

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

ADOPTION AND FOSTER PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

**Report of an Expert Group Meeting
on Adoption and Foster Placement of Children
Geneva, 11-15 December 1978**



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PREFACE

The present publication was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1925 (LVIII) of 6 May 1975, adopted upon the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development. In that resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to submit to the Commission for Social Development, at its twenty-sixth session, a draft declaration on social and legal principles relating to adoption and foster placement of children nationally and internationally, for submission to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly.

An Expert Group was convened by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, from 11 to 15 December 1978 at Geneva, for the purpose of preparing the draft declaration requested by the Council. The present publication contains the draft declaration adopted by the Expert Group as well as background information on the question of adoption and foster placement of children, information on the composition of the Expert Group, observations of the Secretary-General and two working papers prepared for the meeting.

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Part One

MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON ADOPTION AND FOSTER PLACEMENT
OF CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Background information

The twentieth century is sometimes described as the "century of the child". With the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and with the proclamation of the International Year of the Child, the welfare of this vulnerable sector of society has been formally recognized as a basic concern of the international community, resulting, in particular, in an upsurge of services for the rehabilitation of destitute children. Millions of such children, abandoned and deserted by parents or guardians, born out of wedlock or otherwise affected, are being cared for in institutions which, even when functioning under the most scientific conditions, can provide but a poor substitute for family life, which is vital for healthy psychological growth and development.

It is universally acknowledged that every child has a right to have parents and a family life of his own. Principle 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that "the child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security ...".

Adoption and foster placement of children are widespread throughout almost the entire world as a means of providing family life for children deprived of their natural families. The practice of adoption is not a new phenomenon. It has probably existed de facto, if not de jure, almost since the beginning of history. However, it was only after the First World War that, under pressure of public opinion and with a view to regularizing numerous de facto situations, several countries promulgated their first adoption laws, or revised existing laws that had become incompatible with modern ideas. Whereas originally the aim of adoption was essentially to provide the adopters with direct heirs, it is now increasingly considered a unique means of providing parental relationships for children deprived of their natural parents.

Particularly after the Second World War, adoption gradually gained ground in many countries. Since that time extensive changes have been introduced in the laws of many countries. Traditional practices were also significantly modified and new laws passed in countries where this institution previously had hardly been known. The revision of legislation in many countries was profoundly influenced by the European Convention on the Adoption of Children, which laid down minimum standards that each national agreed to apply. Thereafter many countries adopted legal provisions based very closely on the recommendations in the Convention.

However, recent studies and international conferences on adoption and foster placement reveal that the current situation does not satisfy the requirements of the present. Reflecting the conclusions of the World Conference on Adoption and Foster Placement of Children, held at Milan from 16 to 19 September 1971, the General Assembly in its resolution 3028 (XXVII) of 18 December 1972, entitled "United Nations conference for an international convention on adoption law" stated that "owing to the lack of legislation and the contrasts between the laws of various

countries, ever-increasing juridical and legal problems arise which may affect the interests of minors or other persons to be adopted." The Assembly also recognized that there are "multiple causes which, in our modern world, provoke the massive institutionalization of children, thus depriving millions of children all over the world of the family atmosphere which is indispensable for their development". Moreover, since adoption is a social as well as a legal process and is embedded in a social context, the principles that suggest the most desirable procedures in adoption are subject to change with changes in the social situation.

The Commission for Social Development, in considering the report of the Secretary-General, "Protection and welfare of children: convening of a United Nations conference for an international convention on adoption law" (E/CN.5/504 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1), at its twenty-fourth session in January 1975, acknowledged that the problems associated with the adoption and foster placement of children deserve international attention. However, the advisability of convening such a conference was questioned. Among other considerations, the availability of funds and programme priorities were cited. It was pointed out that, in view of the complexity of the problem and the difference in attitudes based on cultural and historical factors, which had been brought out in the Secretary-General's report, it would be impossible to achieve international uniformity of legislation on adoption. The view was expressed that it might be too ambitious and impractical to hold the proposed conference at the present time. Accordingly, the convening of a United Nations conference for an international convention on adoption law was not recommended. For measures that could be taken prior to such a conference, the Commission suggested the collection of information at the regional and secretariat levels and the preparation of a draft declaration of principles, with a view, inter alia, to stimulating awareness of the problem. 1/

In view of the above, the Economic and Social Council, at its fifty-eighth session in 1975, on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development, adopted resolution 1925 (LVIII), "Adoption and foster placement of children", in which the Council, after taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on convening a United Nations conference for an international convention on adoption law, requested the Secretary-General to convene, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, a group of experts with relevant experience of family and child welfare, with primary emphasis on adoption and foster placement of practices, representative of all geographical regions:

- "(a) To prepare a draft declaration of social and legal principles relating to adoption and foster placement of children nationally and internationally, and to review and appraise the recommendations and guidelines incorporated in the report of the Secretary-General 66/ and the relevant material submitted by Governments already available to the Secretary-General and the regional commissions;
- "(b) To draft guidelines for the use of Governments in the implementation of the above principles, as well as suggestions for improving procedures within the context of their social development - including family and child welfare - programmes."

"66/ E/CN.5/504 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1."

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3 (E/5617), chap. V.

In the process of implementing this resolution, an effort was made to appeal to potential donors to secure the necessary extrabudgetary resources for the purpose of convening the group of experts. Contributions were received from the Governments of Austria, Colombia, Greece, Mauritius, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden, the United States of America and Venezuela.

The International Union for Child Welfare (IUCW), the International Social Service (ISS) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) took an active part in the preparatory stage of the Expert Group Meeting. As a result of their efforts, background information on the present trends in policies and practices in adoption and foster placement of children were prepared and made available to members of the Expert Group.

Composition of the Expert Group

In accordance with the requirements of Economic and Social Council resolution 1925 (LVIII), the Expert Group Meeting on Adoption and Foster Placement of Children was composed of the following experts appointed by the Secretary-General: Phoebe M. Asiyo, Executive Officer, Child Welfare Society of Kenya; Ilse M. Goldschmidt, Regional Director for Latin America, International Social Service (Venezuela); Helena Gutierrez, Legal Adviser, Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar; Wanda Klominek, Professor of Psychology at Krakow University (Poland); Damien Ngabonziza, Department of Social Affairs (The Upper Volta); Mohini Raghunath, Indian Council on Social Welfare; Elina A. Rautanen, Executive Director, Child Welfare Association (Finland); Elaine Schwartz, Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (United States of America), Emmett K. Turner, Executive Director, Kaisahang Buhay Foundation (the Philippines).

In addition, the following representatives of non-governmental organizations active in the field of adoption and foster placement of children were invited to participate in the Meeting as experts: John Adams, Executive Director, Holt International Children's Services, Inc.; Giuseppe Cicorella, President, International Committee of the Associations of Adoptive Families; Audrey Moser, Secretary-General, International Social Service; Bette S. Miller, International Union for Child Welfare; Helen Thomaides, Casework Consultant, International Social Service. Dr. Norman Sherry, Assistant Clinical Professor in Paediatrics, Harvard Medical School, United States of America, participated in the Expert Group work as an adviser. Suzanne Bettens, Director of Adoption, Terre des Hommes (Switzerland), Roland Guerin, Quebec Adoption Bureau (Canada), Janina Janik, Medical Academy in Krakow (Poland), May Newby, World Council of Churches, Michele Petit, Foyers Adoptifs Internationaux (France), Elisabet Sandberg, Adoption Centre, Swedish Society for International Child Welfare, Birgitta Thunstrom, Swedish Council for Inter-country Adoption, and Margod Weyer, Terre des Hommes (Federal Republic of Germany), attended the Meeting as observers.

Thus, the Expert Group was composed of the representatives of all geographical regions comprising the main models of adoption and foster placement of children resulting from different cultural attitudes and historical practices. It included leading specialists working in governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations dealing with children available for adoption and foster placement, and adoptive families.

The Meeting had before it two working papers, one prepared by Bette Sprung Miller, at the request of the International Union for Child Welfare and the International Social Service, and the other prepared by Alfred Kadushin, School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin Madison, United States of America, at the request of the International Council on Social Welfare.

I. GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

The Expert Group Meeting held a general discussion on the basis of the background papers that had been submitted. It was decided to consider all questions relating to adoption and foster placement of children within a general framework of family and child welfare. Following that decision, it was admitted that the discussions should proceed from questions relating to general family and child welfare, embracing further questions relating to foster placement and adoption of children nationally and internationally. It was agreed further that the exchange of views should result in the formulation of principles to be embodied in a draft declaration and of relevant recommendations relating to the implementation of those principles.

All participants stressed an urgent need for more active involvement of Governments in matters of family and child welfare. It was acknowledged that it was in the best interest of all nations to give high priority to family and child welfare as they plan for the use and further development of national resources. Accordingly, it was proposed to recommend that all Governments take responsibility for the enactment and implementation of legislation to promote good, current practice in family and child welfare. Standards for family and child welfare services should be established and implemented by Governments in co-operation with a competent authorized agency.

In that regard, the members of the Expert Group pointed out that there was currently a need for ongoing specialized training and staff development of social workers involved in family and child welfare. Some experts believed that the appropriate measures should be undertaken to educate the public in order to increase community awareness of the existence of children with special needs; education for parenthood should be provided for all citizens from childhood on. Counselling services should be available for all prospective parents.

The Expert Group recognized that the best child welfare was good family welfare and that the first priority for a child was to be cared for by its biological parents. Other family members might be the first alternative if the biological parents were unable to provide care for the child. All substitute family care forms could be considered only when care within the biological family was unavailable or inappropriate.

Foster family care was regarded by the participants as a bridge to permanency for a child, which included but was not limited to restoration to the biological family or adoption. Accordingly, it should be a planned, temporary service. The experts unanimously concurred that in providing substitute care, the placement of children in foster families or adoption should be preferred to placement in institutions, unless a child's particular needs could best be met in a specialized facility.

The Expert Group acknowledged that each family whose children were under substitute care should receive services to enable them to resume care of their

children within a reasonable time or to assist them in making other permanent plans for children. In addition, appropriate services should be readily available so that decisions about a child's future welfare could be made as early as possible.

Some experts pointed out that all placements should be made by an authorized child placement agency or directly by the biological family with the assistance of an authorized child placement agency. Accordingly, all independent placement services were regarded as undesirable.

The Expert Group acknowledged that the primary purpose of adoption was to provide a permanent family for a child who could not be cared for by his or her biological family. To provide necessary safeguards for the child, the biological family, the adoptive family and society, appropriate legislation should be established and the services necessary to implement adoption legislation should be provided. Those services should be organized and co-ordinated at the national level in such a way as to enable every child in need of an adoptive family to find one. It was pointed out that legislation and services should ensure that the child becomes an integral part of the adoptive family. In addition to that, the need for careful selection of the most appropriate environment for the particular child concerned was mentioned.

It was unanimously acknowledged that it was the responsibility of Governments to determine the adequacy of their national services for children and to recognize those children whose needs were not being met by existing services. For some of those children, intercountry adoption might be considered as a suitable means of providing them with a family. In such cases, legal validation of the adoption should be assured in the countries involved. It was agreed that no intercountry adoption plan could be considered before it had been established that the child was legally free for adoption and that all necessary consents were in a form that was legally valid in both countries. Furthermore, it was felt that sending countries should get together occasionally at the regional level to discuss their mutual problems and arrive at a well-discussed and well thought-out plan.

In consideration of the child's legal and social safety, so-called proxy adoptions were not considered acceptable. However, observers from Canada and Sweden pointed out that that form of adoption was legally accepted in their countries. It was generally agreed that in cases of older and/or handicapped children, proxy adoptions were totally undesirable.

It was suggested that when a family adopts a large number of children, it should try to have children with the same origins and backgrounds, in order to foster a sense of belonging and affinity.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the general exchange of views on the subject, the Group adopted the following draft Declaration on Social and Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption, Nationally and Internationally:

"General family and child welfare

- "1. It is in the best interest of every nation to give a high priority to family and child welfare as it plans for the use and further development of national resources.
- "2. It is recognized that the best child welfare is good family welfare.
- "3. It is affirmed that the first priority for a child is to be cared for by the biological parents. Other family members should be the first alternative if the biological parents cannot provide care for the child.
- "4. When biological family care is unavailable or inappropriate, substitute family care should be considered.
- "5. It must be recognized that there are parents who cannot bring up their own children and where the children's rights to security, affection and continuing care should be of greatest importance.
- "6. Providers of service should have professional social work training in family and child welfare.

