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Expert Group Meeting on the Production and
Distribution of Contraceptives in the
Developing Countries (Sponsored by UNIDO
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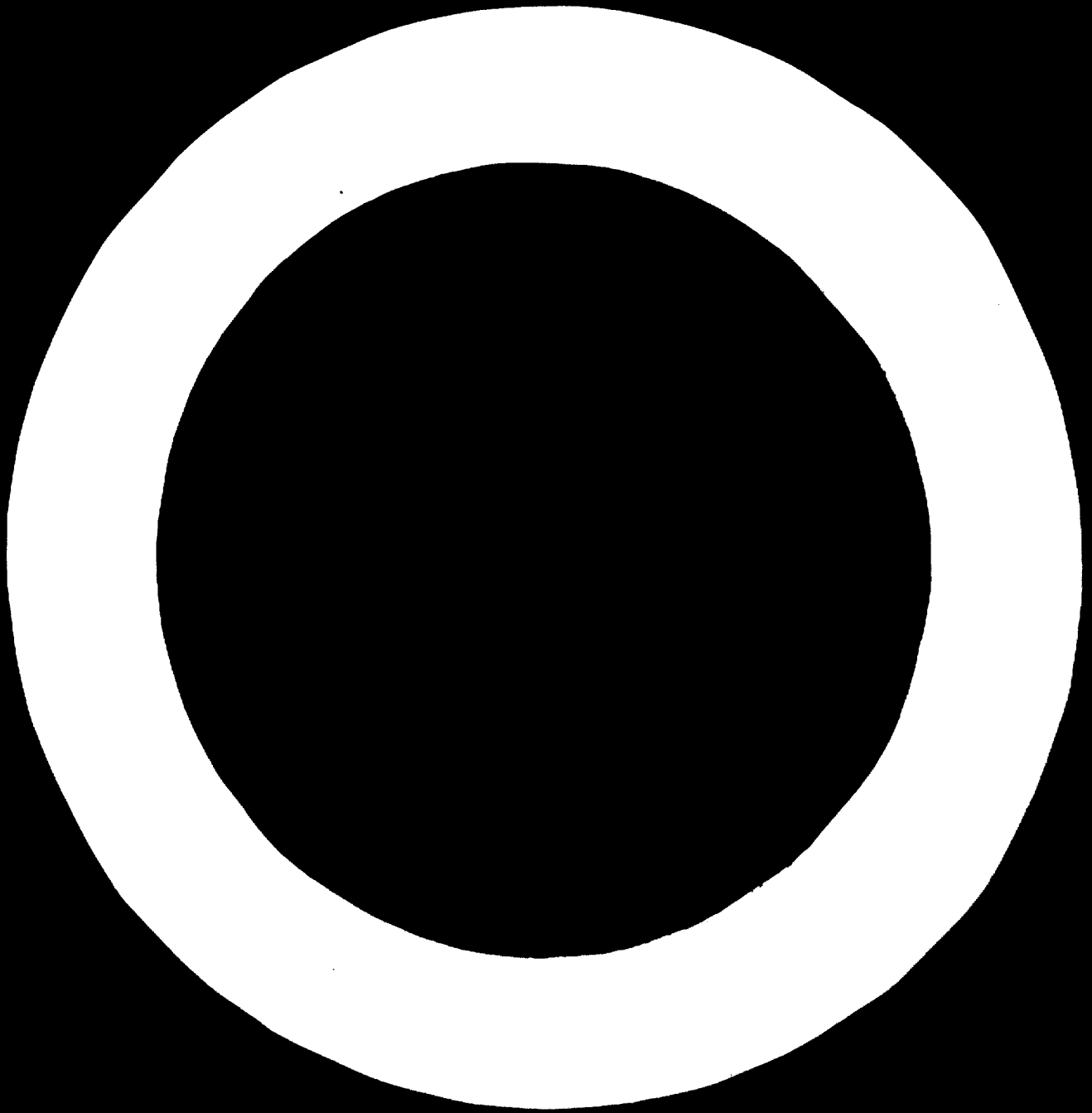
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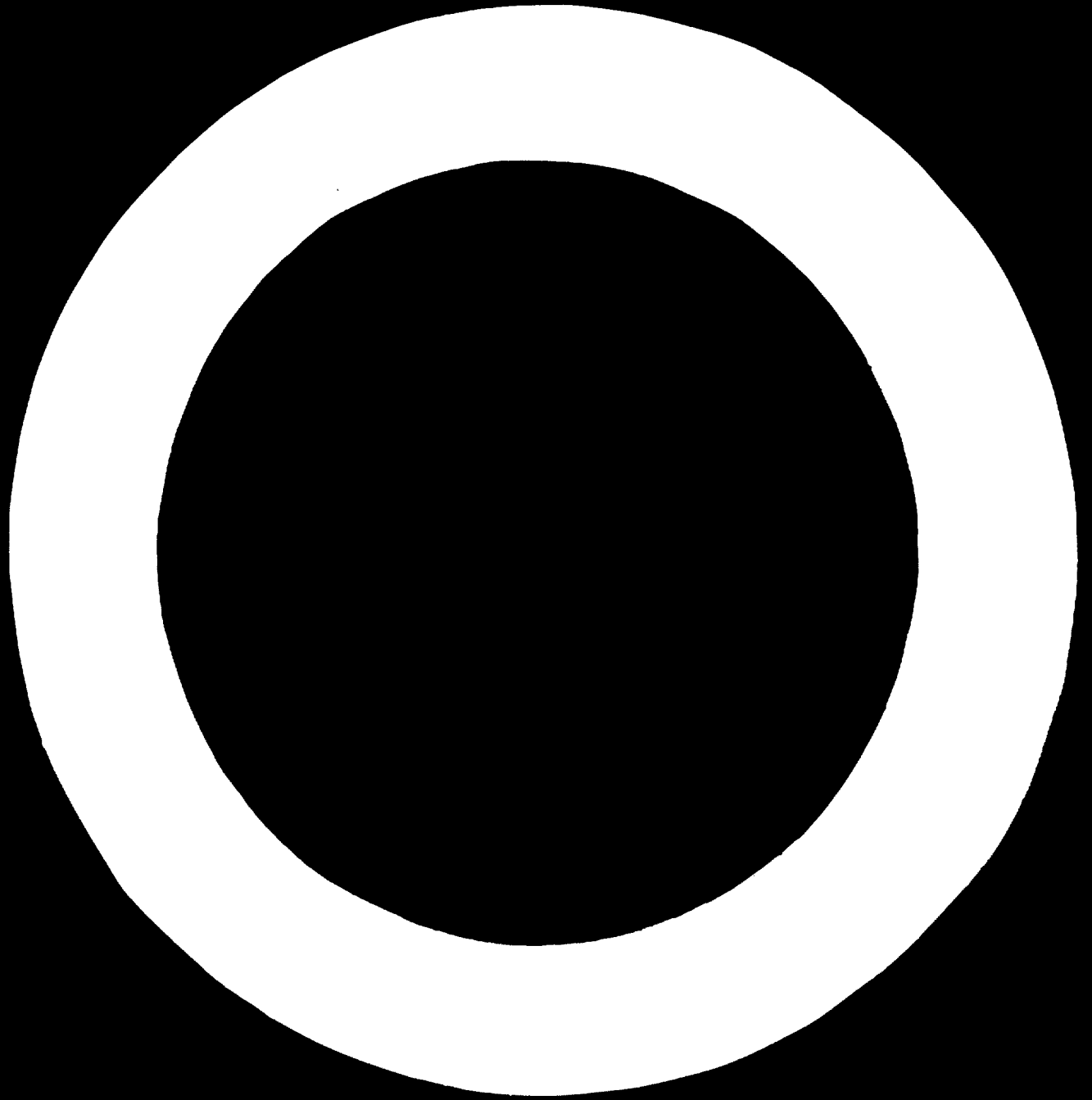
THE ROLE OF UNIDO IN THE FIELD OF CONTRACEPTIVES ^{1/}

