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the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN
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CARIBBEAN COOPERATION IN HEALTH

This document is presented to the 99th Meeting of the Executive Committee for the purpose of informing it of the progress made with respect to the Caribbean Cooperation in Health initiative (CCH).

The document describes what has been done to promote CCH in the Caribbean and with international agencies and foundations. It also refers to the importance of CCH as the framework for technical cooperation in the Caribbean and alludes to possibilities of developing collaborative efforts between the English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries.

The Committee is asked to take note of the information contained herein and, if appropriate, transmit such information to the Directing Council.

CARIBBEAN COOPERATION IN HEALTH

Progress Report

INTRODUCTION

At the XXII Pan American Sanitary Conference (1986) the Member Governments adopted Resolution XI on Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH). This resolution endorsed the initiative and encouraged the Member Countries of the Caribbean subregion to emphasize CCH as the focus for the development of proposals for technical cooperation. The presentation made to the Conference outlined the basic strategies to be used and the various fora to which CCH had been presented. The present report describes the progress which has been made in implementing the initiative.

PROMOTION OF CCH

Within the Caribbean

Efforts have been directed during the past year at promoting CCH within the national governments and with the various Caribbean institutions. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have utilized every means, including formal and informal presentations, to bring CCH to the attention of sectors of government other than the Ministries of Health. PAHO and CARICOM have also informed and involved the Caribbean representatives of the various multilateral and bilateral agencies which have programs of technical cooperation in the Caribbean. Presentations have been made or are planned for the wider public, either through local organizations or directly through the media. PAHO and CARICOM have agreed with the Caribbean Development Bank on ways in which the Bank might support and promote CCH.

At the International Level

The CCH has been presented to a wide range of institutions, including multilateral and bilateral agencies.

Financial Institutions

The CCH has been included in the Work Plan for the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development. Discussions have been held with the Inter American Development Bank on possibilities of support to CCH.

Multilateral Agencies

Discussions have been held with agencies such as UNICEF and UNDP, and contact has been made with UNFPA and UNESCO. The response in every case has been positive, and UNICEF has already indicated support for the development of projects in the area of maternal and child health.

Bilateral Agencies

Discussions have been held with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and a formal approach has been made to try to obtain support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

A preparatory PAHO/CARICOM team visited France, the Netherlands, Belgium, West Germany and Italy in order to seek support from these countries. There was general interest in the CCH although most of the countries did not have specific aid policies for health in the Caribbean. This mission was followed by a visit of Ministers from the Caribbean with the objective of promoting general support for CCH and stimulating the development of an aid policy in health which was more appropriately focused to meet Caribbean needs. The ministerial mission visited the United Kingdom in addition to the countries mentioned above.

Partly as a result of discussions in France, more formal contact has been established between the health departments of Martinique and Guadeloupe and the Office of the PAHO Caribbean Program Coordinator to establish a plan for more structured collaboration and cooperation between the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean countries.

Private Foundations

The Carnegie Corporation of New York agreed to host a meeting of private American foundations to consider CCH. The Caribbean has been an active grant-making area for the Carnegie Corporation, which sees the CCH as providing new opportunities for working with Caribbean groups and institutions. A total of 21 foundations were invited to the meeting, where presentations were made by the Ministers of Health of Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago and by the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

CCH AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Caribbean Cooperation in Health was originally conceived as being more than a mechanism for attracting additional resources into the Caribbean. It was seen as an opportunity to focus the technical cooperation in the region on the priority areas as a means of strengthening the whole health system. The aspect of intercountry collaboration and cooperation was also important, and PAHO, in its dialogue with the national governments, has attempted to use CCH as the reference for its own technical cooperation in the subregion. PAHO has also sought to use a modest amount of funds set aside for activities designed to foster the development of CCH within the context of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC).

The countries have also begun to appreciate that the activities under CCH cannot be restricted to the specific projects already identified for additional support. All the activities under the six priority areas, regardless of source of funding, are being considered as part of the initiative.

TRAINING IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The decision to work through projects has highlighted the need to improve skills in the area of project development and management in the Caribbean. PAHO, CARICOM and the Caribbean Development Bank have collaborated in carrying out subregional as well as national training courses in project development. A major step to be taken in the future development of CCH is the preparation of projects or pre-projects in those areas which have hitherto only been identified with project profiles.

WIDENING THE GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF CCH

When CCH was originally conceived and accepted, it was proposed that the following English-speaking countries and other political units in the subregion would be involved: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands. The selection of these countries and territories was based on the CARICOM grouping.

During subsequent development and promotion of CCH this position was queried, and it was proposed that the wider Caribbean should be involved. Haiti was mentioned as a possible participant; however, a special approach to Haiti's problems would be more prudent. PAHO approached the Government of Haiti and offered the Organization's support in developing a special initiative which would be aimed particularly at strengthening the health system infrastructure and hopefully would attract the attention and support of other international bilateral or multilateral agencies. It was agreed, however, that the CCH subregional projects might involve the wider Caribbean. A good example is the project for eradicating Aedes aegypti. This vector cannot be eliminated successfully from any Caribbean island unless neighboring islands have eradication programs.

The degree of wider Caribbean involvement will therefore depend on the type of project and the possibility of coordinating and funding a genuinely pan-Caribbean effort. The collaboration between Francophone and Anglophone Eastern Caribbean islands has already been mentioned.