"Foster placement

- "7. Every child has a right to a family. Children who cannot remain in their biological family should be placed in foster family or adoption in preference to institutions, unless the child's particular needs can best be met in a specialized facility.
- "8. Children for whom institutional care was formerly regarded as the only option should be placed with families, both foster and adoptive.
- "9. Provision should be made for regulation of placement of children outside of their biological family.
- "10. Foster family care should be a planned, temporary service as a bridge to permanency for a child, which includes but is not limited to restoration to the biological family or adoption.

"11. Planning for the child in foster family care must involve the biological family, foster family and child, if appropriate, under the auspices of a competent authorized agency.

"Adoption

"12. The primary purpose of adoption is to provide a permanent family for a child who cannot be cared for by his/her biological family.

"13. Adoption procedures should be flexible enough to meet the child's needs in various situations.

"14. In considering possible adoption placements, those responsible for the child should select the most appropriate environment for the particular child concerned.

"15. Sufficient time and adequate counselling should be given to the biological parents to enable them to reach a decision on their child's future, recognizing that it is in the child's best interest to reach this decision as early as possible.

"16. Legislation and services should ensure that the child becomes an integral part of the adoptive family.

"17. The need of adult adoptees to know about their background should be recognized.

"18. There should be recognition, in the law, of traditional adoption within the family, to ensure the protection of the children and to assist the family by counselling.

"19. Governments should determine the adequacy of their national services for children, and recognize those children whose needs are not being met by existing services. For some of these children, intercountry adoption may be considered as a suitable means of providing them with a family.

"20. When intercountry adoption is considered, policy and legislation should be established to protect the children concerned.

"21. In each country, placements should be made through authorized agencies competent to deal with intercountry adoption services and providing the same safeguards and standards as are applied in national adoption.

"22. Proxy adoptions are not acceptable, in consideration of the child's legal and social safety.

"23. No adoption plan should be considered before it has been established that the child is legally free for adoption and the pertinent documents necessary to complete the adoption are available. All necessary consents must be in a form which is legally valid in both countries. It must be definitely established that the child will be able to immigrate into the country of the prospective adopters and can subsequently obtain their nationality.

"24. In intercountry adoptions, legal validation of the adoption should be assured in the countries involved.

"25. The child should at all times have a name, nationality and legal guardian."

In resolution 1925 (LVIII), the Economic and Social Council decided that the Expert Group, in addition to preparing the above draft Declaration, should draft guidelines for the use of Governments in the implementation of those principles. However, the Expert Group came to the conclusion that it was impossible to prepare both a draft declaration and guidelines within the limited time (one week) the Group had at its disposal. In view of that fact, the Expert Group decided to restrict its work to the formulation of the following recommendations relating to the implementation of the above principles:

"General family and child welfare

- "1. Governments should take the responsibility for enactment and implementation of legislation to promote good, current practice in family and child welfare.
- "2. It is necessary that society, through Governments, provide for the basic needs of a child and his/her family through general community and family welfare programmes.
- "3. Standards for family and child welfare services should be established and implemented by Governments in co-operation with authorized, competent agencies.
- "4. There should be on-going specialized training and staff development which is responsive to changing needs of the community.
- "5. There should be education of the public to increase community awareness of the existence of children with special needs; and the involvement of all members of the community should be encouraged.
- "6. Governments should provide education for parenthood for its citizens from childhood on. Counselling should be available for all prospective parents. Specific resources should be available for special needs of the family.
- "7. There should be planning for social action and education of society to change attitudes and achieve acceptance of those who are subjected to discrimination.

"Foster placement

- "8. When a child is away from the biological family, the family should receive services to enable them to resume care of their child within a reasonable time or to assist them in making other permanent plans for the child.

- "9. Services for all family and child welfare programmes should be readily available so that decisions about a child's future welfare can be made as early as possible.
- "10. It is the responsibility of agencies to gather information on children coming into care in order to serve them in their own home and/or to share necessary information with foster and adoptive families.
- "11. Flexibility in implementation of principles is important. Imaginative and innovative active responses to changing situations and needs are desirable.
- "12. All placements should be made by an authorized child placement agency or directly by the biological family with the assistance of an authorized child placement agency.
- "13. All principles should be applied with due sensitivity to the religious, ethnic and cultural values and attitudes of all involved.
- "14. There should be information systems in each country for identifying children who are away from their biological families to ensure appropriate planning and services. This information should include characteristics of these children.
- "15. The biological family should have continued involvement in the planning for their child throughout the foster care process.
- "16. Foster parents should have the opportunity for preparing and training for their role.
- "17. The role of foster parents, including their rights and responsibilities, must be clearly stated in national standards.
- "18. Governments should make provisions for adequate foster family care which includes but is not limited to financial, legal and other professional services, provided directly or through competent, authorized agencies.

"Adoption

- "19. Governments should establish legislation for adoption, in order to provide necessary safeguards for the child, the biological family, the adoptive family and society and should make provision for the services necessary to implement adoption legislation.
- "20. These services should be available on a continuing basis to all concerned in the adoption, before, during and after the legal adoption is completed.
- "21. Services should be organized and co-ordinated at the national level in such a way as to enable every child in need of an adoptive family to find one.

"22. At the same time, Governments should inform themselves of the legislation, procedures and standards of service in countries that have offered to find adoptive homes.

"23. Immigration and emigration regulations should be in compliance with good adoption practices, as stated in these principles."

In addition, the Expert Group adopted the following recommendations for future international action:

"Whereas the rights of children have been defined by the United Nations in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and whereas 1979 has been declared the International Year of the Child,

We recommend:

"1. That the United Nations give continuous attention to the development of adequate family and child welfare services;

"2. That comprehensive guidelines for the use of Governments be developed on the basis of the principles and recommendations proposed by the Expert Group;

"3. That the General Assembly give consideration to the principles developed by the Expert Group within the framework of the International Year of the Child;

"4. That the right of a child to a family of his/her own should be incorporated into the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is under development at present;

"5. That the United Nations encourage, by all possible means, safeguards in order to avoid uncontrolled and illegal transfer of children for foster placement or adoption, nationally or internationally;

"6. That the United Nations encourage and provide technical assistance to States Members which are in need of development of legislation on foster placement and adoption;

"7. That the United Nations convene a series of regional conferences and training sessions with a view to improving practices in adoption and foster care as well as to develop procedures and safeguards in intercountry adoptions;

"8. That there be continuing co-operation with other intergovernmental bodies concerned and with non-governmental organizations active and competent in this field;

"9. That the United Nations publish and disseminate widely the report of the Expert Group;

"10. That the United Nations encourage evaluation, research and follow-up studies to assess the well-being of children in substitute care or in need of such care, including foster placement and adoption, both nationally and internationally;

"11. That the United Nations give guidance to Governments in establishing unified systems of collecting and using statistical data on child and family welfare, including foster placement and adoption, both national and international. This would facilitate comparative research and the identification of trends and problems."

Part Two
PAPERS BEFORE THE
EXPERT GROUP

III. THE CHILD WITHOUT A FAMILY OF HIS OWN

A review of currently recorded activities and programmes for children with special needs

Betty Spring Miller*

INTRODUCTION

The present paper was prepared for the use of the experts invited by the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to meet at Geneva for discussions on the subject of foster placement and adoption of children - nationally and internationally. It concerns itself with good social and legal principles to be observed on a practical level. The study is intended to cover as wide a range as possible of actual practices in this specialized field of child welfare.

In the material reviewed there is a predominance of examples taken from North America and the United Kingdom. It is hoped that this will not be considered as a limitation but rather, that principles of universal application will be discovered in the examples.

The primary concern has been to show that foster placement and adoption are but two of the comprehensive family services available. It is important to emphasize that when forming a plan for a child deprived of the love and security of his own family, one should consider, as much as possible, all other related social services in the community.

The material has been organized into three main sections:

- (a) General observations on child welfare policies and programmes;
- (b) Recent developments;
- (c) Legal considerations in adoption and foster placement.

General observations on child welfare policies and programmes

In 1974, 67 Governments replied to a questionnaire from the United Nations Secretary-General in which they were asked to give information on their policies, programmes and laws for the protection of children for adoption and foster placement. The subsequent report of the Secretary-General contains information on existing welfare programmes for children in many lands - 13 from North, Central and South America, 20 from Europe, 10 from the Middle East, 11 from Asia and

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Oceania and 13 from Africa. 1/ There are many lessons of a non-statistical, rather philosophical nature to be drawn from the material on the intentions of Governments to look after unprotected children.

Among the many indications of a positive response to the need for services for children is the attention given to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which stresses the importance of family life to children, recognizing the family as a basic unit of society which, when functioning normally, is able to provide love and security. However, the mode of family life has undergone significant changes in the past several decades, along with growing industrialization, urbanization and mobility of labour. Particularly significant for social planners is the changing status of women and its effect on children.

One simple and familiar social concept, namely, that the best child welfare is good family welfare, does receive recognition in many regions of the world. However, not sufficient attention is given to its practical realization, which means supplementing basic services (e.g., health, nutrition) with supportive financial services for the family (e.g., family allowances). To round out the total welfare picture for children, one must also include educational and rehabilitation facilities for young people.

There is also awareness of the role of the community in assisting distressed families by providing day-care centres, child-minding services, home-making services, school meals with milk, counselling service centres for parents, family education and family advice centres. For foster care for young children with very special needs, counselling service as well as financial assistance is given. More and more social planners are recognizing that for the success of special programmes for handicapped children (and this also affects better practices regarding adoption), the availability of counselling services by trained social workers is essential.

Planning with priorities has become a recognized practice, particularly when selecting types of service programmes for child welfare protection. In addition to official governmental plans, there is a role for the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The ways in which the latter give assistance in social development planning varies considerably from country to country, but they share one general purpose - to focus their activities on sensitive and controversial areas.

Studies and surveys can and do greatly assist in defining and locating needs, and give a sound basis for establishing priorities. Many countries now assess needs through the use of such studies, and commissions of various kinds circulate their proposals for comments. Some countries obtain help from field reports supplied through technical committees.

The following list provides a picture of how 28 countries viewed the priorities for child welfare in 1974:

1. Nutrition, the prevention of malnutrition and child health services (Bahrain, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Kuwait, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania);

1/ "Protection and welfare of children: convening of a United Nations conference for an international convention on adoption law: report of the Secretary-General" (E/CN.5/504 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2).

2. Programmes for pre-school children, with particular reference to day-care (Australia, Barbados, Colombia, Cyprus, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania);
3. Preventive and case-finding activities, and measures to prevent crime among youth (Madagascar, Sweden);
4. Homes for orphans and homeless children, and training of handicapped children (Iran, Liberia, Sri Lanka);
5. Reception and assessment centres for children in country areas, to facilitate treatment-planning in the child's home environment (Australia);
6. Family planning (Sri Lanka);
7. Up-to-date provisions for young offenders (Ireland, Madagascar, Sri Lanka);
8. Services to reduce the gap between different social classes (Israel).

Reference has already been made to the importance of arranging services for children with special needs within a comprehensive family social service programme, and there are now indications that some countries see the importance and the need for this interdisciplinary concern. The United States of America, for instance, has two agencies in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare that are primarily responsible for providing child welfare services - the Community Service Administration and the Office of Child Development. The latter, through its Children's Bureau, is responsible for developing innovative programmes for children and parents as well as serving as a co-ordinator for all federal programmes for children, youth and their families. The Children's Bureau also acts as an advocate for children by bringing their needs to the attention of the Government and the public. (An example of the Children's Bureau's most recent activity in this regard will be given below.) In Nigeria, state governments are responsible for implementing child welfare services and the central Government advises on policies. In a smaller number of countries the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of national legislation and services for child welfare rests with the local authorities. This is the case in Finland and Sweden where county councils and municipal councils, through their child welfare committees, provide services for children and families. In the United Kingdom the local authorities, through their social services committees, have a statutory responsibility for the implementation of national child-care legislation. Another interesting method of co-ordination used in the United Kingdom is that of written guidance such as circulars and publications on various aspects of child care. There is also a provision for periodical visits to local authorities and voluntary organizations by the professional staff of the central department concerned with services for children and families.

