donors is content with a single report drafted on completion of the project or after the funds have been completely used.

114. In order to avoid over-burdening the field services and, in some cases, the Comptroller's Division, it will be recommended that the exception should become the rule and one single report should be transmitted to the donor, upon completion of the programme of interest to it. This would alleviate a task which, in view of the varying number of partners of the Fund, will always remain quite burdensome. For all additional information, the annual country report to be sent to donors, minus the special report, and the country programme profile should suffice to satisfy a legitimate need for verification of the use made of the sums allocated.

IV. ROLE AND WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. The key position of the Executive Board

115. The Executive Board is the king pin of UNICEF, acting simultaneously as its governing, legislative and monitoring body. Not only is the Board responsible for approving the medium-term plan, country programme recommendations and biennial budget estimates; it also has full responsibility for performing the threefold function of monitoring, redirecting and supervising the UNICEF secretariat in the light of the Executive Director's and the Regional Directors' reports, financial reports and any other special reports.

116. Far from acting as a mere rubber stamp, the Board affords ample opportunity for critical assessment, generally constructive, of the Fund's organization and strategy. The Board successfully balances its monitoring function, which cannot be allowed to impede progress, with its relatively autonomous executive powers, which must neither be arbitrary nor reinterpret its members' wishes so far as to misrepresent them. It should be noted that the relationship between the Executive Board and the Administration is often marked by conflict; while this would appear to be inevitable, it also helps the system to run smoothly.

117. The Board's role is also determined by its composition. Elected on the basis of annual rotation for a three-year term by the Economic and Social Council from among the States members of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the International Atomic Energy Agency, its members are chosen

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by combining the principle of equitable geographical distribution with that of adequate representation of the major contributing and donor countries. These have continued to grow in number, recently increasing from 30 to 41. The merits of this continued upward trend in the number of Board members are open to question.

118. It is obvious that, beyond a certain limit, not only the procedures of discussion but the approach to problems change so much as to become almost entirely different. A threshold effect is at play here which may not have been taken sufficiently into account; it is, however, a fact that the Board is increasingly coming to resemble a kind of parliament. Whether or not one considers this development unfortunate, there is virtually no turning back. One must simply acknowledge it so as to offset its drawbacks and draw the relevant conclusions.

119. Under its current statutes, the Board is required to meet once a year in a regular session, but may hold special sessions. It elects officers for a one-year term: a Chairman, four Vice-Chairmen and the Chairmen of the Programme Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance. The officers provide a continuing liaison with the secretariat; the Committees, which formerly met twice a year, now do so once a year, at the same time as the Board. They, too, have experienced a net increase in membership, and their conversion into small-scale parliaments is even more unfortunate than the change that has taken place in the Board.

120. Composed of 41 members, the Committees are becoming increasingly like the Board, to the point that only their names and forms are different. They work in plenary meetings and, although the press and the public are excluded, their work is done in the presence of observers from UNICEF member countries which are not on the Board, as well as representatives of the specialized agencies and the governing bodies of United Nations programmes which, under various arrangements and certain agreements, are required to keep abreast of UNICEF activities. Also attending the plenary meetings of the Committees as well as those of the Board are the Chairman of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF and representatives of non-governmental organizations, regardless of whether they are involved in joint activities with UNICEF.

121. Thus, the Committees and the Board have become a single deliberative body in which the right to speak is widely utilized by delegations that work with UNICEF without being members of the Board. Only the right to vote at the conclusion of the debate differentiates delegations in any way, and this is more a legal than a de facto distinction. Having been significantly modified by the broadening of the field of discussion, the work of the Board and the Committees is now somewhat bogged down. The fact that the Committees hold only one session a year robs them even further of the specialized nature which is rightfully theirs.

122. An Executive Board Working Group has already looked into the problems caused by the unwieldy plenary system. According to the Group's recommendations, the programming cycle could be lengthened further and the volume of documents required for each session of the Board, already pared down from 3,400 pages in 1979 to 1,200 in 1985, reduced even further. Since other United Nations agencies are often worse off in this respect, UNICEF should not only adhere to the 800-page ceiling recommended by the Working Group (see E/ICEF/1985/L.7), but should attempt to

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reduce it by an additional 100-200 pages, in order to keep it more consistent with the capacity of participants to absorb it.

