UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND

EXECUTIVE BOARD

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York
on Friday, 20 March 1953, at 2.30 p.m.

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Child nutrition (E/ICEF/217);
Reports on the International Children's Centre (E/ICEF/215, E/ICEF/216, E/ICEF/220);
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PRESENT:

Chairman: Mr. LINDE Switzerland
PRESENT:

Members: (continued)

Mr. RAJAN India
Mr. UMARI Iraq
Mrs. HARMAN Israel
Mr. GIRETTI Italy
Mr. HANCKE Norway
Mr. HAMDANI Pakistan
Mr. ENCINAS Peru
Mr. REYES Philippines
Mr. DEVAKUL Thailand
Mr. CHECHETKIN Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Mr. ANDERSON United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Miss ELIOT ) United States of America
Miss KERNohan) Yugoslavia
Mr. KOS

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. MAHDAVI International Labour Organization (ILO)
Mrs. SISMANIDIS Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Mr. COIGNY ) World Health Organization (WHO)
Mrs. MEAGHER )

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category B: Mr. FRIEDMAN NGO Committee on UNICEF
Mr. FRIEDMAN Agudas Israel World Organization
Mrs. HAMDANI All Pakistan Women's Association
Miss GUTHRIE International Alliance of Women
Mr. LONGARZO International Conference of Catholic Charities
Miss FREEMAN International Council of Women
Miss HIMER International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Mr. ACTON International Society for the Welfare of Cripples
Miss GARTIAN International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues
Miss DINGMAN International Union for Child Welfare
PRESENT: (continued)

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mrs. SISMANOULIS  
Mr. WORK  
Mr. ANDERSON

Mr. COIGHT  
Mrs. MEACHER  

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category A:  
Mr. ARIAS-FIREZ

World Federation of United Nations Associations

Category B:  
Mr. JUDKIN  
Mr. LONGARZO

International Conference of Catholic Charities

Mrs. FREEMAN  
Mr. ACTON

International Council of Women (International Society for the Welfare of Cripples) (NGO Committee on UNICEF)

Miss DINGMAN

International Union for Child Welfare

Mrs. SAGE-COLEY

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

United Nations Secretariat:

Miss KAHN

Division of Social Welfare

UNICEF Administration:

Mr. PATE

Executive Director

Mr. HEWARD  
Mr. BORCIC  
Mr. YUAN  

Mr. SABIN  
Mr. DAVEE

Mr. EGGER

Mr. KENNY  
Mr. CHARNOW

Medical Advisers UNICEF/WHO

Milk Conservation Co-ordinator

Director, Latin America Regional Office

Director, Europe and Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office

Director, Asia Regional Office

Secretary of the Board
CHILD NUTRITION (E/ICEF/217)

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) said that in December 1952 the Technical Working Group on Long-range Activities for Children had considered what means could be found to increase the protein content in child nutrition in areas in which cow's milk was unavailable or too expensive. They had selected the two most promising substitutes, soybean milk and edible fish flour. Soybean milk had been chosen because it was cheap to produce and had a high protein content.

The Indonesian Government had requested the assistance of FAO and UNICEF in a soybean milk project. The situation had not yet been fully explored, but a team of experts would leave for Indonesia within the next two months.

Edible fish flour made from whole lean fish contained twice as much protein as skim milk and cost about the same. No country had yet officially requested assistance, but negotiations had been opened with Chile, which had supplies of the right type of fish. FAO would begin acceptability tests in that country shortly.

Mrs. SIGMAKIDIS (Food and Agriculture Organization) said that in 1951 the FAO nutrition expert in Indonesia had advised the Government that it would be wise to make use of local raw materials, since less than one ounce of milk per day per person was produced in that country, and it was not then feasible to import milk. In 1952 the Indonesian Government had asked for the services of an expert to advise on methods of producing locally a soybean milk that would not taste bitter. The resulting milk was subjected to acceptability tests and was found to be about as acceptable as cow's milk.

Edible fish flour, which was deodorized and tasteless, might be an alternative solution to the milk problem in some areas. It had a high protein content, its nutritional value was equal to that of dried milk, and it contained vitamin B12, which was not present in vegetable foods. Some fish flour had been produced in Iceland, Norway and the Union of South Africa.

FAO had reached agreement with the Chilean authorities on the desirability of making the acceptability tests, and was assembling samples in Rome in order to select the most suitable types for the project. The tests would begin in the summer of 1953 and would require six months to ensure success. The venture, in which UNICEF was collaborating, was important, because one of the main difficulties with child nutrition was to interest governments in new types of
Miss KAHN (Department of Social Affairs) said that the Inter-Agency Working Group was particularly interested in the project, which concerned almost all the specialized activities the Group was responsible for co-ordinating.