The general impression given by the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/504 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2) is that although a majority of Governments are aware of the necessity to plan better programmes for their children, the idea that good family welfare is also good child welfare is only gradually finding adherents. There is only a minimum awareness that it is essential to have children's programmes relating to and linked with family service based in the community. Though increasing attention is given to the prevention of juvenile

delinquency and improved services for young offenders, insufficient planning is provided for the dynamic growth - both mental and physical - of young children. Institutional care, with its damaging and inhibiting effects on the early development of the child, still has a place in the child welfare programme of many countries.

Funds continue to be limited and therefore Governments are faced with the pressing problem of setting priorities. Experience has shown that, in the longer and larger view, it is not economical to focus a programme on the child and neglect alternative programmes which support or rehabilitate the natural family, for when a child is assisted within the natural family, the social services rendered have a broader effect. Unfortunately, the momentum for building institutions continues, to the neglect of more desirable but more difficult individual treatment of needy children.

Some remarks on alternatives to substitute care

Though there is explicit interest in foster placement and adoption of children, one should also look at those social service programmes that provide alternatives to substitute care - that is to say, efforts or actions directed towards making it possible for a child to remain with his family in the community, instead of being placed elsewhere. Whatever problem of survival has confronted the family - be it industrialization or urbanization - the family remains the key unit in social and economic development. In the past - and particularly in industrialized societies - families with young children, under stress because of unemployment, hospitalization for acute illness or too low wages with resultant inadequate housing, were offered help of a kind that resulted in splitting up the family through placement of the children in temporary care. Little or no consideration was given to the ill effects of such an emotional upheaval on the child. There was also an indifference to the feelings of a parent marked by society as unable to provide the minimal economic security for the family. Clearly, there are many benefits to be derived from trying to help parents achieve some kind of employment which would enable the family to stay together. Employment, however, is not always the best solution, particularly for a single parent who would have to take work during hours when the children would be at home. For youngsters growing up in an impersonalized and industrialized community, there are many dangers of a physical and moral nature that require the presence of a parent.

Given such family problems, in what way can the social services assist, other than by using past methods of institutional and foster care? In Scotland a child care group working within the Social Work Committee of the Strathclyde Regional Council recognizing the positive strength and values of the family unit, made some very practical and realistic recommendations for social progress in family and child welfare; for example:

When faced with hospitalization of a parent, instead of a temporary placement out of the home, provide for a peripatetic house parent who can live in the home with the children. Such an alternative could be helpful and practical for short periods of absence by sparing the child the distress of leaving his home in addition to the trauma of having a parent hospitalized.

When faced with a working parent (particularly mothers) and especially with children under five, attempt to provide day-care facilities, registered play groups, day nurseries, and nursery schools and child minders to avoid institutional day-care.

When a family is under stress because of unemployment or too low wages (i.e., fixed income derived from supplementary benefits), an affective and sensitive way of assisting that does not bring shame and also allows for the maintaining of the family unit is the use of direct payment schemes. Such means can relieve the immediate pressures on the family and enable them to provide for the basic physical necessities of life. 2/

The child care group was aware that in the best interest of some children, it would be necessary to separate them from their families. Under such conditions the placement plan should ideally be worked out by a social worker assisting the parents and children, taking into account the nature of the family breakdown and how it would determine whether the placement should be temporary or long-term.

Obviously, searching for alternatives to substitute care demands co-ordinated action on the part of the social services. If that action results in sustaining and supporting a family in its community, extra effort is justified. We trust that these remarks on alternatives to substitute care will not be thought of as incidental, but, rather, as a part of child welfare services, in a newer, more liberal sense, freed from the traditional connotations of poverty.

Foster placement

Recent developments

Over the years social work has emphasized the necessity to identify the single purpose of the family and to approach problems of children and their families with an awareness and respect for that unity. Nevertheless, when circumstances make it impossible for parents to care for their children, foster placement may be a solution. Ideally foster home placement should be the means to an end - the end being the rehabilitation of the family. Studies on the effects of foster placement on children have shown that children so placed do generally fare better emotionally than those who are sent to institutions. Even though institutions continue to improve their therapeutic facilities and try to avoid settling children in "cold storage", without periodically reviewing their needs, they produce greater negative effects on the well-being and emotional development of children than foster care. Furthermore, foster care is less expensive than residential (institutional) care.

How has the social work professional responded to the challenge of trying to care for children outside of institutions?

2/ "Alternatives to substitute care" Report of the Strathclyde Regional Council, Social Work Committee (February 1978).

An important experiment was set up in 1975 under the direction of the National Children's Home (NCH), a registered English social agency providing care for children apart from their parents. ^{3/} The agency hoped to determine whether or not a training course in child care would enable foster parents to better meet the needs of disturbed or handicapped children. The project lasted for three years, during which 15 children with special needs were placed with foster parents who had previously participated in special training. The scheme proved to be both costly and time-consuming. However, the agency has stated that the expense was probably not more than that of recruiting and training residential workers.

Such a project offers a practical alternative to separate care in institutions. As the project progressed, the agency looked at other problem areas. Attention was given to identifying the factors leading to successful family care for handicapped children deprived of a normal home life. The agency hopes that sound information will make it possible to prepare a "model" for professional foster care. Similar projects might show to what extent the attitudes and motives of foster parents are significant in the success or failure of a foster placement and what degree of objectivity can be expected from foster parents having full access to information about the child and his natural parents.

Foster home placement is used extensively in many countries, and there is an ever-growing concern to expand programmes for foster parenting. Not sufficient concern, however, has been given to the concept of a basic minimum allowance for foster parents. Such an allowance, besides providing financial support, would lend foster care a certain status.

Israel, a country which in the past concentrated on institutional care, is at present in favour of developing a broader range of social services, including foster care. It is thought that the country's growing industrialization and urbanization demand a move away from the placement of children in institutions and a critical assessment of the historical approval of group education and group life.

One of the earliest United Nations seminars on foster home care of children took place in Sweden 25 years ago, and much in its proposed "Statement of principles" continues to have relevancy, since the situation has changed very little nationally or internationally since that time. Some of the main considerations of the seminar are as follows:

- (a) To consider the total family situation and the community situation;
- (b) To plan for the child from the beginning on the basis of a full social study and maintain contact with both the family and the foster parents;
- (c) To provide adequate training for social workers, with supervision in this specialized area of child care.

In 1977 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution on the placement of children. The resolution first recognizes that placement should be avoided as far as possible through preventive measures of

^{3/} National Children's Home, It Pays to Care (London, 1977).

support for families in accordance with their special problems and needs. It then goes on to outline modes of placement, the management of placements, standards for Governments and responsible agencies, and the training of their staffs, means of family support, and the need for local, national and international research on issues relating to child care. The resolution contains an up-to-date and far-reaching understanding of placement. Moreover, its recommendations are formulated on sound social principles which would justify their application on a wide geographical scale.

In Saudi Arabia, foster care, according to a statement by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, ^{4/} owes much to Islam for its development. "It has urged thousands of families to care for children in special circumstances." Islamic philosophy also appears to affect foster parents' attitudes regarding payment for their services: from a total of 600 families providing foster care, only 150 have accepted the foster care aid allowance.

Substitute care for children in unrelated families is increasingly employed in many regions of the world; but in many countries traditional arrangements - those not regulated by planned programmes - prevail over those which provide care through the extended family and tribe or clan.

It is important to mention here that movements of parents with their young children to other countries can create serious child-care problems, especially as a result of differing conceptions of a child's educational and developmental needs. A few years ago there were about 6,000 West African children in private foster homes in Great Britain. Their parents, mainly students, were temporary residents who wished to take advantage of educational opportunities and needed to find suitable substitute care for their young children. In "fostering" (in the English sense), they thought they had found a method of care similar to their own traditional welfare patterns and so they chose it with confidence. They were, however, unaware of the significant differences between fostering in Britain and West Africa. The author of an article on this subject ^{5/} calls attention to the reluctance of West African parents to visit their children while in care and says: "As one mother expressed it, if your child is with a relation, grandmother, or co-wife, and you pay too frequent visits, she will have the impression that you are spying on her and that she is not trusted." This simple expression of trust in foster parents, transferred to another culture where interest and concern are measured by regular visits, could understandably result in much unnecessary distress. Recognizing that the movement of children from one culture to another creates serious misunderstandings, the author hopes that research will be undertaken to "extend our understanding of socialization processes in general" and that a critical appraisal of some of our own child-training practices will be made.

Foster placement abroad

It has been said that in general any child in foster care is one who for some

^{4/} See Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, "Saudi Arabia: family and child welfare", International Child Welfare Review, No. 36 (March 1978), pp. 51-54.

^{5/} June Ellis, "Differing conceptions of a child's need: some implications for social work with West African children and their parents", British Journal of Social Work, vol. 7, No. 2 (1977).

reason is unable to live with his own family, but there are exceptions. A foster placement is sometimes arranged by the natural parents for economic gain. The International Social Service (ISS), a non-governmental organization which assists children caught between two countries, has in its files many such cases. The Director of the Venezuelan branch of ISS reports that she is often asked by natural parents for assistance in privately arranged temporary foster placement of their minor children in a foreign country. Usually the reason for such placements is the promise of better opportunities abroad, and often foster placement is considered by the natural parent to be in the best interest of the child. The ISS case records show many examples of such "foster care" that result in disastrous exploitation of the children. This is especially so for unaccompanied minor girls, cut off from the protection of their families and familiarity with their own environments. Often they are treated as "second-rate individuals". The problems noted here are of both a social and a legal nature, and the ISS Venezuelan Director believes that they can be resolved on a regional level.

Adoption

General remarks

The subject of adoption is a controversial one, almost always discussed with strong sentiments. Public opinion in general in Europe and North America holds that adoption is a "good thing", an acceptable alternative to illegitimacy or family breakdown and a means of assisting childless couples. Although the number of children who are helped to grow up in a family through the legal process of adoption is relatively small when compared with the number cared for by other methods, adoption is practiced in many regions of the world, and those countries with adoption laws have over the past 25 years continued to revise and amend them, always to the further interest of the child. Experts brought together in 1953 by the World Health Organization to discuss the mental health aspects of adoption agreed that, as a general rule, adoption is the best substitute for care by a child's own parents or close relatives.

Adoption in countries under Islamic law

In recent years the practice of legal adoption in countries under Islamic law (e.g., Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman) has increased. In 1972 Iraq provided for adoption by "affiliation" of abandoned children, orphans, or children under nine years of age whose parents were unknown. In Malaysia under certain conditions official registration of the de facto adoption of Moslem children is now possible.

As an example of adoption practice in an Islamic country, we quote from a letter received from an IUCW member, a Pakistani voluntary organization recognized by the Government for the adoption and protection of neglected babies and children. The organization has a baby centre and a children's home in Karachi. Most of the adoptions are from the baby centre. The president of the organization writes:

"Regarding our experience in adoption in Pakistan we have come to the conclusion that it is best for a Pakistani child to be placed with a Pakistani Moslem family. But in some cases we get instructions to place the child in a Christian Pakistani family. If a Christian family asks us to place the child with a foreign national, we will do so.

"Our experience has shown that it is important to follow-up adoption cases, i.e., in the developing countries where people are not really conscious of their duties towards the adoptive child, we therefore suggest that follow-up should be for at least eight years in developing countries but in a very discreet and tactful way. We have been very successful in this.

"Our main problem is a question of inheritance. In Islam there is no law of adoption. We have therefore to safeguard the interest of a child by insurance policies, gifts etc. in favour of the child before the adoption papers are finalized. We also ask them to inform us in case of a death of either of the parents.

"Another difficulty is that the adoptive family does not want anybody to know that the child is not their own. We advise them to let the child know after five years that it is not their own. But even the most educated people do not like to accept this fact."

The writer refers to the problem of adaptation (i.e., identity, secrecy, inheritance) as resistances which could be overcome through a sensitive approach. Perhaps this may suggest the difficulties inherent in transplanting Western concepts of caring for children through adoption into another socio-cultural setting.