prepared by

the Secretariat of UNIDO

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The introduction of contraception and pre-terminal procedures has developed an industrial sector which has wide ramifications of a social, economic and moral nature. International organizations, private foundations and government groups including therein the various United Nations agencies whose professional staff include demographers, economists, sociologists, psychologists, technicians and medical personnel have contributed considerably to the development, testing, distribution and selection of many types of contraceptives and pre-terminal procedures for use in specific areas. All this effort has been directed towards the goal of fertility control because population growth must be controlled within reasonable boundaries that will permit economic development to survive and advance in developing countries.

While the green revolution provides increased food quantities and protein production from petroleum, for example, adds to this potential, at the present population growth rate these efforts, though massive, will not be enough.

Since the practical approach to the problem is fertility control and since techniques for this involve at present drugs, mechanical devices (IUD's), condoms, spermicides and pre-terminal procedures, the industrial sector becomes important in order to assure that these are in adequate supply at reasonable cost in the areas in which they are to be distributed and utilized. No one contraceptive aid enjoys the complete fertility control market in any country, therefore a variety of aids need to be made available.

In addition to assuring adequate supplies which may mean in some countries production, assembly, testing, purchasing, distribution management, etc., the industrial sector becomes a more powerful force as a "platform" from which fertility control programmes can be launched.

UNIDO's role in this most singly important world problem of fertility control would cover the production, testing, assembly, marketing and distribution management sectors. Taking each contraceptive category pre-term procedure for analysis the following can be considered:

Contraceptive Drugs

These include orals, injectables and slow release compounds imbedded in various matrixes inserted into the body. Considerable development has been recorded in this field and orals for example are widely used in the more developed countries since professional medical care is required for initial use. Developed countries have expended considerable funds in research, development and production, and facilities required for this work are not only costly but require professional personnel of a type not available in developing countries. Accordingly therefore at this stage of development UNIDO would not consider encouraging the establishment of production facilities in developing countries for orals, but would encourage the co-operative distribution, purchasing and testing of orals among a number of countries to permit not only savings in costs or more importantly convertible currency, but to permit such countries to have available several optional methods for family planning. In addition UNIDO would, under fellowship programmes, develop a cadre of personnel who can undertake to conduct, at least initially, some production and testing procedures, in order to encourage the industry sectors to be "home oriented". At the present time pharmaceutical subsidiaries in developing countries need to send samples of production batches to the firms' home countries for analysis and approval prior to the release of the production run in the country or to other areas.

In addition to further distribution, assistance could be provided to develop the packaging industry sectors in the country since at present packaging material is brought into the country. Many countries have import regulations taxing raw materials at a higher rate than finished products. This tends to limit a developing industry and changes in the regulations should be encouraged.

Condoms

This contraceptive device is widely used in many countries and provided free of charge for example in India. Condoms are manufactured today by sophisticated automated procedures from a latex material, and processes used are designs based on US, British and Japanese experience. Condom manufacture today is increasing and many plants, for example in India, Japan and the UK are operating 24 hours per day. The major portion of operating costs is in the testing and packaging, once the plant's capital investment has been written off. Further a country which has access to latex is in a better

position than those who do not. For example India has its own latex supply, while the US, UK and Japan need to import the raw material.

UNIDO assistance in this sector would be primarily to assist developing countries in importing bulk condoms and establishing for example in industrial estate areas, facilities for the testing and packaging of the condoms. In addition assistance would be provided in distribution channels, etc. Since such operations are labour intensive, this could be a most valuable input to the economic development of an area.

Intrauterine Devices

These forms of contraceptives include the Lippes loop, Saf-T-Coil, Copper "T" and other modifications embodying a plastic configuration inserted into the uterus. In addition this group would also include the diaphragm. The diaphragm is not too widely used in developing countries since they need to be specially fitted and removed and replaced often. The Lippes loop, Saf-T-Coil, Copper "T" and others are manufactured by simple procedures and their assembly for use by the physicians for insertion requires basically a packaging expertise. These IUD's can be purchased in bulk, delivered to a developing country where they can be tested and assembled and sterilized and made available to the medical teams for insertion. UNIDO assistance in this area would be to establish assembly and test procedures and to provide such help as may be required in the distribution of the finished product.

Chemicals (Spermicides)

The effectiveness of creams, jellies, vaginal foams and other spermicidal products in the form of tablets, suppositories, sprays, etc. has been debated and the possibilities of employing spermicidal materials as the sole contraceptive (without the use of diaphragms, etc.) has been subjected to considerable testing. While statistics developed from "control" groups indicate that a high degree of effectiveness can be predicted, the actual introduction of such preparations in developing countries has not been too successful due to the fact that considerable motivation is needed to depend upon it alone. The use or availability of spermicidal compounds in a developing country, however, adds to the "available" methods and focuses interest in the general problem.