123. Simply following the Working Group's recommendations of 1985, however, is not enough. Other avenues ought to be explored; in this connection, a new guideline formulated by the Working Group in 1986 should perhaps be given fullest consideration. This guideline, on improving country programme recommendations, invites the Board to examine the possibility of achieving a "biennial concentration" of its work, which would then be "in phase with the biennial budget cycle" (see E/ICEF/1986/CRP.30/Rev.1).

B. Advantages of biennial Board sessions

124. Following the apt recommendations of Inspector Bertrand, UNICEF adopted a system of biennial budgets in 1983. A further step should be taken as soon as sufficient time has elapsed for the benefits of that reform to become apparent. It will then be necessary for the decision-making cycle to be brought into line with the budget cycle, and for the system of annual Executive Board sessions to be replaced with a system of biennial sessions. In addition to the logical and financial arguments in favour of such a change, the potential economic and administrative justifications would seem to carry equal weight.

125. The first result of the biennialization of the Board's sessions would be a marked reduction in the volume of documents produced by headquarters each year. ^{3/} In addition to the cost of documentation, one must consider the operational costs incurred by the Board and its committees over a 15-day period, as well as expenditures specifically related to the continued mobilization of senior UNICEF personnel during this period. While biennializing the Board's sessions would appear to have definite financial advantages, particularly at a time of budgetary austerity, these advantages would be even greater in so far as the management and operation of the Fund are concerned.

126. In the first place, holding the Executive Board's sessions on a biennial basis would do much to cut back on the profusion of documents which threatens to overwhelm UNICEF. Above all, it would have the advantage of assigning part of the headquarters staff to tasks more directly related to promoting the welfare of women and children in developing countries.

127. At the very least, preparations for a Board session require three months and the ongoing services during this time of the Front Office's thinkers and administrators, as well as of a significant portion of the headquarters staff. In

^{3/} On the basis of the estimated cost of \$425 per page (typing, translation into official languages, distribution) set by the Executive Board Working Group (see E/ICEF/85/L.4) and assuming that 1,200 pages are produced for each session, savings from biennialization would come close to \$510,000. Reducing the number of pages from 1,200 to 800 would save an additional \$170,000.

addition, one full month is needed in order to follow up, assimilate and transmit the decisions taken by the Board. By saving the UNICEF administration four months every two years, the biennialization of the Board's sessions can only enhance management and increase productivity by 16.5 per cent over a two-year period. Certain posts could then be abolished or a number of staff members assigned to more directly productive work.

128. Combined with a relative lengthening of average programme duration, biennialization of Executive Board sessions should also help the field services to give priority to field work over the too-frequent drafting of programme proposals or holding of workshops prior to or following such drafting. Not only could the volume of information needed to draw up operating plans, a volume that seems out of proportion to the scope of projects, be cut back significantly, but programme preparation by the field services, which consumes a great deal of time medium-sized countries and even more time in small countries (even though it accounts for a smaller share of the administrative work in large countries), could be shortened. ^{4/}

129. More efficient management of the field services thus requires that the extension of programmes by reasonable lengths of time should be partnered with a spacing out of proposals to be submitted to the Executive Board. The lengthening of programming cycles should be implemented without undue concern for the planning cycles of beneficiary countries; even when plans exist, the cycles vary considerably as to their length, philosophy, methods and, above all, their impact.

C. Measures to complement the biennialization of Executive Board sessions

130. The biennialization of sessions should involve the adoption of certain complementary measures which would enable the Executive Board to review problems less frequently but in greater depth. Accordingly, a more effective link should be established between the Office of the Executive Director and the officers of the Executive Board, whose number would be increased from 9 to 11 and whose two-year term of office would be geared to the holding of Board sessions on a biennial basis. The duration of the biennial session could be increased from two to three weeks, which would have relatively little effect on the work-load at headquarters and would help to improve both the debate and the decision-making.

131. For reasons more practical than rational, there would be no need to change the membership of either the Programme Committee or the Committee on Administration and Finance. The pattern of their sessions, too, would change from an annual to a

^{4/} In field offices in medium-sized countries, programme preparation accounts for 60 per cent of the Professional staff's working hours and 57 per cent of the General Service staff's working hours over an 18-month period. The breakdown for small countries is 40 per cent and 12 per cent over 14 months, and for large countries, 16 per cent and 7 per cent over 16 months (see E/ICEF/85/L.4).

biennial one, as would their term of office. In the case of both the committees and the Board, the system could become operational relatively quickly. The Board and the committees would hold a regular session in 1987 to consider the 1988-1989 budget. They would not need to meet in 1988. Furthermore, a joint commission having roughly 20 members drawn from the two committees, with half chosen from each, and co-chaired by their Chairmen, would have to be informed of any changes to be made in the budget during the biennium, through procedures to be determined by the Executive Board.