Adoption in Kenya

In 1969 in a paper on the problems of interracial adoption, Dr. J. Karefa-Smart stated that problems related to adoption continue to show a predominantly Western character. In tribal Africa there was generally no need for adoption, since no exclusive and narrow family groups existed; thus a child would never be alone but would be protected and supported by his community or tribe. In Africa today many of these traditions are strained as a result of industrialization, mobility of labour and urbanization. In Kenya a recognition of these social alterations with their effects on care for children has resulted in a national adoption law, contained in the adoption act CAP.143. The High Court has jurisdiction in adoption proceedings. The applicant must be at least 21 years older than the child and, except in exceptional circumstances, an adoption order will not be made in respect of a female child when the adopter is a man. The consent of the parent or guardian of the child is necessary before an adoption order can be made, although the Court has power to waive the requirement in cases where it is deemed that the consent is being unreasonably withheld. Under available case law the mother, not the father, is considered the parent of an illegitimate child.

In a magazine article of July 1975, there is a frank and professional presentation of the subject of adoption in Kenya. ^{6/} The ideas expressed show an awareness of socio-cultural conflicts in a changing society. It brings again to our attention the importance of testing and reviewing assumptions and expectations of social behaviour originating in another culture, particularly so in regard to the care of children through the institution of adoption. The author tells us that

"Before arrival of Europeans here there was no need for adoption because the problems of homeless children did not exist. In fact, there was no word

^{6/} Barbara Colton, "Can I go home with you?" Viva (Nairobi) (July 1975).

for adoption in the vernaculars or in Kiswahili. If the child lost a parent or parents he was automatically taken in by the most immediate relatives since in most tribal customs children were regarded as a responsibility of the clan as a whole. The changing life-style engendered by contact with Western civilization resulted in the advent of the homeless child."

From 1933-1963 there were only 26 African children legally adopted through the procedure prescribed by the High Court, while during the years 1968-1974 the figure rose to 90. Although there are still not many adoptions in Kenya, the figure is none the less an indication that the traditional methods of child care have not been able to keep up with the fast change towards industrialization in Kenya.

What were some of the problems of cultural adaptation Kenyan social workers had to be aware of in their special care methods for children? To begin with, all persons concerned had difficulty in defining whose interests should be paramount - the child's or the relative's. When the natural parents were absent but the child's origin was known, did the extended family (or tribe) have the same rights as a parent or guardian? If the child was seen as "belonging" to an extended family, was it possible for him to be "given away" to non-related persons? Would it ever be possible for individuals without a blood tie to care for a child as their own?

Too often these dilemmas are "resolved" by non-action; the relatives ignore reality and refuse to give their permission for separation from the child by the act of adoption. It is primarily on this issue - the consent of responsible relatives - that the bulk of case work for adoption in Kenya is centred. In 1974, 300 people were approved as suitable adopters, but only 60 children were locally adopted through the assistance of the Kenyan Child Welfare Society. In Kenyan social work circles adoption is considered a suitable means of providing substitute parental care for the unwanted or illegitimate child, but the general public continues to withhold its approval for this method of child care and refuses to identify with foreign concepts which do not fit in with their traditional ways.

Adoption for children with special needs

In many countries institutional care is considered the only long-term solution for handicapped children. It is only recently that adoption for those children has been considered.

In 1977 the International Catholic Child Bureau organized a conference in France to discuss a new method of child care which would recommend adoption for handicapped children. 7/ The 27 participants, from eight countries, included adoptive parents, professionals from various disciplines and representatives of several international organizations, including the International Union for Child Welfare. A report given at the conference noted that in the last 20 years many handicapped children had been successfully adopted. In many cases the adoption contributed to the improvement of the child's condition. Not only did the child

7/ See "The adoption of handicapped children", International Child Welfare Review, No. 35 (December 1977), pp. 47-50.

benefit from such an adoption, but the entire adoptive family, including the children, gained a great deal from assisting with the integration of the handicapped child into their home and community. A general principle for adoptions was applied to this new development - namely, that the child is the first consideration; that a family be given to him, and not that he be given to a family. The conference participants agreed that for the adoption of the handicapped - as for other adoptions - there were many advantages to be realized when the placement was made in the early years of a child's life. Perhaps even more than in other adoptions, great value was placed on the services of professional (medical and social) individuals and on their ability to interpret the child's growth and development. It was agreed that since the handicapped child had special needs, the adoptive parents should also have special qualities and capabilities. This is a new area, and research is recommended in order to dispel negative attitudes towards such adoptions. In addition, it was felt extremely important that the experiences of adoptive parents who have given a home to a handicapped child should be shared with professional social workers and other prospective adoptive parents.

In the United States a similar concern for finding permanent families for older and handicapped children resulted in the setting up of an agency in 1968 for improving care for such children. The agency, Spaulding for Children, has been able to find homes for 200 children ranging in age from infancy to 16 years. Among them were children suffering from mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida, as well as disturbed teen-agers and members of large sibling groups. In the past children with such problems were seldom considered for adoption because the majority of the prospective adopters were childless couples wanting a baby. The director of the agency was invited to give a series of talks to professional social workers in England, so that a large group of concerned people might have first-hand contact with this specialized child service. During the talks it was re-emphasized that only through the participation of trained professional social workers was it possible to prepare and support handicapped children for eventual placement.

Another very important achievement of the agency has been that through their work they have been able to review former concepts relating to the selection of adopters, the preparation of prospective adoptive parents, and post-adoptive services, often resulting in the revision of past methods and an emphasis on the need to be flexible and approach case problems individually. Perhaps the following ideas which emerge from the agency's experience could find universal application:

- (a) Children and families should be recipients of service, not supervision;
- (b) Children and families should be given support and not prejudged;
- (c) Post-placement service including professional counselling, should be available to children and families.

Trans-racial adoption

On the subject of adoption as a way of helping children with special needs, it would perhaps be appropriate to add some comments on the problems of the trans-racial placement of children considered for adoption in North America today. Canada began the first trans-racial placements; in the United States they began

about 15 years ago. There, as in Great Britain, they are defined as adoption by a white family of a black child or child of mixed-races. Adoptions of this kind were very much in vogue in the United States in the middle-to-late 1960s. But in the 1970s changes of attitude of black people about blackness effected a different response and a reassessment of the practice. The Association of Black Social Workers felt that it was important to announce their statement against trans-racial placement. In their opinion "in a racial society white parents did not have the necessary equipment to have a black or perceivably black child faced with a hostile white society, and therefore preference should be given to placing such children in black families." Unquestionably this is an expression of concern for the child's well-being, but are there not other considerations that call for equal concern on the part of professional social workers? The director of Spaulding for Children believes there are, and in one of her addresses in Great Britain she said: "I have a feeling that that particular thing may not have occurred here yet, but it may well be the wave of the future. It seems essential, however, that we keep in mind that the child's sense of worth may be more imminently tied to a stable family relationship than any other single feature. It would be, it seems to me, wrong to deny permanent placement to a needy child solely out of considerations of colour and culture."

International adoption

The different cultural patterns of two countries involved in an intercountry adoption may result in completely opposing views as to adoption and legal regulations.

In 1957, a group of specialists met to make recommendations for the improvement of procedures regarding intercountry adoption, with emphasis on the best interests of the child, his natural parents and the adoptive parents. The recommendations formed the basis for the discussions at the Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption, held at Leysin, Switzerland, in 1960 and organized by the United Nations, with the co-operation of ISS and IUCW. ^{8/} Although the experts and participants came from Europe and North America, the 12 fundamental principles set forth in the final report of the Seminar are pertinent beyond those regions. Two of them demand particular attention.

The first is that sufficient consideration should be given to possible alternative plans for the child within his own country before intercountry adoption is chosen, since there are difficulties inherent in transplanting the child from one culture to another; the second is that, rather than keep a child indefinitely in an institution because of faulty family ties, the possibility of the child's being adopted in his own country should be examined.

International Social Service has been involved in several thousand intercountry adoptions in its 50 years of existence, and as a result of its experience would prefer to see more children adopted in their own countries, i.e., less intercountry adoption. In many situations the Service has facilitated intercountry adoptions; at other times it has opposed them. It has constantly striven to promote local adoptions and thereby decrease the need for intercountry adoption. Where the latter does occur, ISS has sought to assist intercountry adoption in being carried out on a sound basis and with real safeguards.

^{8/} See Report of the European Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption (UN/TAO/SEM/1960/Rep.2).

In intercountry adoption in particular, the phrase "the child's best interest should be paramount" must be carefully reviewed, since it lends itself to many interpretations contingent upon prevailing social, cultural and religious attitudes. The availability of children for international adoption is affected by changing ideas on such matters as the status of women, illegitimacy, family planning, abortion, marriage arrangements and divorce. Intercountry adoption has been particularly stimulated by world-wide news coverage of natural disasters and the growth of tourism in the developing countries. Certain agencies have adopted the regrettable practice of searching for children for would-be adoptive parents instead of searching for a fit family for the child. The "sending" countries have responded in various ways to this increasing pressure from abroad. Some of them forbid the emigration of children for purposes of adoption. Others impose certain specific eligibility conditions that must be met. Malaysia, for example, discourages overseas adoption, since in its experience, all adoptive children can be placed with Malaysian families. Israel has very little intercountry adoption to record. The Netherlands, where about 2,700 children are received for adoption annually, requires official permission for each child. In Sweden there has been a great demand for adoptive children in the past decade, and many foreign children have found a home there. A special body called Council for Intercountry Adoption has facilitated the adoption process of those children. In the United States the number of foreign children adopted more than quadrupled between 1968 and 1976, from 1,612 to 6,550, and a number of organizations have authority and expertise in effecting such adoptions. In the United Kingdom, the Department of Health and Social Security makes inquiries through the local authorities in the native land of the child before he is permitted to enter. The Government of the Republic of Korea has decreed a 20 per cent decrease in intercountry adoptions per year for the period 1977-1981. This will be coupled with the development of alternative services, so that - it is hoped - by 1981 only a few children will need to emigrate for purposes of adoption. Nor is Thailand desirous of having a large number of its children leave the country for adoption. The ISS Asian Regional Representative, reporting on a visit to the Department of Public Welfare at Bangkok in March 1978, learned that

"To curb and prevent practices leading to many abuses and tragedies, the Department of Public Welfare has assumed control of all Thai adoptions by foreigners since July 1977 through an Executive Adoption Committee set up specifically to deal with such adoptions. The Executive Adoption Committee arranges and approves adoption placements. There is no Court order to decree a legal adoption. The Executive Adoption Committee is made up of representatives from various official departments as well as professional social workers from the Council of Social Welfare."

Opinions on intercountry adoption are very pronounced, since the practice touches on national pride and a country's ability to look after its own, and stresses the advantages, from the viewpoint of economics, of the "have countries" as against the "have not". As a terminological guard against injured sensitivities, people have begun to speak of "sending" and "receiving" countries. In 1975 the United States, a "receiving" country, admitted 5,633 foreign children for adoption; these were in addition to the 80,000 intranational adoptions taking place there.

According to a child care conference held in Trinidad and Tobago in 1974, intercountry adoption is a new trend for that "sending" country. While prospective adopters within the country usually stipulate that the child's ethnic origin and the colour of his skin be similar to theirs, adopters from other

countries do not make those specifications. The social workers at the conference viewed most favourably the changes in adoption legislation in the United States and Canada for handicapped and older children and looked forward to seeing these changes spread in their own social service legislation. They emphasized the importance of continuing with programmes of rehabilitation aimed at keeping the family as a unit together.

The Director of the Venezuelan branch of ISS, speaking for the Latin American regional division, expressed the view that international adoptions should be the last - not the first - step, to be resorted to only after it has proved impossible for a child to be adopted in his own country and at a young age. Viewing the many legal problems existing throughout the Latin American region, the Director stated that if there could be one authorized agency in each country concerned with intercountry adoptions, there would be greater protection for children and prospective adopting parents.

When there have been "breakdowns" in intercountry adoption, the most frequent cause has been that the interests of the child were not the paramount concern. Two other factors often take precedence: first, the prospective adopters' wish for a child; and secondly, the attitude of the natural parents or, in the absence of one, that of the authority or the person named legally responsible.

