

TENTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY - 31 MAY 1957
ACHIEVEMENTS OF THREE-WEEK SESSION

The Tenth World Health Assembly concluded on 24 May a three-week session presided over by Dr. Sabih Hassan Al-Wahbi, former Minister of Health for Iraq.

In the course of this session the Assembly defined the programme of work of the World Health Organization for 1958 to be financed by a budget of \$15.5 million and took important decisions increasing the responsibilities of WHO in cancer research, malaria eradication, health statistics and field activities to assist more than 100 governments in developing their health services.

This Assembly was the first in eight years to be attended by four formerly inactive Members: Albania, Bulgaria, Poland and the USSR. At the end of the session Romania also announced that it had resumed its active participation in WHO. The Assembly welcomed a new Member State, Ghana, which had previously participated in WHO as an Associate Member (the Gold Coast).

The Assembly decided to renew the contract of Dr. M.G. Candau, Director-General, at the expiration of his present term of office on 21 July 1958 and offered him a new contract for up to five years. Dr. Candau is to give his reply before 1 November this year.

Two distinguished scientists were honoured by the Assembly which awarded the Leon Bernard Foundation Prize to Dr. Marcin Kacprzak of Poland in recognition of his outstanding contribution and practical achievements in the field of social medicine. Dr. Paul F. Russell (USA) of the Rockefeller Foundation received from the hands of the President of the World Health Assembly the Darling Foundation medal and prize for outstanding achievements in the control of malaria.

On the technical side, the 1958 programme of work as approved by the Assembly includes the implementation of almost 700 health projects in 112 countries and territories. The Assembly noted with satisfaction a considerable increase of health activities proposed for the African Region in the control of communicable diseases in rural areas.

Other features of the programme include the development of the technical services that WHO renders all countries alike in the fields of epidemiology and quarantine, health statistics, therapeutic substances, drug addiction and development of standards for public health laboratories.

As regards disease control the Assembly approved in particular increased activities to achieve malaria eradication: so far eradication has been achieved in ten countries or territories, is under way in 15 and has been initiated or planned in 38. In order to support these activities the World Health Assembly called for increased contributions to the world malaria fund created two years ago and asked that methods of fund raising other than inviting contributions from governments should also be utilized.

Delegates attached particular importance to WHO's programme dealing with health aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

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This programme lays emphasis on training of health physicists and medical personnel. An Indian proposal that the Assembly should appeal for a ban on atomic bomb tests was ruled out of order because the subject had not been included on the agenda.

The Assembly decided that WHO should undertake an important research programme on the epidemiology of cancer in the belief that a comparative study of the variations between cancer types in different countries will yield a clue to the origin of this disease.

The Assembly also approved a resolution accepting the offer of the Philippine government for the free use of land for the Western Pacific Regional Office building and a contribution of \$500,000 towards the construction of the building. The acceptance of the Philippine offer, however, is "conditioned on the satisfactory conditions of tenure and occupancy and provided that the Philippine government undertakes to compensate WHO on the basis of the book value of the building if it reverts to the government". WHO will advance up to US\$250,000 for construction costs, provided these conditions are met.

As usual the Assembly devoted two days to technical discussions. This year's subject was the role of the hospital in the public health programme.

Next year the World Health Assembly will meet in the United States where it will also hold a special session to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the World Health Organization.

June 11, 1957.

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