132. With biennialization, not only should the volume of documentation submitted to the Board be reduced, but it should be improved as well. At the Board's 1986 session some delegations complained about the lack of precision in the documents submitted for their consideration, while others observed that secretariat reports did not always provide the most readable analysis of financial data. While welcoming the progress made, the Programme Committee also emphasized the need to analyse programme-related data further. The secretariat should therefore make better use of available source materials, extracting from them the most complete tables and most meaningful breakdowns of data, so as to provide the Board with a better study and decision-making tool. The fact that monitoring by the Board takes place at longer intervals will not detract from its effectiveness. The fact that it is done in greater depth and on a firmer foundation will result in a degree of financial openness that was occasionally lacking in the past.

133. In fact, the degree to which the budget documents submitted to the Executive Board are understandable and clear is questionable. With the biennialization of the budget came a functional presentation of expenditures, which was dropped in 1984 in favour of a ways-and-means budget format. Excessive changes being inadvisable, a return to the functional system formerly adopted on the proposal of Inspector Bertrand will not be recommended here. Let us simply recall that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination rightly pointed out that "the prime objective in preparing a budget should be to set forth the estimate in a manner which is clear and understandable to the governing body concerned and which is responsive to the special requirements of that body" (see ACC/1986/4, 14 March 1986). This is something that the UNICEF secretariat often seems to overlook.

134. Even if the current breakdown of allocations for staff costs, general operating costs and packing and assembly costs is retained, the ways-and-means budget format is still somewhat confusing. The single category "general operating costs" covers mission costs (which ought to come under staff costs), expenditures for equipment and supplies, auditing and monitoring costs, research and publicity costs and costs related to the maintenance of premises and equipment. These heterogeneous costs have, with the exception of mission costs, but one common feature: they deal with everything that does not involve staff costs and UNIPAC costs.

135. Although the ways-and-means budget, modelled on the administrative structures of UNICEF, may be a perfectly acceptable financial management tool, it does not facilitate the work of the Executive Board. To clarify the budget format, then, mission costs should be considered together with staff costs, expenditures related

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to equipment and maintenance should be separated from capital expenditures and intervention costs relating to either information or to evaluation and audit should be grouped together. In addition, entries for capital expenditures should be initial estimates of expenditure and not a fraction of the actual expenditure corresponding to an amortization calculated over several years.

136. The financial documents annexed to the budget in its amended format should not artificially underestimate the total amount of UNICEF's general costs, but should accurately reflect the costs involved in woman- and child-oriented development, which are always quite high, particularly since the recipients of the assistance are poor. In an environment where the climate is hostile and, most importantly, even the most basic administrative and economic infrastructures are absent, the notion of "low cost" seems irrelevant. It loses all meaning when there are problems of physical safety or natural disasters, which tend to pile up on, rather than follow, one another.

137. Choosing the arguments and emphasis that will convince the public of the merits of one's actions and the need to finance them is one thing. The often unpleasant facts with which the field staff is all too familiar and which the Board needs in order to make as specific an evaluation as possible and to take the necessary decisions are another.

138. Access to more selective - and more meaningful - information and the holding of two-week rather than three-week sessions every other year should enhance the Board's effectiveness. Furthermore, nothing should be allowed to undermine its authority. Thus the biennialization of sessions should not involve a reassessment of the role of the Standing Group of National Committees which would set the Group up as an administrative body parallel to and competing with UNICEF's Geneva Office or, worse yet, turn it into a rival body of the Executive Board.

