



directing council

PAN AMERICAN
SANITARY
ORGANIZATION
VI MEETING

regional committee

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION
IV MEETING



*Havana, Cuba
15-24 September 1952*

CD6/30 (Eng.)
12 September 1952
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Topic 29: PAN AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Background

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau has given support during the past ten years to the United States-Mexico Border Public Health Association which has been composed of members in all fields of public health activities from public health services on both sides of the frontier between the United States and Mexico. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau has carried in great part the secretarial and organizational load of this organization. (During the past three or four years, a nominal membership fee of \$1.00 per person has been collected which covers only minor incidental expenses in connection with the annual meeting). The Association has no journal of its own but a considerable number of the papers presented at its annual meetings are published in the Bulletin of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau each year. The organization of the Border Association is believed to be unique in that it is semi-official with a Board of Trustees composed of representatives of the National Governments of Mexico and the United States, of individual border states of both countries and the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. The Directing Council of the Association is representative of the different sections and activities of the Association.

The annual meetings of the Border Association are held alternately in the United States and Mexico and have undoubtedly been of considerable importance in facilitating mutual understanding between health workers in the two neighboring countries.

The report of the Secretary at the Annual Meeting of the Association in 1952, contained a surprising reference to a paid up membership of 22 Cuban members, forcibly calling attention to the importance of giving careful consideration to the possibility of expanding this type of international collaboration.

For a number of years, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau has been fostering together with other interested organizations, the development of the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering. Likewise, the Bureau has in the past participated in the activities of the Inter-American Hospital Association. In each of these cases, it has not been possible to develop fully self-supporting organizations and it is apparent on the basis of careful studies which have been made by interested professional groups in each of these two fields of activity, that it is not possible to develop entirely self-supporting inter-American organizations at the present time. In the discussions which have taken place as to the proper method of getting support for such associations, it has been suggested that the possibility should be explored of creating a Pan American Public Health Association having sections of sanitary engineering, hospital administration, nursing, etc., rather than to maintain special individual inter-American organizations, each of which would require its own secretarial staff and, for best results, its own publication.

The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau has learned informally of a certain initiative in Mexico during recent years, looking towards the organization of an Inter-American Association for Public Health, and in the international field, note should be taken of the existence of the International Federation of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, a federation of public health associations of the world organized in Paris in October, 1950.

The American Public Health Association has for many years had official relationships with Canada, Mexico and Cuba and maintains informal contact with a number of health workers throughout the Americas.

The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau has held informal discussions with the Representative of the American Public Health Association and has learned that the APHA recognizes that its structure, as an organization is devoted primarily to the workers of the United States, does not form a natural channel for an inter-American organization.

Points for Discussion

The Director of the Bureau presents the question of the organization of Inter-American Professional Public Health Associations for discussion and suggests the following points for special consideration:

- (1) Advisability of general public health association with special sections versus special professional associations,
- (2) The degree to which a non-official inter-American professional association could anticipate official support from governmental sources,
- (3) Types of membership:
 - a) Of public health associations
 - b) Of individual health workers
- (4) Sources of financial support for minimal secretarial and office help during initial five-year period:
 - a) Public health associations
 - b) Philanthropic sources (Rockefeller Foundation, Kellogg Foundation)
 - c) Pan American Sanitary Bureau
 - d) Institute of Inter-American Affairs
- (5) Type of publication