

directing council



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HEALTH
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XXVII Meeting

regional committee

WORLD
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XXXII Meeting



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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Presented by Mr. Michel Careau (Canada), Chairman of the Executive Committee)

In accordance with Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Committee, I have the honor as its Chairman to report to you on the two Meetings, the 83rd and the 84th, held by the Executive Committee in the last 12 months.

83rd MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The 83rd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Pan American Health Organization was held at the Headquarters building in Washington, D.C., on 5 October 1979, and was attended by representatives of all its members, namely Brazil, Canada, Chile, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Peru, United States of America, and Venezuela. As usual, the Committee received valuable support from the Director and the Secretariat of the Bureau.

The Committee held a single plenary session at which the new Members—Chile, Guyana, and Mexico—were installed.

The officers of the Committee were elected as follows: Chairman, Michel Careau (Canada); Vice Chairman, Dr. Carlos L. de Paredes (Guatemala); and Rapporteur, Dr. Luis David Marcial (Mexico).

The Representative of Guyana was elected member of the Award Committee for the PAHO Award for Administration to replace the outgoing member, Trinidad and Tobago.

The Representative of Chile was appointed to the chair vacated by Paraguay on the Standing Subcommittee on Inter-American Nongovernmental Organizations.

The Representatives of Guyana, Peru and the United States of America were appointed to analyze the measures to be taken by the Governing Bodies in connection with the study of WHO's structures in the light of its functions.

The Representative of Chile was appointed to the Subcommittee on Long-term Planning and Programming in conjunction with the Representatives of Canada and Guatemala.

The Director was instructed to set the dates of the 84th Meeting of the Executive Committee in consultation with the Chairman.

Finally, the Committee adopted a resolution authorizing the establishment of official working relations between PAHO and the Latin American Federation of the Pharmaceutical Industry (FIFARMA).

84th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

I have the honor and good fortune to share my task before you with Dr. Nelson Vargas of Chile, who in the 84th Meeting was also designated to represent the Executive Committee at the XXVII Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO, XXXII Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas. In addition, the Executive Committee designated Dr. Thomas Malone (United States of America) and Dr. Luis David Marcial (Mexico) as first and second alternates, respectively, in the event that either of us were unable to attend the Meeting of the Directing Council.

The 84th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Pan American Health Organization was held at the Headquarters Building in Washington, D.C., from 23 to 27 June 1980. It was unusually brief, and I must say that this fine result is to be credited to the diligence, understanding and goodwill of all the participants, which greatly facilitated the conduct of the discussions and made the Chairman's task a pleasant one. Another factor which in no small way contributed to this result was the circumstance that this year the Executive Committee did not have to consider a proposed program and budget because of the new system of biennial budget cycles. In any case, the brevity of the Meeting did nothing to impair its quality. The Members and Observers joined very actively in the discussions, and the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and his associates were at all times forthcoming with all

the details that were needed for a thorough study of the problems that arose as the agenda of the Meeting was worked through.

This agenda was approved by the Committee pursuant to Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure and without discussion other than to make some slight changes to the order in which the items were to be examined.

Nor did the next item on the agenda elicit any discussion, and the Executive Committee adopted Resolution I in compliance with which the XXVII Meeting of the Directing Council, XXXII Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas, is being held from 22 September to 3 October 1980.

Similarly, the provisional agenda of the present Meeting of the Directing Council, presented by the Director, was adopted by the Executive Committee with the inclusion of an additional topic, "Proposed Five-Year Plan and Resources for the Program on Emergency Preparedness and Role of the Organization in the Immediate Aftermath of Disasters," proposed by the Representative of Canada, as stated in Resolution II adopted on the matter.

Item 5 of the Committee's agenda, "Regional Strategies of Health for All by the Year 2000," was presented by Dr. Ehrlich (Deputy Director), who recalled that in 1977 the World Health Assembly had decided, in Resolution WHA30.43, that the main social target of Governments and WHO should be the attainment by all the citizens of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that would permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life. The previous year the Directing Council had decided in Resolution XXVIII that the evaluation of the Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas was to be completed in 1980. In its 82nd Meeting the Executive Committee had approved an action plan (Resolution XIX) coordinating into one single process the evaluation of the Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas and the formulation of national and regional strategies, and establishing a timetable for this work. In September 1979 the XXVI Meeting of the Directing Council had confirmed this work plan and the timetable for carrying it out.

As of 15 June 1980, 23 Governments had carried out the evaluation of the Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas in their countries, and 20 of them had formulated their national strategies.