139. It would be inappropriate for the Standing Group's statutes to contain a provision specifying that its Chairman may invite the Director of the Geneva Office to meetings of the Group; the Director should automatically be entitled to do so by virtue of his position. Likewise, while it is desirable for the Standing Group to take an active part in the Board's debates and decide how Board decisions might require co-ordinated action by the National Committees, some initiatives seem more open to question. The submission of proposals regarding the Board's agenda, as had been suggested during the most recent meeting of the Standing Group in Paris in June 1986, would throw the system of consultations off balance, to the detriment of beneficiary countries. Such procedures should be avoided, as should anything that might undermine the Board's authority.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although UNICEF is far from presenting the most mediocre management model within the United Nations system, the increase in indirect costs relating to its activities and its structures continues to be rather troubling. This growth is largely the combined effect of two phenomena which, in addition to being widely disparate, are compounding the force of their impact. Like many efficient

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enterprises, UNICEF has substantially modernized its equipment and its methods, yet the anticipated gains in administrative productivity barely seem to offset corresponding increases in costs relating to documentation, monitoring, research and training, organization and support. Furthermore, however effective the slogans intended for the outside world may be, experience from the field, as reflected in the financial tables, shows that the notion of low-cost operations is not very relevant to the welfare of women and children. The poorer the beneficiary country, the greater the insecurity and the higher the price of development. The secretariat should become more fully aware of this fact and should communicate the message clearly to the Executive Board, which has the final say in the matter.

As structures become more sophisticated, their general costs increase and their programme activities show an increase in support and background costs; if this twofold phenomenon cannot be eliminated, perhaps it can be contained. To this end, innovations of doubtful benefit and dubious interpretations must be prevented from reinforcing the damaging aspects of this trend. Likewise, things cannot be allowed to continue, as sometimes seems to be the case, as though more and more time was being devoted to planning, evaluating, reporting and monitoring of activities for which there is less and less time. Neither should its support cost/programme cost ratio continue to cause UNICEF to rank among those United Nations agencies with the highest rates and the worst ratios in this area.

The problems are obvious, but there are solutions. Consolidating the best features of this system and reducing indirect costs, eliminating the spectacular and the superfluous, delineating areas of responsibility and simplifying procedures can all be achieved within a relatively short space of time. This task will be facilitated to the extent that the cardinal principles of the country approach, decentralized responsibility and integrated development with and for children are respected, because they are still the most likely to lead to the refinement of an ever perfectible machine, rather than the building of a perfect structure.

Chapter II: Restructuring

Recommendation I

The Secretariat should:

(a) Space out the more or less institutionalized directors' meetings and simplify the existing collegial system (paras. 32-34 and 51 (a));

(b) Establish an all-purpose inspection unit reporting directly to the Front Office (paras. 36, 37, 46 and 51 (b));

(c) Set up a permanent forecasting and analysis unit with a small staff to focus on planning and long-term studies. The journal Assignment Children would be the responsibility of this unit (paras. 38, 46 and 51 (c) and (d)).

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Recommendation II

The reorganization of the Programme Division should focus on the geographical sections; the technical sections should be abolished and their staff redeployed and cut back (paras. 49, 50 and 51 (e) and (f)).

Recommendation III

The role and functions of IRM should be clarified in respect of the Programme Division, with priority given also to the selection and reduction of information flows (paras. 39-43 and 51 (g)).

Recommendation IV

The regional-office tier should be maintained and consolidated within the framework outlined by the principles of seniority and the two-tier structure. The system of regional meetings should be revised (paras. 65 (a) and (b)) and the reassignment of the advisory capacity to the regional offices should entail a redefinition of its functions in the UNICEF programme manual (paras. 58-61 and 65 (c) and (d)).

Recommendation V

The methods and procedures used in certain forms of recruitment at the regional level should be reviewed (paras. 62 and 65 (e)).

Recommendation VI

The reapportionment of the areas of authority of certain regional offices should be accompanied by the establishment of a new regional office for southern Africa (paras. 63, 64 and 65 (f) and (g)).

Recommendation VII

The Under-Secretary-General-level post for external relations should be eliminated through attrition (paras. 71 and 72 (a) and (b)).

Chapter III: Monitoring and follow-up of programme implementation

Recommendation VIII

Evaluations should be carried out selectively and only by the regional office. Priority shall also be given to strengthening the evaluation capabilities of recipient countries (paras. 87-92). Additional measures should be taken in the following areas:

(a) Internal auditing, institutionalized at the regional level, would provide a regular check on programmes and accounts (paras. 96, 97 and 102 (a));

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(b) Technical monitoring of equipment delivered would be instituted to give UNICEF inspection rights in connection with its use and maintenance (paras. 98 and 102 (b));

(c) Basic inspection and monitoring would be expanded through systematically increased use of junior officers and various categories of volunteer workers (paras. 100, 101 and 102 (c)).