In May 1975 the Netherlands Intercountry Child Welfare Organization (NICWO) was founded. It is authorized and subsidized by the Government to act as the adoption agency in all matters of intercountry adoption. The aim and purpose of the Organization in a "receiving" country is described in the following article II of its regulations:

- "(a) While recognizing that optimal developing possibilities for a child in its native country should be striven for primarily, the Foundation's aim is the promotion in the widest sense of the interest of foreign children who are eligible for transfer to and adoption in the Netherlands;
- "(b) The promotion of these interests is done in accordance with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1959."

Although the Organization endeavours to protect the welfare of foreign children in its country, there will always be problems created because of independent action in which the Organization's role is side-stepped or ignored.

Inasmuch as intercountry adoption is a phenomenon that is steadily increasing, standards should be established. Both the sending and the receiving countries should take part in considering the nature of those standards, keeping in mind safeguards for child, natural parents and adopters.

If, however, an intercountry adoption is also an interracial adoption, attention must be given to other considerations, namely, what a child leaves behind him by giving up his "membership" in one racial group and whether he will be sufficiently compensated for this loss in his adoptive family. In this connexion the consultant to the Indian Council of Social Welfare and retired Metropolitan Magistrate has written, "I know that there is a feeling around in some places that India, Korea, Africa, etc. should be grateful that children who might otherwise die of malnutrition and neglect are adopted often through humanity or

through a Christian feeling, and that the countries of origin make too much fuss and too much delay in letting these unwanted children go. The thing is, we are thinking of the far-ahead life of the children. ... Taking for granted that these children die in India or have to be committed to institutions, is the known better than the unknown? Or is the better to die in one's own gutter rather than in another's?" 9/

There are certainly ready rebuttals to these questions, but of prime importance are the doubt and fear revealed concerning interracial adoption, which must be allayed. One way of doing so is to ensure that contact with the adoptive family is maintained, through the counselling service of a social worker. Such a service - its primary purpose being to provide support, not supervision - should be available as early as possible following placement. Adoptive parents embarking on a new experience generally need someone to listen to their problems rather than talk to them in platitudes and generalities. The social worker would need to be well informed about the differences in daily living patterns of children coming from other countries, especially those with a different socio-cultural tradition. Attention to such simple basic needs as food, clothing and shelter at the early stage of contact of adoptive families with newly placed children can be extremely valuable and often prevent untold future physical and emotional distress. We have already remarked on the advantage of providing such a specialized counselling service to foster and adoptive parents of children with very special needs, such as physical handicaps, and it would be appropriate to extend this type of service to adoptive parents who are experiencing for the first time intimate life with a child from another country.

In recent years, there has been a trend for adoptive parents to form their own associations. One is the International Committee of Associations of Adoptive Families, with members in Europe, North America and Asia. Such organizations have shown the willingness of people to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings on the subject of giving love to children from other countries and of different races. These groups provide support for their members and are also a valuable source of information on problems of adaptation and adoption. The monthly periodical published by the North American Council on Adoptable Children, called Adoptalk, provides a fund of such information.

Studies on the adoption of foreign children

Formal research and studies are also contributing to the understanding of the difficulties inherent in the adoption of foreign children. Of particular interest are two studies conducted by British social workers. They review in a general way the needs of children in placement. The first, discussed in David Fanshel's "Far from the reservation," sought to analyse the characteristics of couples who adopted American-Indian children. 10/ The study began in 1958 and annual interviews were arranged over the first period of five years with the families. The situation was still at an early stage, since the children had not yet reached school age, but the over-all conclusions were encouraging. More than 50 per cent of the children were performing extremely well in all the phases of

9/ Akka, Kulkarni, "Adoption and foster care policy and practice: an Indian perspective", in Adoption and Foster Care - Domestic and International (Bombay, Indian Council of Social Welfare, 1976).

10/ See British Journal of Social Work, vol. 1, No. 4, (Winter 1971).

life and another 25 per cent were performing in a way that made the outlook for their future adjustment very hopeful. Only 10 per cent were showing problems that made their outlook questionable, and only one child was seen as performing at such a low level that the future looked "very dim". The author concludes "Even with the benign outcomes reported here it may be that the Indian leaders would rather see their children share the fate of their fellow Indians than lose them in the white world. It is for the Indian people to decide."

The second study also expressed optimism for the outcome of trans-racial adoptions but reveals an underlying feeling that little is as yet known about their viability. We still need to learn not only how the child fares in the early period but also how he does in school and in the latency years. Adolescence and adulthood will then be the times of real testing.

An interesting pamphlet on this second round of the study, called "Family experience of inter-racial adoption", by Barbara Jackson, makes us particularly aware of the different attitudes of adoptive families towards the subject of colour and how they were prepared to handle it with the community as well as with the children. In general, optimism prevailed. One father summed it up by saying "I know there may be some problems in the future but he won't be facing them on his own. We will be with him."

Two further studies on trans-racial adoptions have recently been completed. Whereas the two studies noted above were "longitudinal", beginning with the selection of prospective adoptive parents and their agreement to be available for further research, these latter studies began sometime after the adoptions and were conducted without prior preparation or agreement on the part of the adoptive family.

The first was a research project that attempted to assess the "self-concept formation" of adoptive children from the Republic of Korea, placed in homes in the United States. The researcher was Doug Soo Kim and the project was the basis for his thesis for the University of Chicago School of Social Work Administration. The subjects ranged in age from 12 to 17 years inclusive at the time of the study and had been in adoptive homes for at least one full year. The co-operating agency for the study was Holt International Children's Services, Inc., of Oregon, and it was with the help of the agency's staff that records of placement from 1956 to 1962 for the early group and from 1962 to 1972 for the later group were made available. Professor Kim has acknowledged that there was a procedural limitation employed in the study: the data were collected by mail and were therefore confined to "a highly structured standard format with little means of verification".

There were a large number of non-respondents - about 30.6 per cent, and it was possible that they represented a population profile different from that of the people who did respond. Though Holt had placed a majority of the Korean children in question, there were other placement agencies which had been involved, perhaps using other placement procedures, and their children may have differed significantly from those placed by Holt. This too had to be noted when the results were considered. Nevertheless, the researcher felt, "findings in this study may have significant implications for a better understanding of all Korean or perhaps other foreign adoptive children in this country". In the middle of 1974 a questionnaire, one part for the adoptive children and another for the parents, was mailed to each of the 700 sample population (350 children having been

placed before the age of six, 350 placed after six). A total of 366 subjects returned questionnaires with complete and usable responses - 190 families for the older children, 176 families for the younger children. They were at the time living in 38 different states. Professor Kim believes that he can be optimistic as a result of his findings. He concludes that when the adoptive homes have a supportive atmosphere characterized by open, honest and concerned relationships, the Korean adoptive children tend to develop a healthy, positive self-concept. "The conventional wisdom of common, happy and healthy homes should take precedence over any unusual motivations and unique qualities in all screening processes of prospective parents." He says that the old myth that no child should be uprooted from his own culture should be replaced by a new reality - to wit, that a child from any culture, nationality or race should have his own home.

The second study was conducted under the guidance of the Danish National Institute of Social Research and deals with adjustment to intercountry trans-racial adoption. 11/ This research too was carried out without prior arrangements with the adoptive families. The principal aim was to determine whether trans-racial and trans-cultural children adopted by Danes would have personality development disturbances or experience serious difficulties in adjusting to the adoptive family and Danish society. Another aim of the study was to determine whether institutions responsible for establishing contacts between the child to be adopted and his adoptive parents and for making investigations prior to the adoption had developed sufficiently reliable working methods. A total of 168 children - 92 boys, 76 girls - were studied: 92 were trans-racial, born in the Federal Republic of Germany; 68 were from the Republic of Korea; and eight were from Viet Nam and India. At the time of the review they had already been in Denmark for at least two years; the average time spent in Denmark was about five years. The study limited itself to children aged 8-12 years old. The reason given for choosing this age group was that "experience indicates that greater importance should be attached to problems of adjustment and development among children within this selected age group than in younger age groups". There was no interviewing or testing of the adopted children. The data forming the basis of the study were obtained by interviewing the adoptive parents and one of each child's teachers. The study had six major findings, of which the first two have special significance for intercountry and trans-racial adoption. First, trans-racial adopted children in foreign countries, in the age range 8-12, do not experience serious disturbances in personality development or adjustment problems in school more frequently than other children in the same age group. Secondly, such children are not referred to authorities or clinics for counselling or treatment to a greater extent than might be expected for a corresponding group of Danish-born children.

Adoption studies in progress

The Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, wanting to ensure that safeguards exist to protect a foreign child considered for adoption in the United States and that services are available to adoptive families in that complicated undertaking, awarded a contract to the American Public Welfare Association to "develop guidelines for intercountry adoptions". The guidelines will serve to:

11/ See a condensed version of the study, entitled "Born in a foreign country: adopted in Denmark", in International Child Welfare Review, No. 36 (March 1978), pp. 41-47.

- (a) "Safeguard against the inappropriate removal of foreign children from their biological parents or their native countries for adoption in the United States;
- (b) "Help to assure that post-placement adoption services are available to these children and their adoptive parents;
- (c) "Provide consistency in intercountry adoption both in this country (USA) and abroad for those children who are to be adopted in the United States".

These interests are very much in keeping with those of social workers in other countries with different socio-cultural traditions, who fear that not enough support and counselling will be available to the adoptive family and the children during the so-called "adjustment years".

Moreover, if legal reciprocity could be realized, it would mark a great advancement in the protection of children along social and legal lines.

Legal considerations in adoption and fostering

Foster placement and parental consent

Foster placement, whether at the initiative of the parents or at governmental direction, usually leaves the rights of the parents over the child unimpaired; but there are exceptions being made to this principle. Under the Children Act of 1975, England enabled local authorities to vest in themselves parental rights and duties, if a child had been in their care for three years. Certain states in the United States have similar provisions for assuming long-term disposition over children left in their care (e.g., in New York the status of children in foster care is subject to review by the court every 18 months. If during that period there is no contact made by parent or relative, an agency can recommend to the court that the child be freed for adoption). These cases would always be subject to appeal in the courts.

When the best interests of the child indicate that foster placement should give way to adoption and the rights of the natural parents over the child be forfeited, legality may conflict with sentiment; for parents, the relinquishing of parental rights is a momentous and irreversible act which they may find extremely difficult to agree to. Indeed, some may find it quite impossible, as an ISS case out of East Africa illustrates. When the ISS correspondent explained to a man that if his child were to be adopted, he himself would lose all claims on the child, he laughed in amazement at what seemed to him the absurdity of the suggestion, and said "How can I give my child away, who is my own blood?"

An English judge has remarked on the dilemma facing authorities who must decide for a child. Although they may suspect that in some years' time the child would be better off in a certain one of the proposed situations, the choice must be made quickly and the most apparently appropriate of the actual alternatives be chosen. Stability and continuity in a child's life are desired; traumatic shifts from one setting to another to be avoided. To this end, paragraph 11 of the Israeli Government's Adoption Law states: "Parental consent for adoption can be dispensed with if there has been neglect or if a parent has not fulfilled

parental tasks and duties, provided that this is in the best interest of the child". The authorities there firmly believe that such a decision must be made as early as possible in a child's life so that repeated separations are prevented.

There is growing disagreement with the view that a parent who is neither culpable nor unreasonable nor incapable should retain rights over his child. Authorities aware of the trend are beginning to study the qualities of parents more closely, so that they are not misused and do not lose a child before they have been given a fair chance to show their ability to care properly for it.

The anonymity of adoption

It is generally accepted that it is desirable for an adopted child to know that he is adopted, preferably at an early age; opinions conflict as to whether he should have the right to information which would enable him to trace his natural parents. To know one's origin, to know who one is, appears to everyone to be a basic right. English law entitles an adoptive child at his majority to learn details of his original birth registration, from which he may be able to trace his natural parents, and provides that counselling should be available to such applicants. The Scottish Adoption Act of 1930 provides that an adopted person after the age of 17 may obtain a birth certificate that includes the names of his parents, their occupation, their address at the time of birth and the name and birthday of the child. The American branch of ISS states that the issue of origin can create great difficulties with the issue of confidentiality and with promises to natural and adopting parents. This is the case in domestic adoptions, and the branch's records indicate that it is emerging in intercountry adoptions as well.

In interracial adoptions there can, of course, be no question as to whether or not to tell the child that he has been adopted. The confrontation awaiting the adoptive parents of a child who has come from a foreign country afflicted by poverty or war might be resolved if the parents discuss their desire to help the child survive and give him a chance for a family life even in a country with different social and cultural traditions.

