



*executive committee of
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
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HEALTH PRIORITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND PANAMA

The XXX Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization adopted Resolution XVII at the ninth plenary session on 28 September 1984 expressing full support for the plan, "Health Priorities in Central America and Panama." Since that time, a series of actions have been taken to fulfill the recommendations of the Directing Council set forth in that resolution.

Progress in External Resource Mobilization

1. Project profiles were developed at country level with full participation of national personnel. This resulted in a total of 40 intercountry or regional projects and 256 national projects, which were summarized in a loose-leaf binder organized in accord with the seven priority areas of the Plan. Also a promotional pamphlet was developed, detailing the origins, purposes, priority areas, and financial requirements of the Plan.
2. Utilizing the above-mentioned documents, an informational mission was carried out during the final two weeks of November to 14 European countries. The mission met with leading governmental and non-governmental development cooperation institutions in those countries. Multilateral agencies, such as the European Economic Community, the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) also were visited. The mission was comprised of either the health ministers or vice-ministers of the Central American countries and Panama. The Minister of Planning of Guatemala also participated in the mission along with the Director of the Pan American Health Organization and other senior staff of PAHO, UNICEF, and WHO/Geneva.
3. Additional informational and promotional visits were conducted with the United States of America and Canadian development institutions as well as with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

4. Subsequent to the mission, additional information concerning individual projects, responding to potential donor interests, was circulated to those agencies.

5. Nevertheless, initial implementation of projects already has begun. Grants have been received from AID to PAHO for a regional project which combines elements of the infant survival and nutrition areas and approval of further regional grants covering several components in malaria control and essential drugs. The IDB has indicated interest in providing technical cooperation grants for project development preliminary to funding subsequent proposals for specific investments. UNICEF and PAHO have utilized regular budget funds to support projects in the infant survival area, particularly in immunization projects. Similarly, at the country level, bilateral donors have used the project to expand their bilateral cooperation into the health field. The Government of Spain also has supported a course in project formulation, management and evaluation and is expanding its cooperation agreements with several countries to include health components. The OPEC Fund has recently indicated possible areas of cooperation.

6. As a result of the promotion of the Plan, the European Economic Community has endorsed inclusion of health in its draft agreement with Central America, through the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America (SIECA). During the last Conference of the Ministers of Health of the Council of Europe the Central America Plan was included in the agenda.

Progress at the Country Level

1. PAHO through its Country Representatives has been informing about specific requests from external agencies.

2. Missions were carried out to the Central American countries and Panama, along with Belize, to reinforce the country working groups in the development of the priority projects.

3. Each country has been requested to maintain and strengthen the work of the national commissions which are responsible for the project. Those commissions include representatives from the ministries of health and planning as well as other related institutions. Specific task forces for each priority area also have been formed. The tasks currently underway include establishing priorities among the projects, taking into account the availability of counterpart funds, recurrent cost generation, administrative feasibility, etc. Countries also have agreed on a time-table for preparation of pre-investment documents for each of the projects selected for urgent implementation.

4. In each country, missions have been conducted to ensure the full awareness of the ministries of planning of the existence and consequences of the Plan as well as to obtain their technical support in the selection and development of the priority projects. A meeting of the ministers of planning of Central America and Panama, organized by SIECA in March in Guatemala discussed the Plan.

5. A session of the national coordinators of the Plan was developed also in March in Nicaragua to review the state of progress and the further development of the national projects.

6. To foster the national capacity for project design, management, and evaluation, five participants from each Central American country were invited to the six-week course on that subject which was inaugurated on March 10 at the Central American Institute for Public Administration in Costa Rica. PAHO and the Government of Spain are supporting that course.

Progress at the Regional Level

1. Regional projects were completed and summarized for inclusion in the loose-leaf notebook last fall. Those projects now have been further refined and developed in light of donor interest and national needs.

2. The implementation of one regional project has begun with INCAP as the responsible agent in collaboration with the maternal child care program and with UNICEF.

3. Regional projects as the one with AID, are in the final stage of preparation for its operational work plan and others in the final stage of negotiation with the Government of the Netherlands.

4. Regional programs currently are expanding the available documentation for those projects for inclusion in the documentation to be forwarded to donors.