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P O L I C Y

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

Report of the Executive Director on the results of the recommendations of the Policy and Co-ordination Committee of the WHO Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (WHO/HRP) together with a recommendation for the level of UNFPA funding for WHO/HRP for the period 1986-1989

Summary

By decision 84/21, II, paragraph 4, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to submit to the Council at its thirty-second session a brief report on the results of the recommendations of the Policy and Co-ordination Committee of the World Health Organization Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, together with a recommendation for the level of UNFPA funding for the Programme for the period 1986-1989. This report of the Executive Director is being submitted in response to the Council's request.

## INTRODUCTION

1. This document is being submitted in response to Governing Council decision 84/21 II, paragraph 4, which requested the Executive Director to submit to the Council at its thirty-second session a brief report on the results of the recommendations of the Policy and Co-ordination Committee of the World Health Organization Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (WHO/HRP), together with a recommendation for the level of UNFPA funding for WHO/HRP for the period 1986-1989.

2. In Governing Council decision 84/21 II, paragraph 1, the Council approved the general principles that should guide UNFPA in its support of contraceptive research and development as outlined in section I of document DP/1984/36, and in paragraph 2 of the same decision decided that the level of UNFPA's contribution to WHO/HRP should be fixed at \$2 million for 1985. In paragraph 3, the Council approved the strategy for UNFPA's funding for contraceptive research as outlined in paragraph 19 of document DP/1984/36.

### I. REPORT

3. Following the Council's decision, UNFPA has taken an active role in the deliberations of organizations receiving UNFPA support for contraceptive research. UNFPA is represented on the seven-member Preparatory Intersessional Committee (PIC) which was directed to prepare a report to the Policy and Co-ordination Committee (PCAC), established in 1983 by the Director-General of WHO as an advisory body of WHO/HRP.

4. At its first meeting, held from 26 to 28 November 1984, PCAC had before it the thirteenth annual report of WHO/HRP as well as the reports concerning the Programme's management prepared by PIC and the WHO/HRP secretariat. PCAC reviewed the Programme's scientific and technical progress and its proposed budget for 1985. It approved the increased role that the Programme was playing in the promotion of co-ordination with other agencies which support and conduct research in human reproduction and indicated that in this way WHO/HRP would become the international focus in the development of fertility-regulating methods. PCAC welcomed the Programme's move to invite scientists from other agencies to participate in Task Force Steering Committee meetings as Collaborating Agency scientists in order to facilitate joint funding, and to agree on a division of labour. It shared the view of the WHO/HRP secretariat that such collaboration would result in the establishment of a truly global network of collaborating research centres.

5. In considering the future role of WHO/HRP, PCAC agreed that, in biomedical research, the Programme should not be involved in long-term high-risk basic research at the expense of the more immediate needs of developing countries, such as long-term safety and efficacy studies, service and psychosocial research, and the strengthening of research capabilities. Rather than expending large amounts of the budget on basic research, the Programme should act as a promoter of basic

research and create mechanisms for early access to its results. It was agreed that the Programme's service and psychosocial research was valuable and the PCAC approved a preliminary plan in this area of research, to be implemented gradually. The plan calls for social science research by (a) the newly created Task Force on Behavioural and Social Determinants of Fertility Regulation; (b) regional "task forces" on health systems research in family planning; and (c) an expansion of the FHE Task Force on Health Systems Research in Maternal and Child Health Care, including Family Planning. The importance of strengthening research capability in developing countries was reiterated by PCAC. The value of combining training with research was stressed as a way of improving results and ensuring that national research priorities are taken fully into account. PCAC noted with approval that WHO/HRP was preparing a major review of its activities in resources for research, particularly institution-strengthening, for consideration by PCAC at its 1985 meeting. After considering the management structure of WHO/HRP, PCAC recommended that the present Advisory Group should be renamed the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) with revised terms of reference, that no permanent intersessional group of PCAC was necessary, and that WHO should develop a fund-raising strategy for WHO/HRP. PCAC made specific suggestions on information to be included in the annual report of STAG to facilitate PCAC's functioning.

6. During the past year, the Director of WHO/HRP has visited almost every donor Government and organization to discuss the WHO/HRP programme and to emphasize the need for increased contributions. At the International Population Conference in Mexico City, the Preparatory Intersessional Committee took the opportunity to hold one of its meetings, and representatives of WHO/HRP, the World Bank, UNFPA, donor Governments and interested non-governmental organizations met informally to exchange ideas on the future directions of research and possible changes in organizational structures that might bring increasing financial support to the entire field of contraceptive research.

7. On 9 January 1985, UNFPA participated in a meeting of private foundations in the United States called by The Rockefeller Foundation to present to the participants a progress report on scientific developments in contraceptive research and to discuss co-ordination among operating research organizations and the outlook for increased funding to the field.

8. On 31 January 1985, a meeting was convened in New York by UNFPA to explore possibilities for a financing consortium to encourage additional support to contraceptive research. It was attended by representatives of WHO/HRP, the World Bank, the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom, the Government of Sweden, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Population Council and the Program for the Introduction and Adaptation of Contraceptive Technology (PIACT). The participants agreed that there was considerable promise of scientific progress towards several new approaches to fertility regulation for which additional funding was needed. Co-ordination of efforts among research programmes had increased greatly in recent months so that cost-effectiveness in research had improved considerably. It was agreed that the scientific community, in both developed and developing countries, had the available talent and facilities for research in this area but that both were currently being underutilized because of

lack of funding. The participants agreed to continue to explore possible mechanisms for co-operative funding of contraceptive research. UNFPA plans to convene a second meeting on this matter in May 1985.

