UNITED NATIONS

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Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda
UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING: FOLLOW-UP TO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 96/38

NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT

1. This note provides a brief summary of the status of the follow-up to decision 96/38, on coordination in health policy and programming, and of recent developments that have a direct bearing on the possible membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy.

2. Decision 96/38 of 13 September 1996 requested the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, with the assistance of the secretariat of UNFPA, to ascertain the views of the Executive Boards of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund on possible membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) (para. 3). It also requested the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to take appropriate action to enable the UNFPA secretariat to participate as an observer in the JCHP meeting scheduled for January 1997 (para. 4). Decision 96/38 further requested the Executive Director of UNFPA to report to the Executive Board at its second regular session 1997 on the observations made in the JCHP and to make further recommendations as appropriate on the action needed for the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to obtain full membership in the JCHP (para. 5) (decision 96/38 attached as annex I).

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3. It should be noted that the JCHP meeting originally scheduled for January 1997 was postponed and rescheduled for May 1997. This altered the timing of the requests set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5 of decision 96/38 but not the substance of those requests.

4. In compliance with decision 96/38, the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board contacted the Presidents of the Executive Boards of WHO and UNICEF, seeking their assistance in bringing the decision to the attention of their respective Executive Boards and, in particular, in facilitating the implementation of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the decision (letters dated 17 September 1996 attached as annexes II and III).

5. In a separate action, on 16 September 1996, the Executive Director of UNFPA contacted the executive heads of WHO and UNICEF concerning decision 96/38 and the views expressed by delegations at the third regular session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board on the issue of the Board's possible membership in the JCHP (letters attached as annexes IV and V). The joint response of the Executive Director of UNICEF and the Director-General of WHO to that letter is attached as annex VI). The joint response notes that the executive heads of UNICEF and WHO plan to submit to their respective Executive Boards the following proposed arrangements:

(a) The agenda of the meeting of the Committee would be organized in such a way that matters of direct reference to UNFPA were clustered together. This selective management of the agenda would enable UNFPA to organize the attendance of its Board members and staff in the most economical and effective way it might wish to adopt;

(b) The present UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy would be known as the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health and its terms of reference would be amended accordingly.

The joint letter also noted that the approval of the above proposed arrangements by the respective Boards of all three organizations prior to the next meeting of the (present) JCHP (scheduled for May 1997) could set in place the new arrangements for the first meeting of the new Committee in May 1997.

6. In her reply, the Executive Director of UNFPA took note of the proposed arrangements and informed the Executive Director of UNICEF and the Director-General of WHO that she would bring the proposals to the attention of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board as soon as possible (letter dated 4 November 1996 attached as annex VII).

Elements of a decision

7. In view of the recent developments noted above, the Executive Board may wish to approve the proposed arrangements recommended by the executive heads of UNICEF and WHO as contained in their joint letter in annex VI and recommend that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board become a full member of the new UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health once it is established. The Executive Board may further wish to recommend that the joint Secretariat of the newly established Committee amend the terms of reference of the Committee accordingly.

Annex I

96/38. Coordination in health policy and programming

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the oral report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on coordination in health policy and programming;

2. Reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund in the area of health policy and programming, including reproductive health, and invites the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy to ensure that the United Nations Population Fund can participate in the meetings of the Joint Committee on Health Policy;

3. Requests the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, with the assistance of the secretariat of the United Nations Population Fund, to ascertain the views of the Executive Boards of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund on possible membership of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund in the Joint Committee on Health Policy;

4. Requests the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund to take appropriate action to enable the United Nations Population Fund secretariat to participate as an observer in the Joint Committee on Health Policy in January 1997;

5. Also requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board at its second regular session 1997 on the observations made in the Joint Committee on Health Policy and to make further recommendations as appropriate on the action needed for the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to obtain full membership.

13 September 1996

/...

Annex II

17 September 1996

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to write to you in my capacity as President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund with reference to decision 96/38, which was adopted by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its third regular session of 1996. A copy of the decision is attached for your information.

Decision 96/38, inter alia, reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA in the area of health policy and programming, including reproductive health, and invites the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy to ensure that UNFPA can participate in the meetings of the Joint Committee on Health Policy (para. 2).

The decision requests that I, as President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, ascertain the views of the Executive Boards of WHO and UNICEF on possible membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (para. 3). It further requests that I take appropriate action to enable the UNFPA secretariat to participate as an observer in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (para.4).

