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XXIV Meeting

XXVIII Meeting

INDEXED

México, D.F.  
September-October 1976

*Complete set of documents*

Provisional Agenda Item 34

CD24/29 (Eng.)  
23 September 1976  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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CREATION OF NATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH SCIENCES  
DOCUMENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA

(Item proposed by the Government of Chile)

LIBRARY  
PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

(TRANSLATION)

REPUBLIC OF CHILE  
Ministry of Health

Ref.: Transmits item presented by the  
Government of Chile to the XXIV  
Meeting of the Directing Council of  
PAHO, XXVIII Meeting of the Regional  
Committee of WHO for the Americas

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No. 2245

Santiago, 13 September 1976

Doctor Héctor R. Acuña  
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau  
525 Twenty-third St., N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20037, U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Acuña:

In accordance with Rule 8 (c) of the Rules of Procedure of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization, the Government of Chile has pleasure in submitting for consideration by the XXIV Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO, XXVIII Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas the following agenda item: "CREATION OF NATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH SCIENCES DOCUMENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA." Enclosed is the original and two copies of the proposed item, and I would be grateful if it could be included in the agenda of the Meeting.

The topic with which the Chilean proposal is concerned was recommended by the III Meeting of Ministers of Health and included in the Ten-Year Health Plan, which is evidence of its importance and its continuing validity. We feel, however, that it has not been given its due importance, and hence that we should press for its application by having the Directing Council approve the proposed recommendations.

I have the honor to be,

(signed)

FERNANDO MATTHEI AUBEL  
Brigadier General (Air Force) (A)  
MINISTER OF HEALTH

CREATION OF NATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH SCIENCES DOCUMENTATION  
IN LATIN AMERICA

(Item proposed by the Government of Chile)

The Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas (PAHO Official Document 118, January 1973) contains the following recommendations:

1. Establish national documentation systems for the health sciences in the countries of Latin America, to be linked among themselves and with the Regional Library of Medicine and with the National Library of Medicine of the United States of America, in a Pan American scientific documentation and information network.
2. Train the necessary personnel for the normal operation of these services.

It also spells out the goals that must be set in order to carry out the recommendations, including the following:

- Establish medical libraries in the countries to serve as the basis for eventual national health-science documentation and information systems.
- Establish a Pan American network for the dissemination of scientific information, developing an interlibrary loan system and applying the most up-to-date procedures available in communications technology and data analysis, storage, and retrieval in the service of the health sciences.
- Create centralized services for the purchase and processing of books and journals so as to avoid unnecessary duplication and facilitate importation and customs clearance.

The action taken by the PAHO/WHO Regional Library of Medicine (BIREME) at São Paulo to provide the Latin American countries with encouragement and incentives with a view to establishing national systems of biomedical documentation is well known. In addition, with the help of contributions from the Kellogg Foundation and the Organization, emphasis has been placed on the educational program designed to provide training at all levels for librarians to operate such systems.

However, a number of countries in Latin America have not been able as yet to organize such national systems or have not been in a position to finance subscriptions to an adequate

number of foreign biomedical periodicals essential for establishing scientific documentation and information programs. Nor have they been able to operate national networks of health-science libraries for lack of specialist technical staff or to make full use of the services made available to them by BIREME.

In view of this, the Government of Chile proposes that the following recommendations be adopted:

1. To repeat the recommendation to the countries that they make haste with a view to creating the national systems of documentation on health sciences by the end of the decade.
2. To urge that the countries which have already established systems consolidate and expand their capacity to disseminate scientific and technical information to health professionals by extending the services to hospitals and thus creating regional systems of biomedical information designed to provide up-to-date scientific information to health professionals, whatever their place of work, and especially to services concerned with initial care and the coverage of the rural areas most remote from large centers.
3. To request the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to continue to give financial support for the establishment of such programs and to give its blessing, vis-à-vis other international or private agencies, to projects set up by the countries to this end.
4. To request the Pan American Health Organization to increase the quota of fellowships to provide advanced training for librarians of hospitals and other health centers.