
MESSAGE FROM DR. JARBAS BARBOSA, PAHO DIRECTOR, WORLD HEALTH DAY, 7 APRIL 2023

Washington, DC

Today we are celebrating World Health Day, as we do every year on April 7th, but we are also honoring the World Health Organization on the 75th anniversary of its creation. This is a great opportunity to highlight the achievements made in recent decades, the major advances in public health that have improved the quality of people's lives, and the lessons learned, while recognizing the challenges that lie ahead.

Health for All has been our top objective throughout all these years. And despite the tremendous progress we have made, inequities persist in the Region of the Americas and have been exacerbated by COVID-19.

The pandemic has significantly impacted people's health and lives, as well as the conditions for development in the countries of the Region. It has exposed and deepened structural challenges faced by health systems, affecting response capacity and deepening inequities.

During the crisis, essential health services were disrupted and those receiving COVID-19 patients were overwhelmed by high demand. Despite the efforts made, maintaining continuity of service remains difficult.

The pandemic also caused shortages and inequities in access to essential medicines and other health technologies. It also significantly increased existing access barriers to health services and generated new ones.

We aspire to develop and achieve resilient health systems that have the capacity to prepare for an emergency and respond effectively, maintain basic functions during a crisis, and reorganize and transform if conditions so require.

Message of Dr. Jarbas Barbosa on World Health Day, April 7, 2023.

As we progress through the pandemic, it has become clear that the Primary Health Care strategy is the key to achieving this, because the fundamental component of a resilient health system is efficient primary care, with the capacity to coordinate health promotion, disease prevention and surveillance, and care for the most prevalent health problems in our communities.

Now more than ever, in the context of the Region of the Americas, "Health for All" is a call to reaffirm our commitment to primary health care in order to build resilient systems, and it is a call to redouble our efforts to achieve this.

On behalf of the Pan American Health Organization, I want to reiterate our commitment to Member States and our support for the achievement of Health for All.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Jarbas Barbosa