To assist the Governing Bodies to formulate the regional strategies, the Secretariat was preparing a reference document, based on replies from the countries, which would not be available until mid-July, i.e., after the 84th Meeting of the Executive Committee.

In view of this, the Executive Committee immediately decided that its Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning and Programming, composed of Representatives of Canada, Chile and Guatemala, would meet on 24 and 25 July to review the reference document. This would still permit the Secretariat to send it to the Member Governments 30 days before the opening of the XXVII Meeting of the Directing Council, as required by the Council's Rules of Procedure.

In the interesting discussions that then took place, the Representative of the United States of America said that the attainment of this goal was a high priority in the policy of his country, which had also participated in a meeting on the subject with Canada, Norway and the U.S.S.R. He emphasized the need for health services that were accessible to all and best suited to the needs of each country. He also referred to the advisability of establishing some indicators for evaluating the results.

The Representative of Brazil explained his country's complex situation, which combined the problems of underdeveloped and industrialized countries, and he spoke of his Government's policy commitment to implement the WHO resolution.

The Observer for Cuba described the situation in her country and said that the strategies for attaining the goal of health for all by the year 2000 were those which her Government had been applying for a long time.

The Director of the Bureau pointed out, among other things, that it would be preferable for the moment not to recommend any indicators that might affect the selection of strategies by the countries themselves. However, he recognized that they would be needed later on, not only to measure the coverage of services, but also for other problems that may arise. He was optimistic about the capacity of the Americas to attain health for all by the year 2000, not as an isolated event, but as part of multisectoral efforts toward socioeconomic development.

The outcome of this discussion was the approval of Resolution VII, which indicates the steps to be taken by the Americas to implement the WHO proposals in regard to health for all by the year 2000.

With regard to item 6, Diarrheal Disease Control Program for the Americas, the Executive Committee was informed about the continuing progress being made toward the control of acute diarrheal diseases in the Americas. There was a lively discussion in which many speakers stressed different important aspects of the control of these diseases, such as the improvement of nutrition, health education and food hygiene, environmental sanitation; epidemiological surveillance; breast-feeding; and research

in new vaccines. It was realized, however, that the greatest emphasis should be placed on the use of salts for the oral rehydration of patients, which could quickly reduce infant mortality from these diseases. In Resolution III the Executive Committee proposes to the Council the adoption of a resolution endorsing the work done and recommending that the Program be continued as an integral component of primary health care strategies.

The Committee held an interesting discussion on the Hemispheric Plan for the Promotion and Support of Malaria Programs (item 7). Several members emphasized the importance of eradication continuing to be the ultimate goal of antimalaria operations, and it was noted that measures taken should be suited to the conditions prevailing in each country and that these operations should be coordinated with neighboring countries. The Observer for Nicaragua reported on the continuous epidemiological evaluation that his country would conduct so that available resources could be used where they were most needed, and the Observer for Cuba said that the malaria control effort offered an excellent opportunity for implementing technical cooperation among developing countries.

The Bureau gave a detailed explanation of the Hemispheric Plan, which is based on 1) the formulation of new strategies; 2) the evaluation of each situation; 3) the study of sources of financing; 4) exchanges of experience and information; 5) the preparation of supplementary regional programs (particularly for professional training); and 6) cooperation among developing countries.

The Director noted that the complexity of the problem and the steeply increased prices of insecticides made it necessary to formulate the strategies very carefully, without losing sight of eradication as the final goal.

This discussion resulted in the adoption by the Executive Committee of Resolution IV, recommending to the Council the adoption of a resolution embodying these points.

With regard to the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) in the Americas (item 8), it was pointed out that the long-term objectives of the EPI were 1) to reduce the mortality and morbidity from diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, and tuberculosis through the vaccination of all children by 1990; 2) national self-efficiency in the provision of immunization services through extension of the coverage of health services; and 3) self-sufficiency in the control of vaccine quality. It was emphasized, among other things, that in order to really immunize and not merely vaccinate, it was necessary to improve the conditions for implementation of the Program. The Director recalled

that the EPI Revolving Fund would need a capital of US\$4 million to function effectively. Hence an additional \$1,700,000 would have to be found, as there was only \$2.3 million on hand. It was also necessary, the Director said, that the countries that had already drawn on the Revolving Fund reimburse the amounts received so that it could continue to serve the purpose for which it was established. The outcome of this discussion was the adoption of Resolution X, in which the Executive Committee recommends to the Directing Council a resolution conveying what it regards as needed for the EPI to truly become an important element toward the goal of health for all by the year 2000.