Recommendation IX

Annual reports should be standardized as to content and format, with special reports submitted on a confidential basis attached as appendices (paras. 106-110, annex I).

Recommendation X

The provision of individual reports to donors should follow a uniform and simplified procedure; the reports should not be prepared until a project is completed (paras. 111-114).

Chapter IV: Role and work of the Executive Board

Recommendation XI

Like the budget cycle, the cycle of Executive Board and committee sessions should be biennialized; several related measures should be taken as part of this reform (paras. 124-131).

Recommendation XII

Economic and budgetary documents prepared by the secretariat for the Executive Board and the committees should be improved as to volume, accuracy, readability, openness and, in particular, the method of calculating indirect costs (paras. 132-137, annexes II and III).

Recommendation XIII

Care should be taken to ensure that the statutory provisions or guidelines governing the Standing Group of National Committees in no way limit the powers of the Executive Board (paras. 138 and 139).

ANNEX I

ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF INFORMATION TO BE FURNISHED IN THE ANNUAL
COUNTRY REPORTS

1. Economic and social indicators relating to GNP and population, life expectancy, literacy and infant-mortality rates with reference to a given base year, economic and demographic growth rates, and population percentages for women, urban-dwellers and children below the ages of 5 and 15.
2. A summary of social and political changes in the recipient country during the year under review.
3. An appraisal of programme delivery, following the order of the main headings established by headquarters.
4. A report - and not simply a list of names - on staff members in the country office, accompanied by an organizational chart detailing duties, sections, category, grade, age and sex of staff.
5. A brief review of UNICEF's ongoing relations with United Nations agencies and administrative units, national and foreign non-governmental organizations, and development banks operating in the country.
6. A table of unused balances that distinguishes between the carry-over of multi-year programme expenditure and the non-utilization of appropriations within a given period.
7. A table comparing actual with forecast expenditures, according to the main headings established at headquarters, as in 3 above.
8. A breakdown of actual expenditures regardless of the source of financing, showing the amount of indirect costs involved in programme expenditures under the main headings and in logistical support expenditures.
9. A report on studies and assessments in progress.
10. An account of the audit-report recommendations.
11. A table of consultancy services provided, showing their cost and duration, the name and nationality of the consultant, his professional qualifications, age and profession.
12. An inventory of advances to Governments, giving their date of issue, amount and purpose, the latter explained clearly rather than in administrative jargon.

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ANNEX II

UNICEF AND THE UNITED NATIONS:
SHARE OF MAIN DONOR GOVERNMENTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO
GENERAL RESOURCES ONLY

(US\$ millions)

1985

Donor*	General Resources	% of Total Gen. Resources Contributions	UN Assessed Rate	If Assessed Rate Applied	Balance A-B
	A			B	
AUSTRALIA	1.8	0.94%	1.57%	3.0	(1.2)
AUSTRIA	0.8	0.42%	0.75%	1.4	(0.6)
BELGIUM	1.1	0.58%	1.26%	2.4	(1.3)
CANADA	9.7	5.09%	3.08%	5.9	3.8
DENMARK	5.1	2.67%	0.75%	1.4	3.7
FINLAND	5.8	3.04%	0.46%	0.9	4.9
FRANCE	3.7	1.94%	6.51%	12.4	(8.7)
GERMANY, F R	4.7	2.46%	8.54%	16.3	(11.6)
INDIA	1.8	0.94%	0.36%	0.7	1.1
ITALY	17.5	9.18%	3.74%	7.1	10.4
JAPAN	14.2	7.45%	10.32%	19.7	(5.5)
NETHERLANDS	6.7	3.51%	1.78%	3.4	3.3
NORWAY	16.4	8.60%	0.51%	1.0	15.4
SAUDI ARABIA	1.0	0.52%	0.86%	1.6	(0.6)
SWEDEN	22.5	11.80%	1.32%	2.5	20.0
SWITZERLAND	5.0	2.62%	N.A.	-	-
U A E	1.0	0.52%	0.16%	0.3	0.7
U K	8.3	4.35%	4.67%	8.9	(0.6)
U S	53.5	28.07%	25.00%	47.6	5.9
U S S R	1.0	0.52%	11.86%	21.6	(20.6)

