



*executive committee of  
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

*working party of  
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WORLD  
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I MEETING OF MINISTERS OF HEALTH OF THE COUNTRIES  
OF THE ANDEAN AREA

(Item proposed by the Government of Peru)

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OF THE ANDEAN AREA

The First Meeting of the Ministers of Health of the Countries of the Andean Area, convened at the initiative of the Minister of Health of Peru, was held in Lima from 15 to 18 December 1971. Its purpose was to study some of the health problems closely related to the basic goals of the Sub-regional Integration Agreement and to establish the framework for institutionalizing these meetings of the Ministers of Health.

It was attended by the Ministers of Health of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. A special invitation to attend the meeting was extended to Dr. Abraham Horwitz, Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

Both the Ministers and Dr. Horwitz were accompanied by their advisers.

Representatives of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNICEF, the Cartagena Agreement, and of national agencies attended the meeting as observers.

General Fernando Miró Quesada Bahamonde, Minister of Health of Peru, was elected President; Dr. Baltazar Caravedo of Peru, Secretary General; and Dr. Plutarco Naranjo of Ecuador, Rapporteur General.

In addition to the draft health convention of the six countries of the Andean area, the Agenda included items on health legislation; health problems related to the anticipated increase in intraregional trade, especially in foodstuffs, drugs, and biological products; occupational health problems; studies of the industrial capacity of the countries of the Andean area to manufacture furniture, equipment, and instruments for health services; studies on cooperation in the event of disasters; nuclear tests in Polynesia; and illegal traffic and use of drugs.

Two technical committees composed of the advisers of the Ministers of Health were established. Committee I dealt exclusively with the draft Health Convention between the six countries of the area. Committee II examined the other agenda items.

An inaugural session, five plenary sessions, and a closing session were held.

The Technical Committees held five working sessions.

At the suggestion of Committee I, the Ministers decided to name the convention to be signed the "Hipólito Unánue" Convention in honor of the eminent physician who was a Peruvian statesman and a politician.

The outstanding result of the meeting was the signature of the Hipólito Unánue Convention by the six countries in attendance. The aim of this Convention is the conduct of coordinated activities by the signatory countries with a view to finding solutions to problems similarly affecting the countries of the Andean area. The activities they propose to undertake are as follows:

- (a) To modernize the Frontier Health Conventions in order to strengthen the health services infrastructure and improve communicable diseases control programs;
- (b) To study the risk of transmission of diseases connected with population migrations, the movement of persons, animals, and goods, and to formulate the corresponding preventive measures;
- (c) To strengthen the interchange of experiences and to establish a standing system of early communication;
- (d) To provide one another with information about communicable diseases as rapidly and efficiently as possible;
- (e) To promote studies on water, soil and air pollution;
- (f) To promote studies, establish standards and conduct occupational health programs;
- (g) To study the needs of the countries of the Andean area with respect to drugs, biological products for human and animal use, their quality control and to find ways of making them available to all sectors of the population;
- (h) To prepare common health standards regulating trade in food-stuffs of animal and vegetable origin between the countries of the Andean area;
- (i) To study the needs and industrial capacity of the countries of the Andean area with respect to equipment, instruments, furniture and various supplies for hospitals and other health establishments to establish uniform quality standards with a view to finding coordinated solutions that reduce the cost of health activities;

- (j) To provide one another with technical assistance services in those aspects in which the countries have a relatively higher level of development than the others;
- (k) To undertake joint research projects and to exchange information about projects in operation or being prepared in this field;
- (l) To hold periodical meetings to enable the technical staff of various countries of the area to study common problems in different health fields and to make pertinent recommendations;
- (ll) To study the present situation in the health sector with respect to manpower in order to determine the training needs of personnel at all levels, taking as a frame of reference the national health plans and the integration process with a view to possible complementation of education and training needs of health personnel in the countries of the Andean area;
- (m) To establish a system for the interchange of health personnel, in accordance with the possibilities of each country and to provide fellowships in areas of interest for students and graduates of the countries of the Andean area;
- (n) To endeavor to ensure that the national health legislation, in accordance with technical standards, simplify the health requirements for the movement of persons between the countries of the Andean area as well as trade in equipment and materials;
- (o) To undertake studies and to establish the necessary framework for providing one another with the most efficient cooperation in event of disasters;
- (p) To undertake studies of the joint measures it is advisable for the countries of the Andean area to adopt to control the use and to suppress illegal traffic in drugs causing addiction.

The Hipólito Unánue Convention establishes provisionally, and until such time as its organs are finally organized, a coordinating committee and a secretariat which, after consultation with the ministers, has become the executive secretariat and will be the executive organ. A Peruvian public health worker had been appointed to this post.

The ministers of health agree to meet annually and have decided that the next meeting will be held in Quito during the first fortnight of December this year.

The results of this I Meeting of the Ministers of Health of the Andean Area have been highly satisfactory, since as a result of the signature of the Hipólito Unánue Convention, these meetings of the six countries of the Andean area have been institutionalized. These six countries constitute an important group of countries united by common ties of history, geography, the complementation of their economies and the desire to overcome their underdevelopment by a joint effort. This subregional approach is in line with the trend in our Continent for the countries with common interests and ties to form groups and we believe that this is the best way of accelerating development.

In addition to the Hipólito Unánue Convention, nine resolutions were approved on the agenda items, which establish the framework for future activities.

The Final Report of the Meeting is being printed and will be distributed as soon as it is ready.

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau provided valuable assistance in preparing the Meeting and in conducting it. It also provided assistance through its technical and administrative personnel and helped to prepare the Convention, as well as an important working document entitled "The Subregional Approach and Some of the Common Problems in the Health Sector in the Countries of the Andean Area," which was highly praised, as was, in particular, the participation of Dr. Abraham Horwitz and a distinguished group of his staff.