9. In the past year, UNFPA has consulted with Governments of developing countries and with non-governmental organizations about contraceptive research to ascertain their needs for funds for projects designed to introduce new or improved contraceptives and to increase existing capacity of developing countries to carry out their own biomedical research on fertility regulation. Since this strategy of consultations was approved by the Governing Council in June 1984, UNFPA has reviewed and approved five funding requests, as described below. In each case, UNFPA has benefited from the prompt and enthusiastic technical appraisal of the proposal by WHO/HRP.

10. The International Committee for Contraception Research (ICCR), described in paragraph 12 of document DP/1984/36, carries on an extensive programme of research in the clinics and laboratories of ICCR members. The latest development from ICCR work is the promising sub-dermal implant method known as NORPLANT, which is now ready for introduction. ICCR is also pursuing research leads such as the contraceptive ring device, a progestin-releasing IUD, a pregnancy vaccine, and LHRH analogs for female and male contraception. After reviewing the research programme of ICCR and its financial needs, UNFPA approved and allocated \$250,000 for 1984 and \$250,000 for 1985 for the ICCR programme.

11. The International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development (IOCD) was described in paragraph 15 of document DP/1984/36. IOCD presented to UNFPA a proposal for a male fertility programme starting with a project for chemical synthesis of agents for sperm-function regulation. This chemical synthesis project, most of which will be carried out in laboratories in developing countries, will complement the work being done by the Male Fertility Task Force of WHO/HRP. WHO will assist IOCD with distribution of needed reagents and chemicals to developing country laboratories. The Department of Chemistry of City University, London, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the United States Department of Health and Human Services will provide further laboratory analysis. UNFPA has approved the following amounts for the IOCD project: \$100,000 for 1984, \$255,000 for 1985 and \$200,000 for 1986.

12. NORPLANT, the sub-dermal implant developed by ICCR and The Population Council, has been approved for use by the drug-regulating authorities of Finland and Sweden, and is now ready for introduction programmes designed for developing countries. The Population Council has prepared an extensive introduction programme which is being gradually put into effect in a number of countries including Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The programme provides for training of medical and paramedical personnel, for information and education programmes for physicians and the public, for provision of the implants and for devising administrative mechanisms suited to each country, including adequate user follow-up, so that every developing country wishing to do so may add NORPLANT to the variety of contraceptives made available by its national family planning

programme. After a thorough review of the programme, including a consultation convened by WHO in October 1984 which concluded that "NORPLANT provides an effective and reversible long-term method of fertility regulation", UNFPA approved The Population Council's programme for introduction of NORPLANT and allocated \$250,000 for 1985 and \$250,000 for 1986 for the programme and recommended the programme for funding by multi-bilateral donors.

13. UNFPA is also funding institution-strengthening projects in China and Indonesia in which WHO/HRP is the executing agency. In the country programme for China for 1985-1989 that was approved by the Governing Council at its thirty-first session in June 1984, UNFPA will provide approximately \$5.5 million over the five-year period, with WHO/HRP as executing agency, to assist the National Research Institute for Family Planning, Beijing, the Family Planning Research Institutes of Sichuan and Quandong and the Tianjin Municipal Research Institute for Family Planning. For Indonesia, UNFPA proposes to provide approximately \$2 million from 1986 to 1990 to continue a project designed to strengthen the capability of the National Family Planning Co-ordinating Board (BKKBN) and several participating Indonesian universities to undertake biomedical research on fertility regulation. Training will concentrate on reproductive endocrinology, epidemiology, clinical pharmacology and medical statistics. WHO/HRP will be the executing agency for about \$1.5 million of the Indonesia country project budgets.

14. As a result of these activities, an improved spirit of collaboration and co-ordination exists among the operating organizations in contraceptive research. Increased sharing of effort and information will surely help to make research programmes more effective. Credit for this improvement must be given to WHO and its Human Reproduction Programme and the government representatives on the HRP Policy and Co-ordination Advisory Committee who have so effectively worked together during the past year. The financial restraints upon the WHO/HRP are still severe, as was seen at the PCAC meeting in November 1984. Programmes at three proposed levels of annual funding for 1985-1987 were discussed: at \$12 million, at \$16 million, and at \$20 million. Pledges made at the meeting totalled only \$10,161,100, even though some of the larger contributors, such as Denmark, Finland and the United Kingdom, increased their contributions in their national currencies over 1984. The need for additional funding for WHO/HRP is clearly demonstrated and UNFPA proposes to the Council that it increase its 1985 contribution to WHO/HRP from \$2 million to \$2.5 million and that it plan contributions to WHO/HRP of \$2.75 million for 1986, \$3 million for 1987, \$3.25 million for 1988 and \$3.5 million for 1989, subject, as always, to availability of funds in each year.

## II. RECOMMENDATION

15. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

- (a) Approve the allocation of an additional \$500,000 to WHO/HRP for 1985;
- (b) Fix the level of UNFPA funding to WHO/HRP, subject to availability of funds, at \$2.75 million for 1986, \$3 million for 1987, \$3.25 million for 1988 and \$3.5 million for 1989.