*AGFUND, EEC and United Nations system are not included since the United Nations assessed rate is applied only to member governments.
N.A. = Not Applicable

1985/SOURCE : UNICEF Compendium of contributions by main donors

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ANNEX III

GNP PER CAPITA OF MAIN DONORS - 1984		PER CAPITA TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MAIN DONORS - 1985	
(US\$)		(US\$)	
13,070	NORWAY		5.37
10,910	SWEDEN		3.43
15,270	SWITZERLAND		2.17
9,820	FINLAND		1.94
10,480	DENMARK		1.65
12,820	CANADA		1.10
8,880	NETHERLANDS		0.96
	U A E		0.83
6,110	ITALY		0.63
10,460	AUSTRALIA		0.50
14,830	U S		0.37
9,190	FRANCE		0.31
10,360	GERMANY, F R		0.29
8,040	BELGIUM		0.28
8,660	AUSTRIA		0.24
9,990	JAPAN		0.23
7,860	U K		0.21
12,230*	SAUDI ARABIA		0.12
4,780*	SPAIN		0.06
N.A.	U S S R		0.004
260*	INDIA		0.003
22,870*			
14,830			
10,360			
9,190			
8,040			
8,660			
9,990			
7,860			
12,230*			
4,780*			
N.A.			
260*			

Source: OECD 1985 Report on Development Co-operation
*1983 indicators based on World Bank's 1985 World
Development Report
N.A. - Not available

ANNEX IV

TOTAL PAGES OF BOARD DOCUMENTATION, UNICEF INCOME AND ESTIMATED
UNITED NATIONS PRODUCTION COST PER PAGE, 1947-1984

cf. E/ICEF/1985/L.4

Year	Total pages	UNICEF income (Millions of US dollars)	Estimated United Nations cost per page (in US dollars)
1947	690	27 (Oct. 1947)	..
1952	2 482	10	..
1957	3 672	21	70
1962	2 272	30	..
1967	3 260	38	90
1972	2 335	81	200
1977	2 728	164	272
1978	2 206	211	298
1979	3 419	253	300
1980	3 311	313	300
1981	3 434	291	360
1982	2 003	378	400
1983	1 950	342	400
1984	1 800	...	425

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ANNEX V

NOTE ON UNICEF OVERHEAD COSTS

1. UNICEF documents and reports, without attempting to give a rational justification for such a determination, take for granted the supposed existence of "true" overhead costs, defined as solely the costs associated with the administrative offices throughout UNICEF (see E/ICEF/1985/AB/L.1, paras. 22-24). A detailed description of these expenditures is contained in an annex to the budget under parts I (Overall policy making, direction, co-ordination and control), II (External relations) and III (General administration). It seems that these expenditures are the only ones that should be considered as overhead, and that expenditures under part IV (Programme development, preparation, implementation and evaluation) should be excluded. Apparently custom and tradition explain this distinction and this practice. Thus it is simply noted that part IV has always been considered as having to do strictly with programme costs and that for this reason - hardly a valid one - it has been customary not to include these costs under overhead.

2. It is hard to see any reason why custom should justify making such a hard-and-fast distinction. The secretariat maintains that the ratio of overhead to total net budget expenditures and to programme costs amounted to 10.4 per cent in 1982-1983, 10.8 per cent in 1984-1985 and 10.9 per cent in the 1986-1987 estimates. These percentages are highly debatable, since the calculations exclude the expenditures under part IV, which are actually overhead costs distinct from but not dissimilar to those that are included in the first three parts of the budget.

3. Short of assuming that expenditures under parts I to III have intrinsically less added value than those under part IV, something which is both impossible to prove and contrary to the very idea of the synergy of which the budget gives us a picture in figures, it is hard to see how one kind of expenditure contributes less than another to programme implementation, or why the cost of using computers, included under part III, would have less impact on external operations than the disbursements for UNIPAC, which come under part IV.

4. Just to complicate the overhead issue or to hide the fact that it is in some ways simple, it was felt necessary to entertain a rather long debate on the question of charging overhead to the budgets of supplementary-funded projects. The secretariat had no difficulty in making its point that it was not possible to provide a quantitative study of overhead costs related to supplementary funds as distinct from those related to general resources and that, while the establishment of a cost accounting system would make such a calculation feasible, its high cost would far outweigh any advantages (see document E/ICEF/1986/L.2). This insistence on what is only a minor point obscures the main issue which is the question not of overhead costs in relation to supplementary funds but rather in relation to all expenditures regardless of their source of financing.

