

SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
PAN AMERICAN SANITARY ORGANIZATION

Washington, D.C.  
May 23-30, 1949

TOPIC VIII. PROPOSAL OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE PAN AMERICAN  
SANITARY BUREAU WITH REGARD TO PAN AMERICAN  
OR INTER-AMERICAN MEDICAL CONGRESSES, OFFICIAL  
AND SEMI-OFFICIAL, IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

I. BACKGROUND

1. The need for promoting the exchange of ideas and information among the members of the medical profession and allied sciences and the increasing specialization in the medical fields have resulted in the convening of numerous scientific meetings, both national and international, in the Western Hemisphere.

2. Official and semi-official organizations frequently sponsor international congresses designated as "inter-American" or "Pan American" and approach the governments with requests for financial assistance in conducting them. The multiplicity of these congresses or meetings and the limited success of some by reason of the great number which are called, frequently lead the corresponding government agencies to express the opinion that the expenditure of funds for this purpose is excessive.

3. The organization and coordination of international medical meetings has become a problem of universal concern.

4. For the purpose of coping with this problem as it relates to non-official congresses, an international conference was held in Brussels, in April 1949, under joint sponsorship of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), resulting in the creation of a Coordinating Council on Medical Congresses which will attempt the following: (a) to suggest appropriate places and dates for medical congresses; (b) to avoid duplication of effort and provide maximum opportunity for physicians to attend important meetings without unnecessary loss of time and money; (c) to supply financial aid, if possible, for the scientific programs of the congresses and organize courses in conjunction with these meetings for the benefit of the physicians attending; and (d) to study conference techniques with a view to making the methods available to medical organizations. It was stated at the conference that the Council, in bringing together organizations whose members represent diverse

nationalities and political groups, will promote international friendship and contribute to cultural and intellectual understanding.

5. Apart from the non-official scientific congresses dealt with in the WHO-UNESCO project, in connection with which the Pan American Sanitary Bureau is to act as a Regional Office of the World Health Organization, conforming to its procedures, it is also necessary to consider the problems arising from the organization and conduct of regional medical meetings having official status.

## II. RECOMMENDATION

6. In order to assist in the international exchange of scientific information at official meetings and cooperate toward the objectives of having these meetings properly organized, not excessive in number, and conveniently coordinated, it is proposed that the Executive Committee present this subject to the governments of the American countries, suggesting that the following procedure be employed in calling official Pan American meetings:

(a) That the organizing committees of Pan American medical meetings or congresses which request assistance or have official status submit their plans and programs to the Executive Committee of the Pan American Sanitary Organization before proceeding to organize the meetings.

(b) The Executive Committee will give careful consideration to the information furnished by the organizing committee, as well as to the purpose and program of the conference, and, with due regard to the compatibility of dates, will submit observations to the governments which may serve as a guide in determining whether to encourage or discourage the official inter-American medical conference in question. The Executive Committee and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau will not intervene in arranging the scientific program of the congress, which will remain a responsibility of the organizing group, but may propose topics and modifications of the agenda for the purpose of augmenting the importance of the congress to the American countries.

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