The seminar, organized jointly by the HNP Sector Board and the HNP/Poverty Thematic Group, took place on the first working day of the new year. The approximately 55 participants included representatives of fifteen departments of the World Bank, and of such other organizations as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Global Health Council, the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The moderator was Acting HNP Sector Board Chair Chris Lovelace.

The seminar topic concerned the World Bank’s forthcoming year 2000/1 World Development Report (WDR). Like the WDR prepared ten years previously, in 1990, the 2000/1 WDR is to focus on poverty. The WDR team has put forward a preliminary draft outline, in preparation for the full-time work due to begin in the summer of 1999. The team is using the draft as a basis for soliciting inputs from professionals in the World Bank and cooperating institutions. The purpose of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for professionals working in health, nutrition, and population to provide such inputs.

The WDR team was represented by director Ravi Kanbur, deputy director Nora Lustig, and member Monica Das Gupta. Ravi opened with a brief presentation. This was followed by an unstructured discussion, designed to elicit as many views as possible, which occupied the majority of the time available.

Opening Presentation

Ravi’s presentation covered three principal topics: the context in which the team has been working; the team’s proposed principal themes; and a possible role for HNP considerations in the development of these themes.

Context. Current thought about poverty reduction continues to be heavily influenced by the 1990 WDR, which featured a two-part strategy: labor-intensive economic growth, and social service programs to develop human capital (supplemented by safety nets for vulnerable groups). The the 2000/1 team will start from this base, updating it to to incorporate the lessons learned from subsequent developments like the shift toward outward-looking development strategies in much of Africa and Asia, the recent traumatic changes in Eastern Europe, and the better understanding of poverty change made possible by improved data. The copious amount of information available on developments like these means that the generation of detail will not be a problem. Rather, the challenge facing the WDR team is to synthesize the copious available information into two or three principal themes or messages relevant for the widely varying conditions found in different parts of the world.

Principal Themes. Three themes are emerging as leading candidates for priority attention:

- Risk and vulnerability, which pose particular threats to the poor and
- and nearly poor. Strategies available for reducing such risk/vulnerability include increasing the assets of the poor; opening up trading opportunities for them, through approaches like
infrastructure investment; providing public works and unemployment insurance; and organizing targeted transfer programs.

- Structural inequalities, which can be manifested in economic, gender, or ethnic terms. Alleviating inequalities like these requires that those affected be empowered to participate effectively in society.

- The inadequate material base found in many settings. Such a constraint calls for economic growth of a type that creates opportunities for as many of the poor as possible.

**Role of HNP.** HNP considerations could fit naturally into the framework in three possible ways:

- HNP status as an element in the definition of poverty. Poverty is increasingly recognized as reflecting much more than economic considerations. This shift opens up a place for inadequate HNP status to join insufficient income as a poverty indicator.

- HNP as an aspect of vulnerability. To the extent that the poor are at higher risk of disability or death than the poor, they can be considered more vulnerable.

- Inadequate access to HNP services for the poor as an important consequence of structural inequality. Such inadequate access represents an institutional issue deserving careful attention in the design of health services.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

The ensuing discussion featured approximately twenty-five interventions from the floor on a wide range of topics. The issue drawing the most intention concerned appropriate HNP indicators for use in assessing poverty. The principal suggestions were to think of nutritional status indicators, of morbidity-adjusted mortality figures, and of under-five mortality rates.

In the course of the discussion, Ravi outlined five areas in which inputs from HNP specialists would be especially helpful to the WDR team:

- Suitable HNP indicators, especially indicators about which adequate information exists to make comparisons among countries, over time, and among different socio-economic groups.

- The effectiveness of HNP institutions/programs in reaching the poor.

- The levels of HNP risk suffered by the poor, including both the risk of falling ill and the risk of becoming impoverished as a result of illness.

- The link between HNP and economic growth, including the impact on economic growth of HNP expenditures, HNP policies, and HNP status.

- The role of international cooperation in HNP as an element in overall international development cooperation.

Chair Chris Lovelace concluded the session by indicating that Dave Gwatkin, as coordinator of the Bank’s HNP/Poverty Thematic Group, would serve as the HNP group’s principal contact with the WDR team. Dave suggested arranging an ordered consideration of the five issues noted by Ravi, as an
initial step toward facilitating effective overall working relationships between interested WDR team members and HNP specialists. Consideration of the first issue, concerning suitable HNP indicators, would be undertaken in close cooperation with the HNP Indicators Thematic Group.