It is through this letter that I seek to carry out the requests contained in decision 96/38. I would therefore very much appreciate your assistance in bringing this decision to the attention of your Executive Board and, in particular, in facilitating the implementation of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of decision 96/38.

It may be useful in your deliberations to note that the members of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board generally expressed strong support for the Board becoming a member of the Joint Committee on Health Policy.

/..

Dasho Sangay Nedup Dorji
Chairman,
Executive Board of the World Health Organization

The Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA stands ready to provide any information and/or support you may need in these endeavours.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Annette des Iles

Annette des Iles
President
Executive Board of the United Nations
Development Programme and the United
Nations Population Fund

17 September 1996

Dear Mr. President,

I have the honour to write to you in my capacity as President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund with reference to decision 96/38, which was adopted by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its third regular session of 1996. A copy of the decision is attached for your information.

Decision 96/38, inter alia, reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA in the area of health policy and programming, including reproductive health, and invites the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy to ensure that UNFPA can participate in the meetings of the Joint Committee on Health Policy (para. 2).

The decision requests that I, as President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, ascertain the views of the Executive Boards of WHO and UNICEF on possible membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (para. 3). It further requests that I take appropriate action to enable the UNFPA secretariat to participate as an observer in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (para.4).

It is through this letter that I seek to carry out the requests contained in decision 96/38. I would therefore very much appreciate your assistance in bringing this decision to the attention of your Executive Board and, in particular, in facilitating the implementation of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of decision 96/38.

It may be useful in your deliberations to note that the members of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board generally expressed strong support for the Board becoming a member of the Joint Committee on Health Policy.

/..

H.E. M. Ion Gorita,
President, Executive Board of UNICEF,
c/o Permanent Mission of Romania
to the United Nations

c.c. Miss Cecilia Lotse
Secretary of the Executive Board of UNICEF

The Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA stands ready to provide any information and/or support you may need in these endeavours.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Annette des Iles

Annette des Iles
President
Executive Board of the United Nations
Development Programme and the United
Nations Population Fund

Annex IV

UNFPA FNUAP

United Nations Population Fund
Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population

220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017
Cable: UNFPA New York
Telex: 422031 or 422038
Fax: (212) 297-4911
Telephone: (212) 297-5122

File No.: _____

16 September 1996

Dear Dr. Nakajima,

As you know, the UNFPA Executive Board which met last week, had among its agenda items inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming. I presented an oral report to the Executive Board, a copy of which I am pleased to share with you attached.

In discussing this item, the UNFPA Executive Board reaffirmed the need for close collaboration at all levels among UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA and it adopted a decision which requests that steps be taken for the UNFPA Executive Board to become member of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP). The decision, a copy of which is also attached for your attention, calls for UNFPA to participate, as an observer, in the next meeting of the JCHP in January 1997.

I look much forward to the support I hope you will provide for the implementation of this important decision in light of the close cooperation existing between WHO and UNFPA, and given the strong positive impact this arrangement has in illustrating further this cooperation to all our partners.

As I will be in Geneva soon during the period 23-26 September, I hope there will be an opportunity for me to meet with you and your WHO colleagues to discuss this issue further.

/...

Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima
Director-General
World Health Organization (WHO)
CH-1211 Geneva 27,
Switzerland

By fax: (41-22).791-0746

While I recall that initially you had raised some questions about this proposal, I trust that I can today count on your full support given the strong complementarity of our organizations' mandates, policies and programmes and the urgency there is today to show coordinated action. The importance of policy coherence and programme coordination has further grown in the course of the past year and it would be most beneficial for all of our organizations to provide further evidence of this towards our legislative and governing bodies as well as our donors.

I personally and my senior management look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues on this proposal, and I thank you in advance very much for the support you will personally provide for its quick implementation.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Nafis Sadik
Executive Director
and Under-Secretary-General

Annex V

UNFPA FNUAP
United Nations Population Fund
Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population

220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017
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Fax: (212) 297-4911
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File No.: _____

16 September 1996

Dear Ms. Bellamy,

As you know, the UNFPA Executive Board which met last week, had among its agenda items inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming. I presented an oral report to the Executive Board, a copy of which I am pleased to share with you attached.

In discussing this item, the UNFPA Executive Board reaffirmed the need for close collaboration at all levels among UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA and it adopted a decision which requests that steps be taken for the UNFPA Executive Board to become member of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP). The decision, a copy of which is also attached for your attention, calls for UNFPA to participate, as an observer, in the next meeting of the JCHP in January 1997.

I look much forward to the support I hope you will provide for the implementation of this important decision in light of the close cooperation existing between UNICEF and UNFPA, and given the strong positive impact this arrangement has in illustrating further this cooperation to all our partners.