In the discussion of item 9 (Program for the Control of Noncommunicable Diseases), the existing programs, preventive measures, and integration of prevention measures into general health services were reviewed.

The Director recalled that, despite their growing importance, noncommunicable diseases still ranked second in the order of priorities after communicable diseases, and that this must be borne in mind when allocating scarce resources. The gist of this interesting discussion was accurately reflected in the text of a resolution recommended to the Council for adoption in Resolution V, which was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee.

The discussion of item 10 of the agenda (Malnutrition and Deficiency-Induced Mental Retardation) was based on a study that the Directing Council had requested from the Director for consideration by the Executive Committee. This study analyzed and identified the deficiency-related causes of mental retardation in children and suitable preventive measures. The subject was of great interest to the members of the Executive Committee and the observers, who cited a variety of socioeconomic factors intrinsic to the context of malnutrition, poverty and ignorance. The spirit of these discussions was reflected in Resolution VI, in which the Executive Committee thanked the Director for his valuable report and requested him to distribute it as widely as possible and to transmit it to the Organization's Advisory Committee on Medical Research.

The Secretariat presented item 11, "Health and Youth." It referred to the importance of young people in society, gave a summary account of the work done by the Organization, and stressed the advisability of young people themselves participating in the definition of their problems and the search for ways of solving them. In the discussion that followed, the problem was considered from the standpoint of the attainment of health for all by the year 2000. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of education and a multisectoral approach to

the matter, and the problems of health, social adaptation, drugs, tobacco, pregnancy, venereal diseases, and exposure to pollutants were analyzed. The Director said that young people should be regarded not so much as a problem but as a resource of inestimable value, whose contribution to health for all by the year 2000 should be maximized. All this was then embodied in Resolution VIII.

An interesting report was presented on the I Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health (item 12). In this Meeting the Member Governments had reported the work done in 1979 in fulfillment of the Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas, and had stressed the need for the close coordination of programs in the health and agricultural sectors. The Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Zoonoses Centers had also reported on their work and the cooperation offered to the Governments that year. The pressing financial problem of those Centers, for which supplementary budgets were approved only for 1980, was also clearly brought out in that Meeting.

The Executive Committee took note of the report on the I Meeting and commended the Ministers of Agriculture that had attended it for their efforts to control and prevent animal diseases that affect human health and the economies of the countries in the Hemisphere (Resolution IX).

On the subject of item 13 (Evaluation of the Pan American Zoonoses Center and the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center and Recommendations on Budgetary Adjustments for 1981), the Committee was informed of the work of the External Evaluation Team. A progress report had been prepared for consideration by the Committee.

Highlights of the provisional conclusions of this report are that, in the judgment of the Evaluation Team, PANAFTOSA is an international undertaking whose management must be entrusted to a prestigious authority that enjoys the confidence of the governments, such as PAHO; that PANAFTOSA and CEPANZO are amply justified by the economies they make possible for the countries which, through relatively modest investments, are able to avert the enormous losses that can be inflicted by, for example, brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis and rabies. The point was also made that, if foot-and-mouth disease were to spread to the north, the losses could be in the thousands of millions of dollars.

The Evaluation Team realized that funds of PAHO's regular budget should not be diverted from human health problems, and it clearly recommended that the Ministries of Agriculture should become more active in the international financing of the Centers. It also advised changes and reorientations in the programs of the Centers, and highlighted the

serious problems in need of solution in the areas of finance, supplies, housing, and employment conditions of the staff. Accordingly, it requested as a transitory measure that a recommendation be made to the Directing Council for the approval of a supplementary budget for 1981 similar to that for 1980.

In the discussion that followed, two different points of view were expressed. One of these was that, since the conclusions of the report presented were not final, the Executive Committee should abstain from any recommendation to the Directing Council for the approval of a supplementary budget, even in the face of the manifest usefulness of the services provided by those Centers to the Governments. Other members considered that a supplementary budget should be approved for 1981 to permit the maintenance of the services of the Centers at the level of 1980.

The discussion ended on that note, and a proposed resolution was considered by the Executive Committee and approved with the deletion of a last paragraph recommending the Directing Council to adopt the aforementioned supplementary budget for 1981 (Resolution XXI). The decision to delete this paragraph was approved by a vote of five in favor and four against.