International adoption

Bearing in mind the wide variations in legal types of adoption, it is important to be aware that the task of ensuring the universal recognition of an adoption status is a difficult one. Chapter II of the Secretary-General's report, "Protection and welfare of children ..." (F/CN.5/504 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2) calls attention to two existing international instruments, namely, the Convention on Jurisprudence, Applicable Law and Recognition of Decrees relating to Adoptions (the "Hague Convention") and the European Convention on the Adoption of Children.

In 1975 a study entitled International Adoptions and the Conflict of Laws was published in Sweden. ^{12/} It is a helpful resource for those concerned with this legal issue and emphasizes that "there is growing interest in the contemporary international community in providing for uniform laws relating to the creation and effects of adoption, and, through standardization, in facilitating and ultimately ensuring the international recognition of adoptions effected and the laws of a particular State. The task of ensuring the universal recognition of an

^{12/} Ingrid Doimi di Delupis (Stockholm, Almquist and Wiksell, 1975).

adoption status is formidable, bearing in mind the wide variations and types of adoption used in various national legislation and also the fact that in many States adoption is unknown, as in most Muslim countries, or is unknown except for religious purposes, as in India".

At the regional level there are also several agreements. For Latin America there is the Bustamante Code which provides that the conditions for adoption be governed by the personal law of each party. The Nordic Convention (of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway) provides that any application for adoption must be made in the country of domicile or permanent residence of the adopter. There are other bilateral agreements concerning adoption between Eastern European States, such as those existing between Poland and Czechoslovakia; Bulgaria and Hungary; the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia; the Soviet Union and Bulgaria; the Soviet Union and Romania; the Soviet Union and Poland.

Enforcement of the Hague Convention

One of the most important aspects of international adoption is still the recognition of foreign adoption orders. Though the Hague Convention of 1965 only entered into force at the end of October 1978, it has already had an effect, in that some countries have introduced national legislation implementing its provisions, though they may not have always made the necessary alterations in their own laws. In the Secretary-General's report, Governments were asked whether they felt there was a need for international legislation on adoption. To this central and vital question the majority of Governments did not reply at all or replied with "no comment". Of the 18 Governments that expressed an opinion, seven stated that reciprocity of law appeared absolutely necessary in order to protect a child being adopted by foreigners.

A final word

The general impression gained from a study of the material reviewed in the present paper is that the innovations mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General have been finding wider acceptance among nations, as they strive to compensate those of their children who have been denied the love, warmth and security of their natural families.

Two concepts emerge as essential, to be kept in the forefront of our considerations:

(a) The need for substitute families should be diminished as far as is possible by stressing preventive rehabilitation and the maintaining of ties between natural parents and their children:

(b) For those children considered for adoption, every effort should be made to ensure a prompt and appropriate placement.

A child's life is literally measured in hours and days, and delays in making decisions will then take toll of his future happiness.

IV. PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE FORMULATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR ADOPTION AND FOSTER PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

Alfred Kadushin*

As is often noted, adoption is a social process as well as a legal process. Imbedded in a social context, the principles which suggest the most desirable procedures in adoption are subject to change along with changes in the social situation. The central thesis of the present paper is that the basic axioms which have guided adoption practice since the Second World War may need re-examination at this time as a consequence of changes in the social situation. This need for a re-examination of basic principles, either for critical reaffirmation or revision, may suggest the desirability of considering an international conference on adoption.

Adoption services are more frequently used by more people in the Western industrialized countries than in other regions. It may be argued, then, that adoption is a specialized concern of a limited component of the United Nations membership. In support of a contention to the contrary - that it is of possible concern to the entire United Nations membership - two considerations might be cited. One is that as far as adoption is concerned, the entire world is a single system. The situation regarding the availability of children for adoption and the demand for adoptees in the Western industrialized region affects all other countries in changing pressures regarding intercountry adoptions. Secondly, the changing social situation which may require a re-examination of basic adoption principles - while it may be of only academic interest to non-Western, industrializing countries today - is likely to be of actual concern to them tomorrow, so that international action in this field may be of ultimate benefit to such countries as well. The tendency is for social problems to be more alike than different in different countries despite real differences in cultural backgrounds, values and historical experience. This is not a consequence of cultural imperialism but rather the consequence of situational imperatives which generate similar problems and evoke experimentation with similar solutions. Industrialization and urbanization, whenever manifested, result in the attenuation of primary, informal, group-support systems - the extended family; the tribe; the small, intimate local community. The problems once handled effectively and successfully by those systems eventually require the development of more formal services provided by agencies organized by the larger community for such purposes. Explicitly organized, agency-directed adoption services may not until now have been of interest to, or needed by, many of the countries outside the West. ^{1/} But with growing urbanization and industrialization, such services may become of greater interest to such countries in the future. The 1974 report of the Secretary-General in response to a questionnaire distributed to all United Nations

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^{1/} See Mary K. Benet, The Politics of Adoption (New York, Free Press, 1970); Vern Carroll, Adoption in Eastern Oceania (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1970); Thomas Melone, "Adoption and crises in the third world: thoughts on the future", International Child Welfare Review, No. 28 (March 1976), pp. 75-85.

Member States regarding substitute care for children suggests that this is the direction in which events are moving. 2/ Consequently, a critical review of the principles of adoption might ultimately serve the needs of the entire United Nations membership.

The basic principles relating to adoption which shape the laws regulating adoption and the practices of social agencies offering the service in Western Europe and North America have been affirmed in a number of documents representing different constituencies. These include the report of the Leysin European Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption, 3/ European Convention on the Adoption of Children, 4/ the resolutions of the World Conference on Adoption and Foster Placement, 5/ and the publications of the Child Welfare League of America. 6/

These and other relevant documents affirm a consensus on the following guidelines:

1. The first, best, place for the child is with his own family in his own community in his own country. Adoption is not appropriate unless all efforts have been made to salvage his family for the child. Adoption is always a substitute for the original biological home and should not be employed unless it is clear that the child's own family is not likely to be able to provide the care the child needs and to which he is rightfully entitled.

If substitute care is needed, the first efforts to find such a home should be made in the child's own racial, national, ethnic, religious community. Only if it is clear that such resources are not available should efforts be made to find an adoptive home outside of the child's community.

2. The primary purpose of adoption is to provide a permanent family for the child who cannot be cared for by his own biological parents. Therefore, the child's welfare, his needs and interests, are the basic determinants of good adoption practice.
3. Adoption is the most desirable form of permanent substitute care where it is the necessary alternative to the child's own family. It is a more securely permanent arrangement than the foster family home. It

2/ "Protection and welfare of children. Convening of a United Nations Conference for an international convention of adoption law: report of the Secretary-General" (E/CN.5/504 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2).

3/ Report of the European Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption (Leysin, Switzerland, 22-31 May 1960), (UN/TAO/SEM/1960/Rep.2).

4/ Council of Europe, European Treaty Series, No. 58.

5/ Comité International d'entente des Associations de Foyers Adoptifs, World Conference on Adoption and Foster Placement. Acta (Milan, 1971), pp. 623-629.

6/ Child Welfare League of America, Standards for Adoption Services, Revised ed. (New York, 1973).

is more likely to provide the necessary long-term stability and continuity of affectionate, intimate care by the same parent than either the foster family home or an institution.

4. Adoption should be made available to every child who needs it and can use the service without regard to age, religion, race or presence of siblings, or mental, emotion and physical handicaps which do not preclude the child's living in a family and the general community. In order to make use of the service, the child needs to be legally freed for adoption.

Acceptance of the concept that adoption should be provided for every child who can make use of the service rules out as a guideline the attempt to match adopters and adoptee so as to imitate nature as closely as possible. If a trans-racial, trans-ethnic adoption is the only kind that provides a home for an older child, matching is not possible.

5. The welfare of the child requires that a decision regarding the need for permanent substitute care be made as early as possible, implemented with a minimum of delay and uncertainty; finality in adoption should be achieved as soon as possible, with due regard, however, for other, countervailing considerations.
6. All parties to the adoption - the biological mother and father, the adoptive parents, the child at an appropriate age - should be offered the opportunity of a reasoned consideration of alternatives to adoption, and help in implementing those alternatives of choice. If adoption is the considered option, help should be provided in clarifying the implications of the decision, in considering anticipated problems and in preparation for implementing the decision.
7. In providing such opportunities for reflective and considered decision-making, there should be for the biological parent a period of time between the decision to surrender the child and actual legal surrender, between the placement of the child for adoption and the actual legal consummation of adoption.
8. Adoption invariably severs the relationship between biological parent and adoptive child, and adoptive parents and child assume all of the reciprocal rights and obligations of the biological parent/child relationship. In support of this, confidentiality and anonymity regarding the identity of the biological parents and the adoptive parents should be safeguarded.
9. Adoption is a long-time process and the community is responsible for offering assistance throughout. Consequently, post-placement service is as necessary and desirable as pre-placement service.
10. The community has an obligation in adoption to discharge its responsibility to the child. This responsibility is mandated to the social agency, which is sanctioned to act in behalf of the community. The task of the agency in implementing this mandate is to identify

children needing adoption and help free them for adoption, recruit parents for children needing adoption, carefully assess, on the basis of defensible criteria, the suitability of adoption applicants, select a particular home for a particular child and assist the adoptive family in making a success of the placement. Further, the community has an obligation to safeguard the child from the risks attendant on adoption engaged in for financial gain.

In implementing these obligations, some attention needs to be given to developing a trained professional cadre of social workers with specialized knowledge about and skill in adoption practice.

Some significant changes in the adoption situation have prompted questions about certain aspects of these basic guidelines. The principal change is the decrease since 1970/71 in the number of Caucasian, non-handicapped infants available for adoption. This change is most pronounced in the United States and England but is manifested in other countries as well. It has been reported by Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. 7/

The change has been attributed to a variety of factors -- the increased availability of legal abortion to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, more adequate services to unmarried mothers, increasing the feasibility of their keeping and caring for the child, and greater acceptance by both the unmarried mother and the general public of single-parent status.

Whatever the reasons, the available adoption statistics clearly indicate such a trend. As a consequence of the decreased supply of such children in the face of continued high demand, there has been growing pressure to re-examine the general substitute-care configuration to see if more children might not be made available for adoption.

If a smaller percentage of out-of-wedlock children -- the principal source of adoptable children -- are being surrendered for adoption, can the number be increased by an increase in involuntary legal terminations of parental rights for cause? This calls into question more frequently than before the guideline stipulating that the child's biological parents are the best parents for him. Now, more often than before, biological parents have to satisfy specific statutory requirements to validate their continued claim to their children. Courts or community review boards are charged with periodically reviewing the situation of all children in substitute care to determine whether parents have maintained regular contact, are making effective use of agency service so as to make likely the child's return home to a safe situation, and are likely to be ultimately capable of providing adequate care for the child. Failure to meet these stipulations provides grounds for the termination of parental rights. The agency is charged with assessing the situation of every child in foster or institutional care to determine whether adoption might not be the best plan and then taking the necessary legal action.

7/ See "Protection and welfare of children ...", p.18; and Audrey Moser, "International action on adoption", International Child Welfare Review, No. 28 (March 1976), pp. 75-85.

Further justification for questioning the assumption that the child's own parents are the parents of choice derives from a change in what is required of the substitute-care agency in meeting the child's needs.

"It is no longer considered sufficient that a child be afforded a placement situation in which his basic needs are being cared for in terms of shelter, food and clothing and a benign environment in which positive emotional growth can be enhanced. A newly emphasized criterion is being used to assess the adequacy of an agency's performance: Is a child being assured permanency in his living arrangement and continuity of relationship? It is not enough that he might be placed in a foster family home that offers him family-like care. If he cannot regard the people he is living with as his family, on a permanent basis, his situation is increasingly regarded as reflecting less than an adequate resolution of his life situation." 8/

Meeting the child's need for and right to permanence raises further questions about the ultimate desirability to many of the homes from which children in substitute care come. Psychological parenthood, established as a consequence of caring for the child physically and emotionally over a period of time, competes with biological parenthood and is being accorded equal status. 9/

Empirical research raises the same question. Tizard followed a group of children who had been institutionalized early in life and then either returned to their own homes or placed for adoption. In a follow-up of their subsequent adjustment, Tizard found that the adopted children developed more adequately and had fewer problems than the children who were returned to their own parents. 10/ An earlier study, which followed children born out of wedlock in 1958 and who had been subsequently reared by their own mothers or by adoptive parents, came to a similar conclusion. 11/

In an increasingly critical assessment of the guideline that the child's biological parents are the parents of choice, lawyers and social workers concerned with substitute care have moved towards a more precise definition and active termination of parental rights in freeing children for adoption. Are communities ready to encourage people to acknowledge freely that their parenthood was a mistake and their children an unwanted burden, and make voluntary divorce between parents and children as freely sanctioned and easily implemented as divorce between marital partners?