Since the UNICEF Executive Board is currently in session, it would be very useful to bring this matter immediately to your Board's attention . I am also pleased to note that UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) , Ms. Kerstin Trone, will address the UNICEF Executive Board on this issue.

/...

Ms. Carol Bellamy
Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
UNICEF House
3 United Nations Plaza
Room H-1380
New York, New York 10017
By fax: 326-7758

While I recall that initially you had raised some questions about this proposal, I trust that I can today count on your full support given the strong complementarity of our organizations' mandates, policies and programmes and the urgency there is today to show coordinated action. The importance of policy coherence and programme coordination has further grown in the course of the past year and it would be most beneficial for all of our organizations to provide further evidence of this towards our legislative and governing bodies as well as our donors.

I personally and my senior management look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues on this proposal, and I thank you in advance very much for the support you will personally provide for its quick implementation.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Nafis Sadik
Executive Director
and Under-Secretary-General

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE

Annex VI

Téléphone Central/Exchange: 791. 21.11
Direct: 791 3364

In reply please refer to:
Prière de rappeler la FRH:P13/522/22

Your reference:
Votre référence:

Dr Nafis Sadik
Executive Director
United Nations Population Fund
220 East, 42nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10017
USA

October 1996

Dear Dr Sadik,

We refer to the discussions that took place at the UNFPA Executive Board, in the context of interagency coordination, concerning the participation of the UNFPA Executive Board in the WHO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Health Policy, and as referred to in your letter of 16 September 1996.

We attach great importance to coordination within the United Nations system. In this regard, we fully share the concern that both you, yourself, and the Board members have expressed regarding the need to ensure close collaboration, and coordinated action, between UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO. We look forward to working more closely with UNFPA on issues related to the work of the three agencies.

In recent meetings, we have had an opportunity to review jointly the question of UNFPA membership in the JCHP. In so doing we took full account of the views expressed by the members of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board on 12 September 1996, and the views of the UNICEF Executive Board on 18 September 1996. We also recalled the contents of your letter to us in November 1995.

Recognizing the prerogatives of the Governing Bodies of our organizations, we plan to submit to our respective Executive Boards the following proposed arrangements:

.../2.

cc: The Director, UNFPA Liaison Office for Europe, Geneva Executive Centre, Palais des Nations, 1211 Genève 10

- The agenda of the meeting of the Committee would be organized in such a way that matters of direct reference to UNFPA were clustered together. This selective management of the agenda would enable UNFPA to organize the attendance of its Board members and staff in the most economical and effective way it might wish to adopt.

- The present UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy would be known as the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health and its terms of reference would be amended accordingly.

The next meeting of the (present) JCHP is scheduled for May 1997. The Executive Boards of all three organizations will meet before that time and, on approval by our respective Boards, the new arrangements could be set in place for the first meeting of the new Committee in May 1997.

We trust that you will find these proposals in line with the expectations of your Board, and of yourself. An early response from you would be appreciated so that matters can be set in motion without delay.

We look forward to fully cooperating with you in pursuit of our common goals.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Carol Bellamy
Executive Director
UNICEF

Hiroshi Nakajima, M.D., Ph.D.
Director-General
WHO

UNFPA FNUAP
United Nations Population Fund
Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population

Annex VII

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Telephone: (212) 297-5122

File No.: _____

4 November 1996

Dear Ms. Bellamy and Dr. Nakajima,

Thank you for your letter of October 1996, reference FRH: P13/522/22, concerning the Joint Committee on Health Policy.

I am pleased that you agree that coordination at the policy level is important among our three organizations and I am glad that you welcome the proposal for UNFPA Executive Board to become a member of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Health Policy.

I take note of your suggestions for the proposed arrangements; namely the preparation of the agenda so that matters of direct reference to UNFPA are clustered together, the renaming of the committee as **"UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health"** and the amending of its terms of reference accordingly.

I also note that the next meeting of the JCHP is scheduled for May 1997, and that the Executive Boards of our respective organizations will meet before that time. As you have suggested, it is expected that upon approval by our respective Boards, the new arrangements can then be set in place for the first meeting of the new Committee in May 1997.

We will proceed to immediately inform the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board accordingly. We look very much forward to cooperating closely with UNICEF and WHO on this new Coordinating Committee on Health.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Nafis Sadik
Executive Director
and Under-Secretary-General

Ms. Carol Bellamy
Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
3 United Nations Plaza, Room H-1380
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