The Executive Committee also dealt with item 14 of its agenda "Status of the Evaluation of Pan American Centers: Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC), Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), Latin American Center for Perinatology and Human Development (CLAP), and Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP)." The Secretariat reported on the progress of the evaluations, which had been mandated by Resolution XXXI of the XXVI Meeting of the Directing Council. The evaluations had not been completed because many Governments had not replied to the questionnaires sent to them. In the course of the discussion it was emphasized, among other things, that the work of the Centers must meet the real needs of the countries in the Region. The Director provided additional information on how the Centers could be improved and donations obtained for the provision of proper installations. He also spoke of the correlation between the work of the Centers and PAHO's technical cooperation program. He hoped that when the evaluation was completed, sufficient information could be given on every single Center to enable the Directing Council to reorient the work properly. The highlights of the discussion were written into Resolution XXII.

In the discussion of item 15 (Report on the Program of Technical Cooperation with Nicaragua), the Executive Committee was apprised in detail of the flexible and effective manner in which the Organization had

fully implemented the mandate of providing technical cooperation to Nicaragua in keeping with Resolution VII, by which the XXVI Meeting of the Directing Council had established an increased technical cooperation budget for 1980-1981 for that country. The technical cooperation had been provided properly, expeditiously and flexibly, taking into account at all times the situation in the country and the requests of its authorities.

This was acknowledged by the Observer for Nicaragua at the Meeting, who expressed the gratitude of his Government and suggested the wording of a possible proposed resolution, which was immediately sponsored by the Representatives of Venezuela and Brazil as members of the Executive Committee.

The Director explained that the new programming system (AMPES) had made it possible to deliver that cooperation with the requisite flexibility; this, he noted, was a feature exclusive to the Region of the Americas, which had been much praised by the members of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit during a visit to PAHO Headquarters.

The proposed resolution was finally approved by the Executive Committee as Resolution XIII.

The Executive Committee was also informed about the resolutions of the Thirty-third World Health Assembly that were of particular interest to it (item 16). The Director spoke in detail about the possible consequences of all of them, clarified doubts, and answered several questions of the members, such as the latest provisions in connection with the eradication of smallpox and the destruction of some virus stocks. He also referred to the legal or even constitutional factors which still prevent some countries from lifting their smallpox vaccination requirement for international travelers. Other matters were also discussed, among them the difficulties of hiring professional staff from countries which WHO deemed to be "overrepresented" in WHO's personnel. The Executive Committee approved Resolution XII taking note of these resolutions of WHO and transmitting them to the Directing Council for its information.

The Representative of the United States of America spoke of his interest in Resolution WHA33.27 of the WHO World Health Assembly, and presented to the Executive Committee a proposed resolution, which was approved (Resolution XI), to highlight the importance of the problems of drug abuse in the Region so that attention would be given to them in the countries and the item placed on the agenda of the XXVII Meeting of the Directing Council.

Also in connection with this item on the WHO resolutions of interest to PAHO, the Committee adopted Resolution XVIII, in which you are invited to support the proposal that World Health Assemblies be held every two years, and you are urged to support the proposed amendments to the Constitution of WHO on this subject. The Director is also requested to transmit the resolution to WHO and to the other WHO Regional Directors.

As the Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Study of WHO's Structures in the Light of its Functions (item 17), Dr. Bryant reported on the progress made in this matter, and underscored its importance by noting that the social objective of health for all by the year 2000 would never be any more than an idle rhetorical flourish unless a proper organization were set up. He explained in detail the discussions that had taken place at the Thirty-third World Health Assembly on this matter and the content of Resolution WHA33.17 adopted on the subject. He said that the Subcommittee he chaired endorsed the proposal to strengthen the regional structures of WHO and their functions, for decentralization had brought the decision-making bodies into closer touch with the real needs of the countries. He asked that the Subcommittee meet again to draw up a basic document for the Directing Council. The Director proposed that this meeting be held during the week of 11 August. Since the Representative of Peru said that he would be unable to take part in the work of the Subcommittee, the Executive Committee decided to appoint the Representative of Brazil in his place. The Subcommittee will therefore consist of the Representatives of Brazil, Guyana and the United States of America.

At the end of the discussion the Director spoke of the difficulties and dangers involved in the adaptation of structures, functions, regulations, etc., to those of WHO, and said that each case merited thorough study, and he therefore promised to convey the views of the Secretariat at the meeting of the Subcommittee in August.

The outcome of this important discussion was Resolution XVII, which faithfully reflects the views of the members of the Executive Committee.