If in the future the children coming into adoption are more frequently than ever before likely to come from voluntary and involuntary termination of the rights of married parents, rather than from out-of-wedlock birth, urgent questions now demanding answers more insistently than before will be raised relating to the

8/ David Fanshel, "The impact of research on social policy: foster care of children as a case example" (Honolulu, Honolulu School of Social Work, May 1976), mimeo, p. 2.

9/ See Joseph Goldstein and others, Beyond the Best Interests of the Child (New York, Free Press, 1977).

10/ See Barbara Tizard, Adoption: A Second Chance (New York, Free Press, 1977).

11/ Eileen Crellin and others, Born Illegitimate: Social and Educational Implications (London, National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, 1971).

criteria which determine termination: What conditions in the biological home are likely to dictate consideration of justifiable termination? Under what circumstances is an adoptive home better than the child's own home?

Concern with achieving permanence without undue delay is beginning to conflict with the guideline that social agencies should be given primary responsibility for the adoption process. In granting this mandate to the social agencies, the community also assigned responsibility for accountability of such activities to internal mechanisms of agency control - to the supervisors of adoption workers, to agency administrative review teams etc. Currently there is a greater tendency to establish out-of-agency control systems to monitor the rapidity with which agency planning for, and implementation of, permanence is being accomplished. In some jurisdictions, the requirement is that the agency report at periodic intervals to the court on the status of children in its care. In other instances, community review boards have been established to monitor agency performance. Whatever the nature of the procedure established to monitor agency performance by external agency institutions, it presents problems for the adoption agencies, which are the principal apparatuses established to regularize and organize the adoption process. Those problems, which were not encountered a decade ago, ultimately affect all parties to the adoption event. Consequently, they might profitably be the subject of discussion by a meeting at this time of groups concerned with adoption.

At the same time, the guideline regarding the social agency as the institution mandated to handle adoptions is being eroded as a consequence of another recent development: the growing imbalance between the demand for healthy, white infants and the limited availability of such children, which as resulted in a resurgence of black market activities, in the sale of infants intra- and internationally. This raises, for more insistent current re-examination, a question regarding the extent of the agencies' mandate. While social agencies have been perceived as having primary responsibility for adoption, they have not, except in a few jurisdictions, been granted exclusive responsibility for such activity. Independent adoptions, conducted outside agency auspices, have had parallel sanction and acceptance. A meeting of experts concerned with adoption might profitably discuss, in the light of recent developments regarding independent adoptions, the question of an exclusive agency adoptions mandate.

One of the most often approved guidelines is the one which suggests that adoption is primarily for the purpose of providing for the welfare of the child. While the annotations of the guideline suggest a need for considering the desires of all parties in the relationship, the primary concern for the child's welfare often translates into exclusive concern. The needs and objective preferences of adoptive applicants become not just secondary but often neglected. The emergence of the independent market suggests perhaps some redistribution of emphasis. The research confirms the fact that the adoptive applicant - and the biological mother - resort to independent services, often after having explored agency resources, because the independent facilitator gives greater priority to their needs. Indifference to or very limited concern for the needs of the adoptive applicant, in exclusive concern for the child's needs, may be ultimately counter-productive for children needing adoption. Consequently, the questions now needing more explicit examination relate to a clear explication of the needs of biological parents and adoptive parents in the adoptive situation. How can the agency move to meet those needs so that it does not detract from the welfare of the child?

Some of the needs of biological and adoptive parents can easily be reconciled with the needs of adoptive children within the currently accepted guidelines by

means of changes in agency policy. For instance, children need to be placed as early in life as possible, and adoptive parents want to obtain children as young as possible. Currently, independent adoptions are made on the average earlier than agency placements in the United States. Children need to experience as few changes in parenting as possible, and biological parents hesitate to use an agency because it might involve a temporary stay in foster care for the child before adoptive placement. 12/ Here biological parent preference and child needs are congruent.

But how can the mother's need for time to consider carefully whether or not to surrender her child after birth be reconciled with the child's need for earliest possible placement with minimum discontinuity in parenting? How can the agency meet the needs of the child for earliest possible placement and respect the entitlement of the putative father to have an input in the decision to place or not to place the child for adoption? Here reconciliation of conflicting preferences and needs are more difficult.

Other responses to the changed supply/demand situation in adoption have called for a more critical look at some of the other guidelines and the policies and practice procedures which derive from them. As a consequence of the limited numbers of young, healthy, white infants available, agencies have been actively involved in the placement of previously hard-to-place children. More older children, handicapped and/or of racial minorities, are being placed. To meet the demands of adoptive applicants, agencies in North America and Europe have been making trans-racial and trans-ethnic placement. International placements have increased, as have intranational placements of children of various minority groups.

Within the past decade, several research studies have been concerned with the empirical questions regarding the psychosocial development of children adopted trans-racially and/or trans-ethnically. 13/ In the largest percentage of

12/ See William Meezan and others, Adoptions Without Agencies: A Study of Independent Adoptions (New York, Child Welfare League of America, 1978).

13/ See L. DiVirgilia, Adjustment of Foreign Children in their Adoptive Homes, (New York, Child Welfare League of America, 1956); International Social Service, Adoption of Oriental Children by American White Families (New York, Child Welfare League of America, 1960); Constance Rabnurn and others, "Labor adjustment of children following racial separation from family and culture", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, No. 28 (1964), pp. 408-415; Lois Raynor, Adoption of Non-White Children: the Experience of the British Adoption Project, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1970); David C. Anderson, Children of Special Value: Interracial Adoption in America (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1971); David Fanshel, Far from the Reservation (Metuchen, New Jersey, Scarecrow Press, 1972); H. T. Kim and Elaine Riold, "After a long journey", The Unbroken Circle (Minneapolis, Organization of United Response, 1975), pp. 307-427; Sandra Scarr-Salpabeck and Richard Weinberg, "When black children grow up in white homes", Psychology Today, No. 9 (December 1975), pp. 80-82; Lucille Grow and Deborah Shapiro, Black Children - White Parents: A Study of Transracial Adoption (New York, Child Welfare League of America, 1975); Joyce Ladner, Mixed-Race Families: Adoption Across Racial Boundaries (New York, Doubleday, 1977); Dong S. Kim, "How they fared in American homes: a follow-up study of Korean children in the U. S.", Children Today, (March-April 1977); Barbara Jackson, Family Experiences in Interracial Adoption (London, Association of British Adoption and Fostering Agencies, 1977).

instances, the children researched were pre-teen-agers. The findings regarding the children's development during this early part of their lives is impressively consensual: the children are progressing well and the rate of successful adoptions is comparable to that involving intra-racial, intra-ethnic placements. A study concerned with the question of racial identification of children adopted trans-racially comes to a similar optimistic conclusion about the effect of such adoption, namely, that identification is not adversely affected by such adoption. 14/

All the studies cited, however, are concerned with young or latency-aged children; the problems in adolescence and young adulthood occasioned by trans-racial or trans-ethnic adoptions have yet to be explored.

Beyond the empirical questions concerning the outcome of such adoptions lie the more value-laden questions regarding the offence to ethnic and racial pride and solidarity associated with them, questions of the level of affective acceptance of the person adopted outside his group by members of another group.

The problem of an equitable decision regarding the care to be provided for children who might be offered trans-racial or trans-ethnic adoption is further complicated by attitudes towards them in their own community and the resources available there. More often than not, there is no family in their own community willing to adopt them and able to care adequately for them. Trans-racial or trans-ethnic adoption is offered as a second-best alternative in preference to the third-best choice of foster family or institutional care. 15/

The guidelines suggest that, whenever possible, a reasonably intensive effort should be made towards in-group placement before out-group placement is attempted. Noting that the flow of children is always in one direction, from the less affluent to the more affluent countries internationally, from lower to middle and upper class within any one country, and from minority groups (blacks, American Indians, Chicano children in the United States) to majority group, the organizations providing children for adoption have been prompted to protest. The question is raised as to whether sufficient effort is in fact being made to provide adequate opportunities for in-group placement. A conflict appears to exist between the needs of children for early placement and permanent care and the needs of minority groups to hold on to and provide adequate care for their own children, for the sake of self-preservation and self-esteem.

The latter needs on the part of religious groups was recognized early in the history of adoption and is codified in article 9-2 of the European Convention on the Adoption of Children. The same concern about out-group flow of children is regulated more frequently now by various countries such as the Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka which have restricted exportation of their children and by minority

14/ Riba J. Simon and Howard Alstein, Transracial Adoption (New York, John Wiley, 1977).

15/ See Barbara Joe, "In defense of intercountry adoption", Social Service Review (March 1978), pp. 1-20.

groups in the United States which have actively discouraged trans-racial adoption. Between 1971 and 1973 there was a 58 per cent decline in the trans-racial adoption of children in the United States. 16/

Concern for making the definition of an adoptable child as broad as possible, in accordance with the guideline that adoption is for any child who can benefit by it, has prompted agencies to increase their pool of adoptive couples by modifying eligibility standards. This is particularly true of eligibility requirements that are not functionally related to the task of parenting.

The 1974 report of the Secretary-General on the protection and welfare of children 17/ notes the trend towards greater concern on the part of many of the reporting countries with a liberalization of the eligibility requirements of adoptive applicants regarding age limits and whether they already have children in the home, and provision for fuller integration of the adopted child into the adopting family.

Such flexibility extends in some countries to the acceptance of single-parent adoptive applicants. Article 6-1 of the European Convention indicates that this is beyond the limits of acceptable flexibility. The child is entitled, it is suggested, to a heterosexual parent nuclear family. Limited research on the single-parent adoptive experience points to the fact that a large percentage of such children are performing adequately and are well cared-for. 18/

Some countries are moving towards continuing support of the child through adoption subsidies. This increases the pool of applicants who are interested in adoption but who do not have the resources to support an adopted child, and it increases the probability of finding a permanent home for some children.

The guideline stating that each child should be provided with a permanent home without undue delay conflicts in some instances with the guideline stipulating that, with adoption, adopter and adoptee assume the reciprocal rights and obligations of biological parents and child. The objective of subsidized adoptions is to provide a permanent home to certain children who would otherwise be deprived. Yet in achieving this, the subsequent relationship between adopter and adoptee involves state support, making the adoptive families different from biological families. The State is a party to the relationship, and periodic state intrusion is necessary to determine whether the family is eligible for continuing subsidy. Unlike the normative biological parent/child relationship, the State assumes some of the obligations of the parent. As a consequence, adoptive parents enjoy a greater measure of financial support as well as service support from the community than is available to biological parents, and are thus placed in a more desirable competitive position vis-à-vis the biological family.

16/ National Adoptalk (January-February 1975), p.2.

17/ E/CN.5/504 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2.

18/ See Sharon A. Dougherty, "Single adoptive mothers and their children", Social Work (July 1978), pp. 311-314; William Feidelman and Arnold Silverman, "Single parent adoptions", Social Casework (July 1977), pp. 418-424; Joan Shireman and Penny R. Johnson, "Single persons as adoptive parents", Social Service Review, No. 50 (March 1976), pp. 103-116.

The fact that more of the children currently placed for adoption present special problems which require a mutual adjustment on the part of adopters and adoptees - problems of age, of handicaps, of differences in race or ethnicity - argues for greater efforts being devoted to offering post-placement services to the family. This accentuates the difference between the adoptive family unit and the biological family unit. There is a greater obligation to offer such services to adoptive families. The special facilities, embodied in the adoptive agency post-placement service programme, are more extensive than the services available to the general run of biological families encountering problems. Here, as in the case of adoption subsidies, the adoptive family is treated differently from the biological family.

