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INTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE  
MCH SERVICES IN IRAN

by

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With a view to ensuring co-operation between the various organizations interested in maternal and child care, and to improve the social and maternal health level, a special organization was set up in February 1953 under the patronage of H.H. Princess Achraf.

In order to maintain a correlation between that objective and the international activities, the High Council set up a body called "UNICEF National Committee". The autonomy of this Committee enabled it to achieve the major part of the task it has assigned to itself.

The scattered efforts of the various organizations and services were grouped to form a national scheme, into the details of which I shall abstain from going.

Considering the large size of the country, the dispersion of the population, the usefulness of advice and care, and, in addition, the existence of very intricate social and ethnic problems, the need for Care Centres was increasingly felt.

Since its inception, and with a view to reach the planned goal, the UNICEF National Committee established eleven Centres in the different districts of Iran.

The usefulness of these Centres was fully realized by the population and by national and private organizations (such as the Red Lion and Sun, the Imperial Foundation of Social Services, some industrial Centres, etc.). The number of Centres thus gradually increased reaching up till now 156. It is beyond doubt that the setting up of these Centres aroused very complex problems, some administrative and some connected with the recruitment of a technical staff.

The first difficulty was to organize training courses. To this effect, special courses were established for midwives and health assistants training.

In order to survey the facilities and needs of the various parts of Iran, MCH Centres were set up and divided into three categories. Those included in the first category, used both as teaching and training Centres, were localized in "Ostan" Centres and placed under governmental management. The other two categories are rather the responsibility of national and private organizations, most of which are established in small towns and some important villages.

The activities of those Centres, which were used both for education and care, showed clearly and in a spectacular way, that infantile mortality could be easily checked, and that very simple and easily applicable instructions could lead to very satisfactory results.

It may, then, be asserted that the intensified co-operation between national and governmental organizations played a very important part in the fall of the infantile mortality rate.

The strength which was able to bring together the activities of organizations (such as the Red Lion and Sun, the Imperial Foundation Organization, Souraya Foundation and other institutions) has its source in the Royal Family, who is always following up very closely the daily activities of these Social Organizations.

#### Other achievements

Thanks to UNICEF's assistance and to the efforts of governmental and national institutions, we succeeded in establishing a pasteurization factory, with an output of 60.000 litres per day.

As a result of the implementation, three years ago, of the scheme for a daily milk distribution in schools, the number of beneficiaries has reached now the figure of 300.000 per day. Moreover, the daily meal programme, provided for in the pilot project, is in the process of implementation.

#### Future development

Considering that maternal and child care cannot be limited to a few centres or to the training of some personnel, we came to the conclusion that a special body

should be entrusted with the task of establishing a base wide enough to cope with all possible needs.

With a view to reaching this objective, investigations were undertaken and agreements were concluded, the result of which was the setting up of a Children's High Council under the Chairmanship of H.H. Princess Achraf, with the participation of the members concerned (health, education, labour, agriculture, justice, interior), each of whom presides over a special commission consisting of 7-10 members and dealing with health, hygiene, educational, social and legal matters.

The study relating to the various subjects is brought before the High Council special commissions; after discussion, a resolution is submitted to the Government in the form of a request. This, of course, will be supported, for the majority of the members of the State Council will already have attended the discussions and accepted the proposal, and they will try to obtain the issue of a special Departmental Order or the adoption of a Parliament Bill.

In view of the existing co-operation, we trust that the development of maternal and child health programmes will keep pace with the development of Iran. I hope also that increasingly closer links will be established between the future generations thus, allowing a better knowledge of our customs, our languages and our activities.

Before closing, I have the pleasure to extend to this honourable gathering the invitation of my Government to hold the next meeting in Iran, at Ramsar, on the Caspian Sea.