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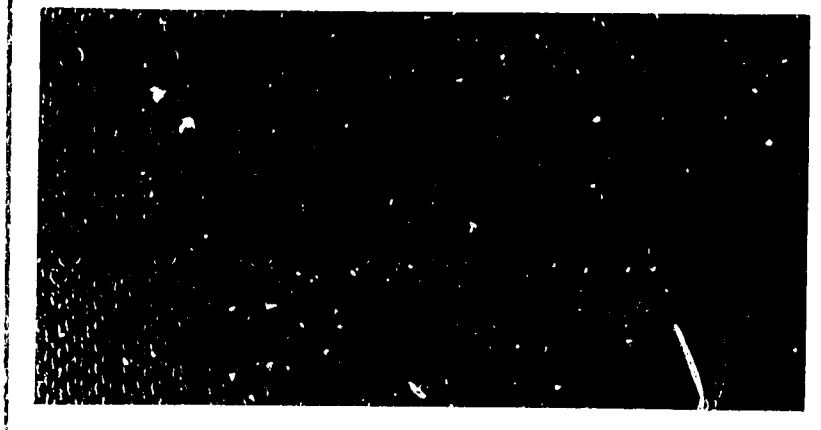

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REPORT ON A CONSULTANCY
TO DEVELOP A MODEL
FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC AND PROGRAM

A Report Prepared By:
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Purpose and Scope of Work

The purpose and scope of work for this consultancy were to assist the Sudan Fertility Control Association (SFCA) in developing a model family planning clinic and program. This assistance took the form of facilitating the interchange of ideas between the SFCA's Executive Board and the AID project team and the population officer at USAID/Sudan. Numerous discussions were held with SFCA Board members, usually individually. The substance of these discussions was deemed confidential and passed to the AID project team and the population officer verbally. It will not be presented here.

Discussions were held with the following persons:

SFCA Executive Board

Harith Hamad Ali, Chairman

Hamid Rushwan, Executive Director

Mutasim Abu Bakr Mustafa, Treasurer

Abdel Salam Gerais

Farouk Abdel Aziz

Osman Mahmoud Mukhtar

SFCA Member

Amal Adnan

AID Project Team

John Paul James, AID/W

Richard Montieth, CDC/Atlanta

Allison Spitz, CDC/Atlanta

AID/Sudan Mission Population Officer

Mary Ann Micka

This consultation did not constitute a "fact-finding" mission in the usual sense of research. Rather, the consultant worked as a catalyzer of ideas. Thus, only general impressions and recommendations are presented in this report.

General Impressions and Recommendations

The chief architect of the SFCA is Hamid Rushwan. Dr. Rushwan formed the Association in 1973; it became a legal entity in 1975. The SFCA was created in an environment hostile to family planning, both within the OB-GYN professional community and without. Much of the consultant's knowledge of the creation and development of the SFCA comes from numerous discussions with senior officials of the International Fertility Research Program (IFRP), who assisted Dr. Rushwan in the SFCA's activities from 1973 on.

Several of the current Board members (as well as other SFCA members) were completely opposed to family planning in 1975 but, primarily through the efforts of Dr. Rushwan, their position on family planning (particularly sterilization) has been reversed. However, in general, the community of physicians in Khartoum still harbors unfavorable attitudes toward family planning. Even among obstetricians and gynecologists, a slight majority may be opposed to family planning, and approximately three-fourths are opposed to sterilization for contraceptive reasons. Consequently, the SFCA represents virtually all the OB-GYN physician-support for family planning in Khartoum.

Since the consultant's first visit to the Sudan 15 months ago, and particularly in the past three months, there has been a dramatic evolution in attitudes toward family planning and the delivery of family planning services among SFCA Board members. This change in attitudes is, in part, due to the findings of several SFCA-IFRP studies which were completed recently. A set of maternity care studies, for example, showed both the need for family planning to improve maternity care and a strong demand for family planning services among the women studied. A study of male attitudes toward family planning found that males are more favorably disposed toward family planning than was thought. No doubt, the positive outcome of the National Population Conference, held in April, also contributed substantially to this change in attitudes.

The consultant believes that the Board is fully committed to the success of the project the SFCA is developing. It has taken years of struggle to bring this group together to prepare for a serious effort to bring family planning services to the people of the Sudan. Life is growing difficult in the Sudan. It is the consultant's deep-felt concern that if this project is not implemented in a reasonable length of time (or if a substantive substitute is not formulated and implemented), the members who make up the Board will turn inward and the family planning initiative will be lost altogether. No other group can be expected to replace the members for possibly a decade, if then.

Though the Board is fully committed, heavy demands are placed on the members for curative services. In no way is it likely that, individually or as a group, these Board members can be expected to devote adequate attention to the daily operation of this project. For this reason, it is imperative that a full-time generalist-physician be employed as the project director. It is essential that the director be fully committed to family planning and be sensitive to the needs of the women and men this project serves. In this society, this role would best be played by a female generalist-physician.

It is estimated that one million Sudanese (of a population of 20 million) have emigrated to the Gulf. Among these one million is the bulk of the country's technical and middle-management people. For this reason, an unusual amount of technical input will be required of U.S. and other personnel both as the project is implemented and during its early years of operation.

Currently, there are few good-quality family planning services in the Sudan. In addition, few persons have ever visited a full-service family planning clinic in another country. Consequently, an extraordinary effort will have to be made to train professional project personnel before the project is implemented and during its early years.

This project faces more than its fair share of difficulties, and enormous obstacles must be overcome, for there are serious shortages of every possible resource. There is also a grossly inadequate infrastructure. However, given the SFCA's current commitment and with a full commitment from AID, this project can be most successful. Delay in implementing a serious family planning effort in the Sudan is nearly certain to reduce the chances of success.

This assignment was completed when the consultant attended an AID staff project proposal review meeting on August 31, 1982. The consultant's principal contribution to this meeting was a presentation of the SFCA's qualifications to undertake the project and to respond to related questions. In general, the participants' comments on the proposal were positive.