Mr. TSAO (China) remarked that soybean milk had been welcomed by all Chinese for generations. The raw material was abundant in China, its cost was low and it was easy to process. Thus soybean milk was likely to be widely acceptable throughout the Far East. UNICEF and FAO might well explore the prospects of wider distribution.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia), referring to the project set forth in paragraph 65 (E/ICEF/217), asked whether the soybean milk would be distributed in the countries where the raw material already existed or whether it would be manufactured there and shipped to other areas.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) replied that the plan was to develop indigenous resources. The acceptability tests in Chile would be carried out with imported fish flour; but if they were successful the flour would subsequently be produced and used in Chile. Guatemala had shown some interest in soybean milk. Its soybean production was small, but the Government would be prepared to increase it to meet all requirements, and could easily do so.

In reply to Miss ELIOT (United States of America), Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) regretted that it had not been possible to submit a recommendation on the Indonesian project at the current session, but thought that a recommendation might be submitted at the following session.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the representative of FAO had remarked on the difficulty of interesting governments in new foods, and asked whether there was any evidence that the Indonesian Government was really interested in the soybean project.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) said that the Indonesian Government had made a very careful study of the project, with the assistance of the FAO expert, and was showing the greatest interest.
Mrs. SINCLAIR (Canada) asked whether the production of soybean milk necessitated the use of complicated machinery such as that used in processing cow's milk.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) replied that the machinery required would be similar to that used for processing milk. The difficulty in Indonesia was that the type of soy grown there had a bitter flavour which had to be removed by cooking under pressure. That might be the reason why soybean milk had not been as popular in Indonesia as it was in China.

Mr. ANDERSON (United Kingdom) said that consideration should be given to a policy of combining the distribution of the soybean milk with the projects for education in nutrition referred to in paragraphs 41 and 42. As many UNICEF activities as possible should be carried out through and around community centres, as had been the case in most countries with the distribution of skim milk.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) said that the Indonesian Government proposed to distribute the soybean milk entirely through controlled channels such as schools and mother and child welfare centres.

Mrs. SIGMANIDIS (Food and Agriculture Organization) said that the Indonesian Government regarded education in nutrition as an important part of the programme.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia), referring to paragraph 66, said that the steps contemplated in sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) should be completed before government officials were consulted regarding the erection of facilities for the local manufacture of fish flour, since refining such flour might require complicated machinery.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) said that the machinery required would in fact be fairly complicated. It would be similar to that used for the commercial manufacture of fish meal for animal foods, but would have to be more sanitary. The plant would have to be situated near an existing fish meal plant, which would be able to dispose of surplus or spoiled fish. No commitments to the Chilean Government would be made before the acceptability tests had been conducted and analyzed; the erection of suitable installations had not yet been formally discussed with that government.
In reply to Miss ELIOT (United States of America), Mrs. SISMANIDIS (Food and Agriculture Organization) said that the FAO had not made any other acceptability tests of fish flour, but it had been used in some countries during the war.

Mr. HANCHE (Norway) said that fish flour had been used quite extensively in his country during the war and a considerable quantity had been sold to an international relief organization after the war had ended.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) said that reports had been received from South Africa that such flour was widely used mixed with corn meal in bread.

Mr. REYES (Philippines) observed that although there was a reference to the relatively low cost of edible fish flour in paragraph 64, sub-paragraph (b), it had been stated that the machinery required would be complicated and would have to be used in conjunction with already existing fish meal plant; thus it appeared that the cost would be higher for countries which did not already have such plant.

Mr. SABIN (UNICEF) said it was true that the fish flour project would be feasible only where there was existing plant available and there was a steady daily supply of at least twenty tons of a particular type of lean fish. FAO and UNICEF were anxious not to start large-scale projects until it had gained experience from the pilot project in Chile.

Mr. DEBRE (France) remarked that acceptance of the projects required virtually a decision on principle. The problems of child nutrition were so vast, so little known and so plagued with every kind of difficulty that it would need the greatest boldness and initiative to solve them. Despite the difficulties, there could be no doubt that UNICEF should welcome every opportunity of pressing its attack on those problems.
As the United Kingdom representative had implied, the decision to manufacture the new high protein content foods on a large scale and then distribute them as required should be taken only after careful reflection. The expenditures would probably be very large. Moreover, most people preferred to produce their own basic foodstuffs. UNICEF should therefore consider, in consultation with the governments concerned, whether it might not be wiser to combine local family production with industrial production. The local production could be carried on, as it was in Africa, by families, empirically and provisionally, and would not necessitate too many scientific tests, which in any case were slow and hard to interpret. At the same time, central industrial production might also be started, as scientifically as possible. The two methods were not mutually exclusive and both could be included in the UNICEF programme. UNICEF and FAO might be asked to establish such a twofold plan of action for the Board's approval. UNICEF should pioneer the important development under discussion, a new stage in tackling the child nutrition problem, but it should have the full support of the specialized agencies which, as was known, wished to co-operate with UNICEF even as the governments concerned, and it should allow no difficulties to deter it.

REPORTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (E/ICEF/215, E/ICEF/216, E/ICEF/220)

Mr. DEBRE (France), speaking as the Chairman of the Governing Body of the International Children's Centre, outlined the activities described in full in the Centre's reports (E/ICEF/215, E/ICEF/216), stressing the fact that the Centre had maintained its international character and that greater emphasis had been laid on seminars and practical research than on courses. As in previous years, fellowship or scholarship holders resided together in hostels and ate and worked together as a group.

Research had continued at the Centre's laboratories. The research of main interest to UNICEF was that on BCG; an attempt was being made to obtain full data on dry vaccine. If that vaccine was found fully satisfactory, the entire production policy might be altered and improved.

Among the Centre's other activities, the Working Group on holiday camps for diabetic children had aroused genuine interest.
Throughout the period under review, collaboration with WHO had been very close and it was to be hoped that it would become even closer in 1953.

Mr. FENAUX (Belgium) said that the report before the Board was the first one covering a normal year's work of the International Children's Centre, as the Centre had hitherto been in process of establishment. The report was excellent in every respect, and the Centre had proved a very good investment. All the chapters of the report came fully up to his expectations. He was particularly interested in the experiment relating to the culture and recreation of children living in remote rural areas and in the work that was being done on recreational films for children. The Centre was extremely well administered and was guided by a very strict policy of economy. As it had so amply proved its worth, he felt that everything possible must be done nationally and internationally to arrange for new financial agreements to keep the Centre in operation.

Mr. ROUSSOS (Greece) also paid tribute to the excellent work of the Centre which had fully justified the confidence of all who had participated in its creation.

Mr. ANDERSON (United Kingdom) said that his country also appreciated the work of the Centre highly. He emphasized the importance of integrating its activities with the projects jointly organized by UNICEF and WHO.

Mr. DEHNE (France), speaking as the Chairman of the Governing Body of the ICC, assured the United Kingdom representative that the Centre would be glad to integrate its activities with those of UNICEF and WHO and to place its services at the disposal of those two agencies.

Mr. KOS (Yugoslavia) said that the ICC was an enterprise of great international importance and was held in very high esteem in his country. He congratulated it on its achievements and expressed particular interest in its medical work. As his country was not a member of the Programme Committee, he took the opportunity to express his full agreement with the Administration's recommendation regarding the financing of the Centre (E/ICF/220).
Mr. HAMDANI (Pakistan) associated himself with the other representatives who had congratulated the Centre on its excellent work. His country was particularly interested in the training facilities afforded by the Centre, and he hoped it might be possible to expand them in future for the benefit of countries which did not themselves possess such facilities. The Executive Board should seriously consider increasing its financial support to the Centre for that purpose.

Mr. COIGNY (World Health Organization) said that the ICC had fully proved its usefulness. Its instruction courses were very well organized and the fellows sent by WHO to attend them had certainly benefited greatly. He fully agreed with the United Kingdom representative's suggestion that the Centre's activities should be integrated with the joint UNICEF/WHO projects, and he emphasized that the Centre already had very close and cordial relations with WHO.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Debre for his co-operation and said that the discussion had clearly demonstrated the Board's great interest in the work of the ICC.

STATEMENT BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON PERMANENT CHILD HEALTH CENTRES (E/ICEF/NGO.5)

Mr. ACTON (International Society for the Welfare of Cripples) introduced the joint statement by sixteen non-governmental organizations recommending the expansion of UNICEF programmes to develop permanent child health centres (E/ICEF/NGO.5). Such centres would form a focus for community development and would also stimulate public understanding and support of welfare activities. The voluntary agencies had learned from experience the value of such permanent centres; he therefore commended the idea to the Board for its consideration.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Acton and the non-governmental organizations for their interesting practical suggestion.
Miss DINMAN (International Union for Child Welfare) reported on the Conference which had been held in Bombay under the auspices of her organization and of the Indian Council for Child Welfare. The Conference had been attended by 700 persons from 27 countries and by representatives from eight inter-governmental and 14 non-governmental organizations. It had held very valuable discussions on a variety of subjects, including the problems of physically handicapped and mentally retarded children. A continuation committee had been established to carry on the work and eventually to convene a second international study conference. She was very glad to be able to report that it had been possible to raise sufficient money to enable specialists from various Asian countries who could not themselves have afforded the journey to attend the Conference.

Mr. PATE (Executive Director) welcomed the support of the non-governmental organizations. The Administration was fully aware of the importance of establishing permanent child health centres and was in fact proceeding along the lines suggested in the joint statement (E/ICEF/60.5).

Miss KAHN (Department of Social Affairs) added that a good deal of work was already being done along the lines suggested, as would be seen from the progress report on community organization and development which had been prepared for the Social Commission.

Mr. TSAO (China) said he had been very much encouraged by the support and the recommendations of the non-governmental organizations. He suggested that some expression of appreciation of their activities should be included in the Board's report.

Miss ELIOT (United States of America) supported that suggestion.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

4/4 p.m.