

*executive committee of
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN
SANITARY
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Topic 13: REGIONALIZATION OF VACCINE PRODUCTION

The Executive Committee, at its 22nd Meeting (Washington, D.C., 22-27 April 1954) called attention to point "a" of the report of the working party that studied the 1955 Proposed Program and Budget of PASB, concerning a "study of the needs, production, centralization, and distribution of vaccines in the Americas" (Resolution XVI).

To initiate this study, the Director requested information from the countries of the Region on annual consumption figures, sources of supply, and estimated requirements for vaccines against smallpox, typhoid, pertussis, diphtheria, and rabies. At its 23rd Meeting (Santiago, Chile, 4-7 October 1954), the Executive Committee was advised that the information obtained up to that time was very incomplete and that a report would be prepared for the 25th Meeting, when it was expected to have data from most of the governments.

The information received from 14 countries and 13 territories that had answered at the time of the preparation of this document, indicates that the majority of the countries of South America produce vaccines against smallpox, typhoid, and rabies in the amounts required for their own needs. With regard to diphtheria and pertussis vaccines, some of the South American countries are producing them in sufficient amounts and others are now beginning production. It appears that, under the circumstances, centralization of the production of those vaccines is not advisable in that part of the Continent.

The situation appears to be different in Central America and the Caribbean Area, where the large majority of countries or territories are not producing the vaccines required for their own needs.

It is apparent, however, from the reports presented by the governments to the XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference, that the main problem in ensuring the necessary immunization of the population is not so much the unavailability of vaccines, as the administrative difficulties connected with the maintenance of appropriate levels of protection through adequate vaccination programs.

This has been the experience gained in the implementation of the smallpox eradication program, through which collaboration has been given to every country that has indicated interest in and readiness to undertake such a program. Dry smallpox vaccine is already being produced in the laboratories of Santiago, Buenos Aires, Lima, and Guayaquil, with equipment provided by the Organization. The laboratories of La Paz and Havana will soon begin production. Some of these laboratories are already producing vaccine on a large scale, so it might be expected that they could in the future serve as distributing centers for non-producing countries, through arrangements between the governments concerned. The Bureau is prepared to play its coordinating role, if the occasion arises.

The production of yellow fever vaccine has already been centralized in the Continent. There are at this moment three producing laboratories, one privately owned (National Drug Co., Philadelphia, USA), and two official (Carlos Finlay Institute, Bogotá, Colombia; and Oswaldo Cruz Institute, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). Through agreements concluded between the respective governments and the Bureau, it has been possible to establish a service for providing yellow fever vaccine free of cost to the American countries.

In submitting this report, the Director requests the views of the Executive Committee, taking into account the information obtained on the regionalization of vaccine production.