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*Protection of the World's Children Corp.*  
Minutes\*

Consultative Group to Protect The World's Children

The Harvard Club of New York

October 24, 1983

In attendance at the meeting were four representatives from The World Health Organization, Dr. Halfdan Mahler - Director General, Dr. Joshua Cohen, Dr. Ralph Henderson and Dr. John Copland; two representatives of UNICEF, Dr. James Grant - Executive Director, and Dr. Stephen Joseph; four representatives of the International Committee to Protect the World's Children, the Honorable Robert S. McNamara, Dr. Jonas Salk, Dr. Philippe Stoeckel and Sir Gustav Nossal; Dr. William Foege of the Center for Disease Control and two representatives from The Rockefeller Foundation, Dr. Laurence Stifel, Vice President, and Dr. Kenneth Warren.

James Grant gave a summary of the discussion on the previous evening. He began with the landmark decision at The World Health Organization/UNICEF meeting in Alma-Ata to support primary health care throughout the world in order to provide Health For All By The Year 2000. A major factor in this effort was the World Health Organization's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) which evolved from the great campaign which eradicated smallpox. He then described the new UNICEF initiative called the Children's Survival Revolution which is devoted to the acceleration of four crucial sectors of primary health care; childhood immunization, oral rehydration, breast feeding and growth monitoring. In order to achieve the goal of a drastic reduction in child mortality three factors are essential: (1) additional advocacy in order to foster political will and the involvement of

\*Final 23/11/83 as amended by Grant, Salk, Cohen and Nossal.

the people and existing institutions to attack this overwhelming problem; (2) financial aid in the form of both more dollars and more flexible funding, particularly from the laggard countries such as US, France, Germany and Japan; (3) research into vaccines and improved operations, a matter of fundamental importance. With respect to the organization of the program, Sir Gustav Nossal's proposal for a Consultative Group was discussed. He suggested an executive body led by the sponsoring organizations, WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank, and a Secretariat headed by a senior experienced Executive Director. It was felt that this would significantly strengthen both the EPI and UNICEF in their respective roles. A Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) would be necessary to affirm and monitor the program. Grant believes that the program should be broadened as emphasized in the title suggested by Jonas Salk - Consultative Group to Protect the World's Children. In the initial period the primary focus would be on immunization; as this was consolidated it would be complemented by the addition of equally important technologies such as oral rehydration therapy, all working through primary health care and incidentally strengthening it.

McNamara was pleased at these developments and endorsed this plan and sees the new Consultative Group as parallel in many ways to the hugely successful Consultative Group in International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). He believes that The World Bank would back this initiative. There was general support for the concept of a joint invitation involving WHO, UNICEF, and The World Bank from all of the participants in the meeting. McNamara felt that any groups involved in this initial program should be prepared to



make long term commitments as in the CGIAR program, and that countries that were willing to develop major immunization programs, such as India, Colombia and Senegal would be eligible for large loans from The World Bank. Salk felt that if dramatic results occurred in these three countries, the campaign would sell itself. McNamara supported broadening the name to "Protect the World's Children," and saw the program developing from immunization to oral rehydration ultimately through all of the components of primary health care and would be a major factor in the development of population control. He clearly believed that if health improved it would lead naturally to a reduction in family size. Mahler felt that it was essential to have The World Bank involved as a joint sponsor at the March meeting. It was generally felt that the meeting should not preordain India, Colombia, or Senegal or other countries as the first major programs in immunization, but that these countries should be invited to discuss these issues. While the world's capacity to deal with this major effort must be considered, it was not necessary to go into exact tactical detail. We must also deal with the resource issues of political will, motivation of the people, and technical and financial resources.

A decision was made to go along with the planned meeting at The Rockefeller Foundation's Study Center in Bellagio, Italy, in the period March 12-16, 1984. A maximum of 29 people could attend that meeting, and the guest list would include the following: Mahler, R. Henderson, Grant, Joseph, Warren, Nossal, Stoeckel, Salk, Foege, D.A. Henderson. The World Bank might send either Clausen, Husain, or Stern, and major representatives from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank would be welcomed. Representatives from three countries interested in

developing immunization programs would be invited; the three countries suggested were Colombia, India and Senegal. The representatives should be at the top governmental level, with the possibility of a second technical level person as back-up. Up to nine bilateral agencies would be invited, one covering a consortium of the Nordic countries, plus probably US, Canada, France, Germany, UK, Holland, Japan and Australia. Foundation representatives would include MacArthur, and David Hamburg of the Carnegie. Pisani of the Commission of the European Communities would also be invited.

Six working papers would be prepared: the first two by Ralph Henderson and staff of the Expanded Programme in Immunization, (1) The nature and extent of the problem and the potential effect of immunization procedures and (2) A description of the state of the art of immunization for childhood diseases. As an example of a major immunization program in the developing world, Philippe Stoeckel would prepare a paper on (3) The Senegal/Mali/Upper Volta Immunization Program. Sir Gustav Nossal would prepare the paper on (4) The biotechnology revolution and new and improved vaccines. William Foege would produce a paper on (5) Strategies for the development of a comprehensive global childhood immunization program and paper (6) would be by Donald A. Henderson on Childhood immunization as an impetus to primary health care. It was requested that Warren, R. Henderson and Joseph prepare a draft letter for the joint sponsors to send to the invitees to the conference. Mahler, Grant and McNamara would divide up the invitation list for personal phone contact.

McNamara discussed the actions coming out of the Bellagio meeting. He felt that the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) was of great importance and that Sir Gustav Nossal should head it. Salk concurred



with this and pointed out that Nossal was now the President-Elect of the International Union of Immunological Societies. It was suggested that a function of the STAC would be to recommend the best present technology relevant to the interests of the Consultative Group. Salk felt that the committee should deal with all phases of vaccinology, from epidemiology to laboratory science to vaccine production and to operational field research; the STAC should think of the problem as a whole. Stifel pointed out the crucial role of TAC in the CGIAR is that it provided the donors with the confidence to make long-term commitments for support. Salk pointed out that this committee must be open to new ideas and be prepared to encourage new ideas and be prepared to encourage new science and to consider new ways and new ideas.

The crucial role of the Executive Director for this program was then discussed. It was generally believed that if a truly outstanding person who had the confidence of all parties could be obtained this would be of enormous importance. With Mahler taking the lead, there was a unanimous feeling that William Foege would be the ideal person to lead this great effort. He was asked to consider the possibility, and all of the agencies involved pledged their support for this initiative.

The meeting ended with the feeling expressed by Grant that we were at the crest of a great wave, and that an overwhelming attack on childhood morbidity and mortality would have an enormous influence on the other elements essential for the well being of the developing world, population and agriculture.