

Preface

This book reports the proceedings of the International Conference on Nutrition, National Development, and Planning held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from October 19 to October 21, 1971. The purpose of this conference was to explore the place of large-scale nutrition programs in planning for national development, particularly in the developing countries and among low-income groups. The participants included nutritionists, economists, development planners, and national and international administrators. Papers and discussion focused on two main issues: (1) problems of nutrition per se, as they affect both the individual and the nation, and the most feasible means of alleviating the problems; (2) the integration of nutrition planning into an overall national development program in nations with limited economic resources.

The participants included 35 from Asia, 38 from Latin America, 24 from the United Kingdom and Europe, 14 from Africa, 8 from the Middle East, 11 from Canada, and 209 from the United States. An attempt was made to represent as many as possible of the groups and institutions working in areas related to the conference theme.

The plan of the book follows the conference program: Part I: The Effects of Nutrition on the Individual; Part II: The Role of Nutrition in National Development; Part III: Diagnosis of Food and Nutrition Problems and Establishment of Priorities; Part IV: Determinants of Malnutrition and Alternative Nutrition Intervention Programs; Part V: A Conceptual Approach to National Nutrition Program Planning; and Part VI: Case Studies. Except for the last section, the keynote paper is followed by four to six shorter panel papers commenting on the theme elaborated in the principal paper. Each session concluded with a general floor discussion, which appears in the book in condensed and edited form.

An important purpose of the conference was to stimulate nutritionists and development specialists to talk to each other, to share information on mutual tasks, and to search for ways to jointly advance the goal of national development through improving the nutritional and health status of a nation's population—not simply on humanitarian grounds but for pragmatic economic reasons as well. The participants agreed that unless the two disciplines do join forces, in planning and in implementation, neither will fully achieve its goals. As is always the case, many more issues were raised than solved. But the conference was a fruitful beginning and may constitute a foundation for continuing dialogue and accomplishment.

The conference was initiated by the Committee on International Nutrition Programs, Food and Nutrition Board, National Academy of Sciences. We were assisted in developing the plans by a committee consisting of Mr. Sol Chafkin, Dr. Martin Forman, Dr. Derrick Jelliffe, Mr. Mogens Jul, Dr. Michael Latham, Dr. Arthur Mosher, Dr. Robert Muscat, Dr. Merrill Read, Dr. Roberto Rueda-Williamson, Dr. Lester Tepley, Dr. Douglas Wilson, and Mr. John Hurley. Support for the conference was provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development; the U.S. National Institutes of Health through the Joint Malnutrition Panel of the U.S.—Japan Cooperative Medical Science Program; the World Bank; and the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children. Participating agencies included the Ford Foundation, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNIDO, and UNESCO.

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