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# Director's Letter

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## NEW STRATEGIC AND PROGRAMMATIC ORIENTATIONS

One of the decisions made by the XXIV Pan American Sanitary Conference was approval of the document containing the strategic and programmatic orientations (SPO) of the Pan American Health Organization for the 1995–1998 quadrennium. The SPO were reinforced by the ideas, proposals, and facts presented and analyzed in other documents reviewed by the Conference: *Health Conditions in the Americas, 1994 edition*; the *Report of the Director: Quadrennial 1990–1993, Annual 1993*; and the “Joint PAHO/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Report on Health, Social Equity, and Changing Production Patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean”—all of which shared common themes with the Ninth General Program of Work of WHO.

The strategic and programmatic orientations are decisive in the life of the Organization. In addition to charting the course of the Secretariat's activities, they serve as the foundation and reference point for the decisions that member countries make in defining their own priorities. The new SPO, like those for the previous quadrennium, reflect the willingness of PAHO to adjust to the changes taking place in the Region—changes in both the epidemiologic profile and the economic and social context. Moreover, they examine the areas of work that, in general, will require the greatest effort and into which PAHO's technical cooperation with the countries will be channeled.

The SPO delineate five major areas of action: (1) *Health in development*, which establishes the way to make the objectives of progress and growth compatible with the overriding goal of better quality of life and greater equity for all citizens; (2) *health systems development*, which is grounded in the need to reform the health systems, so that the services offered by the many public and private providers can be linked into an efficient and effective network of universal protection; (3) *health promotion and protection*, which calls for the health sector to take the lead in fomenting policies and conditions that, together with healthy attitudes and practices, will enable people to realize their full personal and social potential; (4) *environmental protection and development*, which involves not only ensuring access to adequate basic services but also preserving and restoring our natural heritage as national resources essential to human well-being and sustainable development; and finally, (5) *disease prevention and control*, which seeks to continue and broaden national as well as regional efforts to prevent, control, eliminate, or eradicate communicable and other preventable diseases.

The Organization will provide the most effective possible technical cooperation to the countries in the main work areas; it will continue to fight for the principles of equity and the right to health; and it will demand effective management of available resources. The Secretariat is pledged to the pursuit of excellence in these undertakings. We are confident that the strategic and programmatic orientations will result in a new and unprecedented period of constructive reform and production in the health field in the Region of the Americas.



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