

*executive committee of
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Topic 13: HEALTH CHARTER OF PUERTO RICO

Pursuant to the decision of the Executive Committee at its 36th meeting, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on 3 October 1958, the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau has the honor to transmit to this meeting the attached document entitled "Health Charter of Puerto Rico."

The aforesaid document was presented by the Delegation of Peru at the XV Pan American Sanitary Conference (Puerto Rico, 1958)^{1/}, which approved it in principle and agreed to transmit it to the 36th Meeting of the Executive Committee^{2/} so that the latter might study it and make recommendations to the Directing Council. The Executive Committee felt that, because of the importance of the document, it should be given detailed study, something that could not be done at the brief meeting of the Committee, and therefore deferred the study until the 37th Meeting of the Executive Committee.

Annex: Health Charter of Puerto Rico

^{1/} Documents CSF15/85 (p. 45) and CSF15/86 (p. 45)

^{2/} Document CE36/2, Rev. 1, p. 12.

HEALTH CHARTER OF PUERTO RICO

The XV Pan American Sanitary Conference,

Having heard the reports submitted by the Member Countries of the Organization on the progress achieved in health during the period 1954 to 1957; and

Having taken note of the discussions, which also reflect the status of health in the Americas,

Establishes the present document, entitled "Health Charter of Puerto Rico," in the nature of a general conclusion, in which it

AFFIRMS:

That there has been marked progress in health in the countries of the Americas resulting from the campaigns against infectious and preventable diseases, as well as in various aspects of prevention and care;

That there are still many health problems that affect the lives of the peoples of the Americas, causing an appreciable loss of human potential;

That there are serious deficiencies in many countries with respect to environmental sanitation, which obviously afflict the lives and the health of the inhabitants;

That there are appreciable deficiencies in the organizations and means for the promotion, protection, and restoration of health, and that in many countries these facilities do not reach all the people;

That the financial resources made available for public health by the countries are insufficient, disproportionate to population numbers, and in many cases not in harmony with the nation's total resources;

That even in the programs of economic development, the protection of health is not given preferential consideration;

That the number of specialized professionals, technicians, and auxiliary workers is insufficient for the growing needs and demands of the health organizations; and

In view of these facts, and in the sincere desire to advance solutions,

DECLARES:

1. Health is a prime obligation of governments and peoples; it should be within reach of all the inhabitants of the Americas as an effective means for attaining social well-being for the individual and the family;

2. Health is the essential basis of democracy and is an inalienable first right of a country's entire population, without exception;

3. Health is an expression of the cooperative efforts of the individual, the family, and the State;

4. Health takes preferential place in all programs for the economic development of societies;

5. Health is the result of a balance between a healthful environment and the individual;

6. Health is an index to the economic, cultural, and social condition of the individual and the community;

and as a general means of attaining the highest level of health for the people of the Hemisphere,

RECOMMENDS:

1. Increase in resources for promoting, protecting, and restoring the health of the American peoples, with preference over other activities, since this means the safeguarding of the peoples' vital capacities.

2. Improvement of the individual's general working conditions, including proper environment, adequate remuneration for work performed, and hygienic living quarters.

3. Formulation of national health plans, with strict priorities, to cope with health problems, including the essential matter of environmental sanitation.

4. Full cooperation and mutual assistance among the various countries for the progressive solution of health problems.

5. Preparation and proper training of professional, technical, and auxiliary personnel, according to the needs of the health plans.

6. The continuing exchange of experience, information, and results among the various American countries.

7. The assignment of preference to health programs in any plan for national economic development.

The XV Pan American Sanitary Conference further affirms that the ties of solidarity between the countries of America and the world are growing constantly stronger in matters of health, but that in this Hemisphere, through the Pan American Health Organization and its executive organ, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, stronger cooperative efforts must be made, based on the desire of governments and peoples to fight for a healthier, more prosperous, and happier life for all the inhabitants of the Americas.