Should cooperation be of interest to a developing country UNICEF could assist in the form of providing cost returns to descriptive effectiveness, to assist in the collection of pharmaceutical preparations since they are easily prepared and to provide assistance in packaging and distribution.

UNICEF is at present developing the importance of regional efforts in the preparation, purchase and distribution of pharmaceutical specialties, from and from national facilities. For example, we are now engaged in an East African Commission study where it is planned to initiate a three country programme Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania whereby pharmaceuticals, etc. can be purchased jointly, allowed to cross national barriers under a tax free ruling and where such quality control as needed can be performed for the benefit of all three countries. In such a case distribution of specific materials, including contraceptives and abortion equipment can be made on a well defined basis.

Our pharmaceutical industry studies have shown that on an individual basis a developing country will be hard pressed to sustain individual pharmaceutical operations, but in a regional effort such co-operation would merit consideration. In addition to the preparation of specific materials, the regional plan calls for the training of laboratory personnel and the development of "medical stores" for the efficient distribution of materials through hospitals, dispensaries, etc.

We have also found in our studies that often bilateral assistance from other countries in the form of clinics, missions, dispensaries, etc. use a variety of products from their home country, and considerable difficulty has been met in attempting to relate the use of these products to specific prophylactic or therapeutic conditions. Accordingly in the field of contraceptives UNICEF would in an individual country, or in a regional programme establish a distribution centre in liaison with bilateral agencies to assure that contraceptives find their place in the pharmacies, clinics, dispensaries, market places, etc.

The point has been raised by many professionals that proper distribution will result in reaching a maximum number of persons at a time. In developing countries, natural resources are a main variable currency export. This means ore mining, agricultural processing, cattle raising, etc. In some countries and in others, garment production, tea and coffee picking, fish packing, etc. Each of these industries and many more depend upon a "community work force" and in some cases they are called "Industrial Estates". Large industrial estates have

complete villages attached with medical facilities, schools, canteenages, workshops, houses, stores, etc. These may support a population work force of from 70 - 800 or more families. UNIDO can foresee the inclusion of a small plant to produce the most acceptable types of contraceptives in the area and include therein testing. For example condoms and IUD's can be purchased in bulk and can be tested and packaged in these facilities for distribution. The distribution of these can be handled through the social services operating in the industrial estate area and UNIDO could supply experts to teach production and testing techniques as needed and also supply distribution management expertise. In many cases contraceptives may be available at no cost through international organizations and UNIDO in its industrial estate studies would consider the inclusion of family planning as an integral part of the plan. These could be distributed under conditions found most acceptable to the community. There are many private industrial projects in which employers provide family planning assistance.

Pre-Terminal Procedures

In developed countries pre-terminal procedures are highly developed and professional assistance is available. In developing countries such equipment and procedures are rarely available, and such equipment as is available is not always properly used due to lack of professional assistance. One procedure which lends itself to extensive use in developing countries is uterine aspiration, or termination of pregnancy by vacuum. The equipment can be both sophisticated in nature for hospital use, or basic for use in areas lacking such facilities as electricity. The Labor Foundation, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and others have contributed to developing low cost, easily assembled and easy to operate abortion equipment. UNIDO in its work efforts can assist in standardizing the equipment for production in developing countries, to provide specifications for its testing and provide for its distribution to areas in which it is needed. Abortion equipment for example could be made part of the standard facilities available at family planning facilities in industrial estates.