The preferential offer of special services violates the guideline that once adoption has been legally consummated, the adoptive family takes its place in the community indistinguishable from other families. The special offer of service, however, is desirable and justified in reducing the risk of adoptive placement failure, or "disruption", as it has been more euphemistically termed. As against a general failure rate of 2-3 per cent (defined as return of the child to the agency before adoption is legally completed), the failure rate of the placement of children with special needs - the hard-to-place children - runs about 10 per cent. 19/

The effort to place the child with parents of his own race and/or ethnic group can conflict with the guideline to offer the child continuity and permanence with psychologically stable parents. Currently one frequent tug-of-love situation involves a minority or multiracial child who has been living in a white foster home while efforts are made to find an adoptive home. At the end of one or two years, when an in-racial adoptive home has been found, the agency, over the opposition of the foster parents - who often are willing to adopt - faces the decision of whether to remove the child. The decision gives priority to the in-racial placement guideline as opposed to the continuity guideline. This is an example of a number of similar kinds of conflicting decisions which agencies are having to make more frequently. Such dilemmas might productively be topics for discussion among professionals who have experienced analogous kinds of problems in different national contexts.

The guidelines, while eschewing "secrecy", recommend protection of anonymity and confidentiality. The biological parents and the adoptive parents are strangers to each other; the identity of the biological parents is not shared with the child. Recently, however, there has been an intensified and widespread demand on the part of adopted children and adults that they have access to records of their background, including the identity of the biological parents. Organizations of adoptees have been pressing for legal remedies in furtherance of what has been called "the search", and agencies have made efforts to offer a service in relation to search problems. 20/ There is clear conflict here between the adoptee's needs in furtherance of clarification of identity, the rights of the biological parents to protection from intrusion, and the needs of the adoptive parents to maintain their self-image as the true parents of the adopted child without

19/ See Alfred Kadushin and Frederick Seidl, "Adoption failure: a social work post-mortem", Social Work (July 1971), pp. 32-37; Christopher Unger and others, Madness and Unpredictability (Chelsea, Michigan, Spaulding for Children, 1977).

20/ Mary A. Jones, The Sealed Record Controversy: Report of Agency Policy Practice Opinions (New York, Child Welfare League of America, 1976).

possible risk of the biological parents' interference. The controversy has been the subject of some beginning research and comments. 21/

However, many aspects of the question remain to be discussed, and the limited experience with the problem can be profitably shared in a conference which included this question on the agenda.

There is some conflict between the guideline on anonymity, as it applies to the child, and the guideline stipulating that every child who might benefit from adoption should be provided adoption. The routine procedures for the recruitment of adoptive homes for non-handicapped infants are not applicable for the recruitment of parents for older, handicapped children from minority groups. The most effective procedure in this instance appears to be public presentation of such children and their need for a home in newspapers, on radio, and on television. This involves pictures of the children and details which tend to identify them. It involves a clear violation of confidentiality and anonymity in the achievement of a higher good - a home for the child. It may also involve a reactivation of the trauma regarding the decision to surrender the child on the part of the biological parent who might see the child presented on television or see the child's picture in the paper. The conflict between the guideline on anonymity and the guideline redefining, more broadly, the concept of "adoptable child" might be the subject for review.

The guideline relating to providing the earliest possible permanence for the child tends to conflict with the guideline stating that there be some period of time between placement and legal finalization of the adoption. During this "trial", or "supervisory", period, the adoptive parents and the child - if old enough to be aware of the situation - cannot be truly secure in regarding the arrangement as permanent. They have to live with some anxiety that a disruption might take place. As a consequence, there has been advocacy of some official transfer of custody at the time of placement, consideration of an interlocutory decree at placement or contractual assurance on the part of the placing agency that, aside from exceptionally unanticipated circumstances, there is every clear intention of regarding the arrangement as permanent. With the great number of older children being placed who, because of prior living experience, are very sensitive to any risk of impermanence, this problem is receiving greater discussion. The conflict between the desirability of earliest possible permanence and the trial period guideline might be a conference agenda item.

During the past decade there has been a very decided development of self-help organizations by foster parents, adoptive parents and adoptees. They publish newsletters, organize meetings, participate in conferences, educate, support, and counsel people who are newly involved in adoption or foster care and lobby in behalf of legislative or agency policy changes. Social agencies concerned with substitute care have, of necessity, had to relate to these organizations and their activities in one way or another. More often than not, however, this has been done in an unsystematic way, on an ad hoc basis. It might be helpful, to both the social agencies and their counterpart self-help organizations, if, as part of the agenda of an international meeting, systematic consideration were given to the question of the mutual relationship between these two groups.

21/ Arthur Sorosky and others, The Adoption Triangle (New York, Anchor Press, 1978); John Triseliotis, In Search of Origins (London, Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1973).

Earlier in the history of substitute care, foster family care and adoptions were clearly separate and distinguishable services. There were identifiable differences between the nature of the children offered the two different services, the nature of the problems which occasioned the need for their care, the kinds of parents who were recruited for the two different services, the criteria employed in their selection, and their subsequent relationship to the agency. Currently, however, there is more frequent interpenetration of the two services so that they are less clearly distinguishable. The foster family child today is the adoptive child tomorrow; the foster family often decides to adopt. There is less of a tendency to recruit foster families in terms of criteria that are different from those employed in adoptive family recruitment. The adoptive family receiving a subsidy is paid in the same way as the foster family for the care of the child. Long-term foster care is indistinguishable from adoption and might be regarded as a social adoption. The changing relationship between foster family care and adoption poses special problems which, once again, may be a significant item for inclusion on the agenda of a meeting concerned with adoption.

The fact that foster family care and adoptive care services overlap to a greater extent now than ever before raises many questions regarding the organization and administration of these respective services. Should there be greater organizational integration of the two? Should there be a separate foster family care staff and adoption staff? Should one worker offer service to the child in the foster home and have responsibility for an adoptive parent caseload so as to increase the possibilities available to the child in moving towards adoption? Or is it more desirable to move in the direction of encouraging the development of single-service specialized agencies offering service to special groups of hard-to-place children, service available to general substitute care agencies on the basis of purchase-of-service agreements? These and other relevant organizational and administrative questions might be the subject of discussion.

Almost every review of adoption - intranational as well as international - points to the fact that understanding of and response to the needs of the different parties in the relationship suffers from a lack of basic data. None of the international organizations concerned with social statistics collects data in accordance with standardized uniform definitions of adoptions. The United States, in which more adoptions are completed each year than in any other country, last published national statistics on adoptions in 1972. There are no current national statistics on the number of children placed for adoption, the age of children at placement and the age of adopters at placement, the primary factors related to the surrender of the child for adoption, the sex, race or ethnic identity of the child, the number of subsidized adoptions and single-parent adoptions, handicapping conditions, if any, of the child at placement, the number of placements made with relatives and non-relatives, through agency auspices and through independent auspices, the number of children freed for adoption but not placed, the number of adoptive applicants processed by agencies, the period of time between application and placement, the period of time between placement and final adoption, the size of the populations which request service, the points in the process presenting problems for concern. Yet information of this kind is basic to determining trends in adoption. A conference on adoption might make a significant contribution by identifying basic minimum data which could be obtained, intra- and internationally, by then formulating, with due regard for national differences in adoption, definitions of the terms relating to those items so as to permit collection of comparable data.

Significant factors determining the nature of adoption services are undergoing change. Some discussion of those factors in anticipating and formulating the most desirable response on the part of adoption agencies might also be a relevant agenda item since policy changes devised in reactive response to crises may be less thoughtful.

It is likely that the next two decades will see a reduction in the demand for adoptive children. Low birth rates after 1955-1960 in North America and Europe will make for a smaller cohort group of adopters in the near future. The 25-35 age group, which supplies the largest number of adoptive applicants, is likely to be smaller than it has been over the past 10 years.

There is a growing acceptance of artificial insemination as a response to infertility as an alternative to adoption. There have been advances in procedures for remedying various conditions making for infertility, thereby permitting more people to become parents biologically rather than through adoption. The recent successful implantation in Britain of an ovum fertilized in the laboratory promises a "cure" for a large number of women who might otherwise have resorted to adoption.

There has been increasing acceptance of childlessness as an optional lifestyle. There is growing public sanction and support for adults who voluntarily elect not to become parents. The decision not to become a parent no longer requires an apology nor does it occasion as much discomfort as it previously did. Concern regarding population growth and the ideology of women's liberation have contributed towards the growing acceptance of childlessness. As a consequence, more infertile couples may choose to adjust to their situation by accepting their childlessness rather than attempting to change their situation through adoption.

On the supply side, there may be a continued long-term reduction in the number of children available for adoption. Most industrialized countries face a growing number of single-parent families headed by a woman. The needs of such families are receiving greater consideration now than ever before, as the detailed report to the British Parliament in 1974 of the Committee on One Parent Families, chaired by M. Finer, exemplifies. Recommendations for legislative changes providing more varied and more adequate support to such families are being actively considered in many countries. The family with a single mother and an out-of-wedlock child is only one type of single-parent family headed by a female. However, any policy changes to the advantage of such families will generally be to the advantage of the never-married mother as well.

Special measures such as housing for single-parent families, increases in day-care facilities and special maintenance allowances for single-parent families will reduce the difficulties in keeping and caring for the children of such families. Consequently, single mothers are likely to be in a better position in the future to raise their own children rather than surrender them for adoption. Policy changes are likely to move in the direction of reducing disincentives to surrender the child for adoption.

The general climate of social attitudes has changed in ways which make it currently easier for the unmarried mother to keep and raise her child. There is less stigma and social rejection associated with unmarried-mother status. Surrender of the out-of-wedlock child, like abortion, is a procedure which permits

the mother to divest herself of the status of unmarried mother. If the label results in rejection, embarrassment, guilt, anxiety, a self-image of moral inferiority and deviance, reinforced by the reaction of others, incentives towards surrender are high. However, an increasingly more neutral, less punitive attitude towards the unmarried mother attenuates the incentives towards surrender.

Demographic changes during the next decade also will result in a probable reduction in the number of children available for adoption. The low birth rates of the 1965-1975 decade project a smaller group of adolescents and young adults in the near future. This is the age group for which the rate of illegitimacy is highest and for whom the difficulties in keeping and raising a child are greatest. The pressure of circumstances predisposing to surrender are greatest for this group, as is the pressure from significant others, such as parents, on whom the adolescent is likely to be dependent. Contraction of the size of this cohort group makes for a reduction in children available for adoption.

The lowering of the age at which a child is no longer regarded as a minor legally dependent on parents may likewise result in a reduction in the number of children available for adoption. The trend is towards a reduction in the age of emancipation from 21 to 18 years. A larger number of adolescents with unwanted pregnancies will be in a position to make independent decisions regarding abortion and keeping their children without involving the consent of parents. The greater weight of such parental pressure has been in the direction of surrender of the out-of-wedlock child. Earlier emancipation will tend to reduce the potency of pressure in this direction.

It is not likely that, with reductions in the number of white, non-handicapped infants available, a continuing high number of non-relatives adoptions will be made. There is currently a sizable number of older, handicapped minority-group children available for adoption. The number of such children available is likely to increase as foster care agencies review their caseloads and move actively towards termination of parental rights of those parents who have manifested little, if any, consistent continuing interest in their child. But, if past experience in a context of shortage of white, non-handicapped infants is suggestive, only a small percentage of potential adopters are likely to move to adopt such children. A larger percentage of potential adopters, moving down their hierarchy of preferences, soon reach a point where the decision not to adopt at all is more acceptable than the decision to adopt the kind of child who is available.

All of these changes move in the same direction. Reductions in both supply of, and demand for, adoptable children suggests a levelling off or reduction in the number of children available for adoption each year. Adoption services may be less significant in the future as compared with the immediate past.

What steps might be taken to respond to these trends is a matter of mutual interest and concern to the adoption services intra- and internationally.

Summary

The present paper has identified certain trends and problems in adoption and foster care services which might serve as agenda items for an international meeting concerned with the current state and future direction of such services.

Consensually accepted guidelines were explicated. This was followed by a review of the changing situation which creates problems in adhering to the guidelines and suggests the need for rediscussion of previously agreed-upon guidelines and formulation of new guidelines more consonant with the current situation.

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