5. To be sure, as the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme pointed out in a 1984 report, there are no definitions or criteria for system-wide measures to be taken by United Nations organizations with regard to overhead. The

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fact remains that, despite the approximate results due to the variety of approaches, one report was able to establish the ratio of support cost expenditure to technical co-operation project expenditure for most of the specialized agencies and programme administrations in the United Nations system. The table that does so provides interesting figures and ratios (see document DP/1986/65). It is therefore a pity that it does not include UNICEF, especially since ACABQ had felt that UNICEF should consider applying the rate used by organizations in the United Nations system as a possible option.

6. Such calculations are complicated by the fact that overhead for support cost expenditure relates in varying proportions to government programmes that often are only partly UNICEF-funded. According to an average calculated for the developing countries, 40 per cent of capital investment costs for water supply and sanitation are funded from government budgets, 40 per cent from the communities and 20 per cent from external contributions (see document E/ICEF/L.1442). UNICEF's share of overhead costs, which are related as much to what UNICEF pays as to what the recipient countries finance, will go down accordingly. The same reasoning applies to government contributions in kind and in manpower, which UNICEF includes within its programme activities but not in its accounting system.

7. There is, furthermore, no doubt that the impact of programmes stems also in part from services (advocacy, information, advice or policy-making) provided by supervisory staff and some of the operational staff in the field. Yet the cost of the manpower thus employed is charged to the budget expenditures under category 1 or part III but not to programme expenditures. Moreover, it cannot be over-emphasized that, because of its unique situation, UNICEF's total overhead costs are inevitably increased by all the related fund-raising and external-relations costs, whereas the other agencies of the United Nations system are not hampered by such a constraint.

8. In order to avoid useless controversy regarding any single method of calculating overhead costs that should be followed in preference to other methods, the results that are obtained according to each given method of calculation should be presented using the same expenditure figures grouped according to different criteria. It will thus not be necessary to ask the UNICEF secretariat to opt for a method of calculation that differs from the one it currently follows, but it will be recommended that it provide the Executive Board, in an annex to the budget, with the results obtained by using the six methods of calculation considered. The Board will thus be able to have a clearer idea of total indirect costs, which seem to be not inconsiderable, as was amply confirmed by an on-the-spot inquiry in Africa and by a review of the distribution of expenditures in certain programmes.

9. By way of example, the consolidated summary of UNICEF costs for 1985 should be considered. The various methods of calculation will be applied and the following overhead ratios will be established:

(a) Total administrative office costs under parts I to III (\$44.8 million) as a percentage of the sum of budget expenditures under parts I to IV (\$44.8 million + \$66.3 million) and programme expenditures (\$278.5 million), or \$389.8 million. This method of calculation, which is the only one followed by the secretariat, gives a figure of 11.5 per cent.

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(b) Total budget expenditures under parts I to IV (administrative offices and programme support) as a percentage of the sum of budget and programme expenditures (\$111.1 million compared with \$389.8 million). This method of calculation, gives a figure of roughly 28 per cent.

(c) The sum of all staff costs under parts I to IV (\$31 million + \$44 million) and project staff costs (\$35 million), or \$110 million, as a percentage of the sum of budget and programme expenditures. As in the previous case, the figure is approximately 28 per cent.

(d) The sum of total budget expenditures under parts I to IV and project staff costs (\$44.8 million + \$66.3 million + \$35 million = \$146.1 million) as a percentage of the sum of budget and programme expenditures; this figure is approximately 37.5 per cent.

(e) Programme support costs under part IV as a percentage of programme expenditures plus programme support costs under part IV (\$278.5 million + \$66.3 million = \$344.8 million). The figure is approximately 23 per cent.

(f) Total expenditures under part IV plus total project staff costs (\$66.3 million + \$35 million = \$101.3 million) as a percentage of total programme expenditures plus total expenditures under part IV. The figure is approximately 29 per cent. This is the method of calculation followed (apparently) by UNDP in its study DP/1986/65 of 16 May 1986. However, in the case of UNICEF project staff costs are not included among programme support costs, so that any comparative analysis can give only orders of magnitude which, while not entirely trustworthy, are nevertheless quite meaningful.