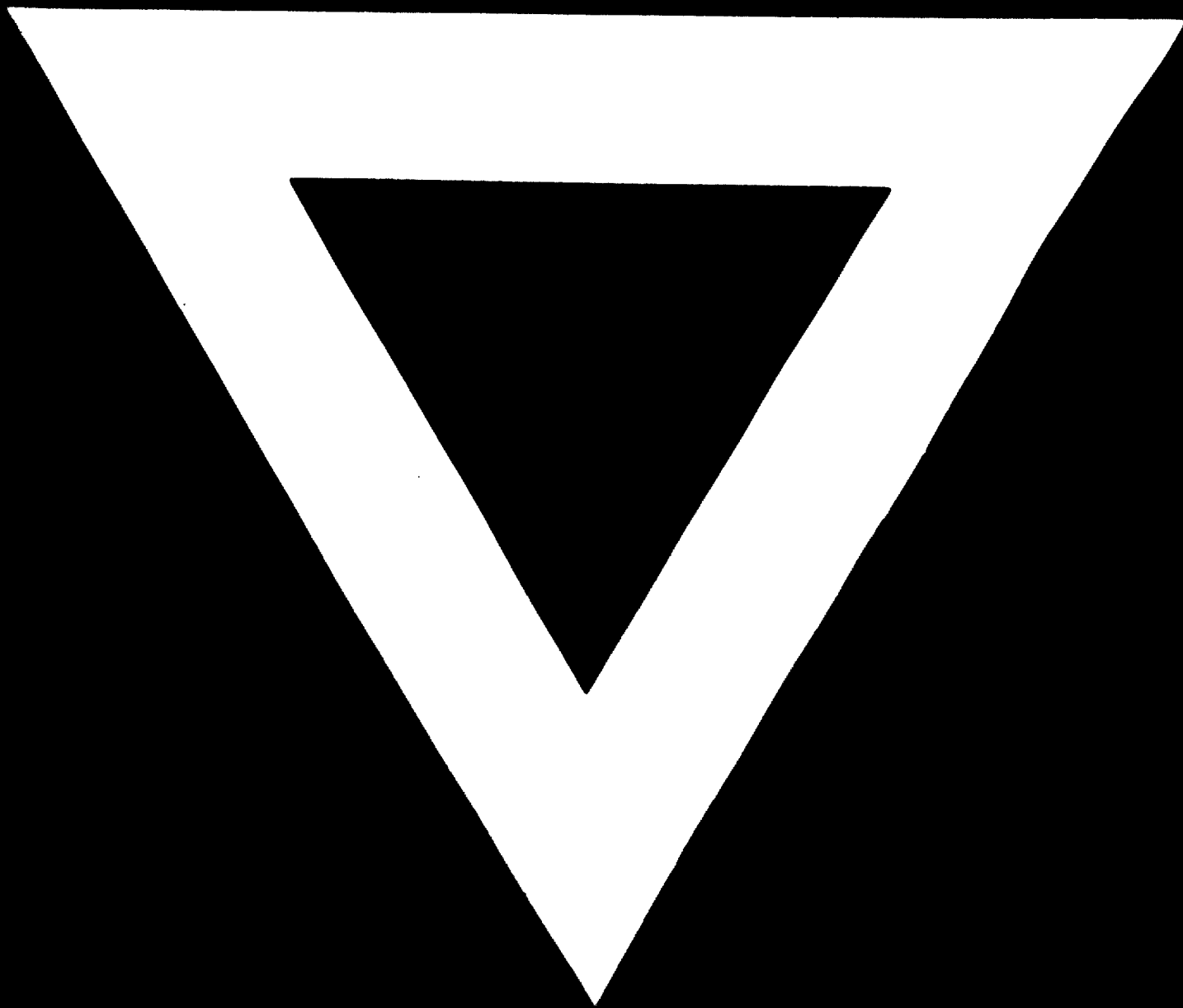
Further under UNIDO sponsorship fellowships could be arranged to introduce developing country managers, technicians and others to production, testing and distribution techniques in the field of contraceptives. Through the means of expert group meetings, study programmes and assignment of experts, transfer of information can be made at all levels. Liaison with

the World Health Organization, for example, in connexion with regional programmes in the field of pharmaceuticals and para medical supplies and with UNICEF in maternal care, will permit a ready introduction of new techniques and equipment to industrial development.

In any liaison work UNIDO would work closely with all international agencies in both the public and private sector.

The "science" of contraception and pre-terminal procedures is continuously moving forth so that today the field appears "crowded" with new products, systems, etc. While we cannot predict which systems will emerge as the easiest to use, or the cheapest and most reliable for particular groups, UNIDO can devote its expertise in the industrial sectors of their manufacture and distribution.





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