With regard to the Tentative Budgetary Projections for the Program Budget of the World Health Organization for the Region of the Americas for the Biennium 1982-1983 (item 18), the Secretariat gave a clear explanation of the situation halfway through the budgetary biennium. The Committee approved Resolution XIV, whose preamble clearly represents the situation and which, in its operative part, recommends to the Council the approval of the proposed program and budget of the World Health

Organization for the Region of the Americas, as given in Official Document 161 and revised in Document CE84/5 and ADD. I of the 84th Meeting of the Executive Committee, for transmittal to the Director-General of WHO.

With regard to the Report on the Collection of Quota Contributions (item 19), the Secretariat reported on the situation in detail and mentioned that collections had been somewhat slower in 1980 than in the previous year. This had made it necessary for the Bureau to draw more heavily on the Working Capital Fund to finance the regular operations. This situation also reduced the return on some investments that provided occasional income and could help finance the regular budget. The Executive Committee adopted Resolution XV on the collection of quota contributions, couched in terms similar to those of earlier years.

The Financial Report of the Director and Report of the External Auditor for 1979 (item 20) was presented with high precision and extensive detail. The members of the Committee were fully apprised of the content of Official Document 168, heard the Secretariat's explanation of the External Auditor's observations, and were convinced that the Organization's financial situation continued to be satisfactory. The Director referred, among other things, to the new AMPES system, to the gradual introduction of the computerized system recommended by the External Auditor, and to the advisability that donors provide their financial contributions early in order not to have to resort to the Working Capital Fund.

The Executive Committee adopted Resolution XIX to take note of the Report for 1979, and to commend the Director and thank the External Auditor.

On taking up item 22 of its agenda, the Committee was brought up to date on developments in regard to the representation of a number of organizations by observers in the meetings of the Governing Bodies. The study presented by the Director on the matter had been requested by the Executive Committee in its 82nd Meeting. This study amplified and systematized the rules initially established in 1954 by the XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference in Resolution CSP14.28. All this was reflected in Resolution XX, in which it is recommended that the Council approve a series of mechanisms for the establishment of relations with intergovernmental organizations whose requests for such relations have been approved by two thirds of the Directing Council or Pan American Sanitary Conference.

For the PAHO Award for Administration (item 23), this year there were five candidates, selected from a total of 21 nominations, for whom the biographical data were forwarded to the Award Committee, consisting

of the Representatives of Brazil, Guyana, and Peru. The Award Committee met on 25 and 26 June and decided to recommend that the Award for 1980 be made to Dr. Jair de Oliveira Soares, of Brazil. It also proposed a number of amendments to the Rules for conferring the Award, which the Executive Committee accepted after a brief discussion and, in Resolution XXIII, presents to the Council with a recommendation for approval.

The Secretariat presented item 24, concerning amendments to the Staff Rules of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, and pointed out that they conformed to those adopted by the Executive Board of WHO in January 1980 and had been drafted following consultations with representatives of the staff at Headquarters, in Areas II, IV and V, and at CEPANZO. Details were provided on a number of amendments presented in agencies belonging to the United Nations Common System with a view to uniformity of conditions of employment for staff at PAHO, WHO and the United Nations in regard to salary steps and promotions. The amendments are also intended to make mandatory the compensation of overtime worked by general services staff by monetary payment (or compensatory leave), to improve dependents' benefits, and to require at least three months notice (instead of only one) in the event of nonrenewal of contract.

The Chairman invited the President of the Staff Committee, Mr. del Campo, to present his views. Mr. del Campo made a case for the right of the Staff Association to participate in the deliberations of the decision-making bodies, not only on relations between the Staff and the Administration, but also on the programming, budgeting and organization of operations. He reported in detail on the efforts to make the Staff Association more representative by including the field staff, and complained of a lack of cooperation from the Administration in connection with the first meeting of the new Staff Council, to be held in Lima, Peru, in 1980, and by not providing facilities for communication with Headquarters, field organizations, and other international staff associations. He acknowledged, however, that the situation was improving, as evidenced by a recent letter from the Director to FICSA. After referring to the possibilities for improving the status of women in PASB and to the burning question of the personal safety of PAHO/WHO international civil servants, Mr. del Campo closed with an expression of confidence in the spirit of dialogue that would make it possible to solve problems in a harmonious way.

In the discussion that followed, several points were clarified and all the members of the Committee gave their full support to the amendments proposed, as stated in Resolution XVI, unanimously adopted, in which the Executive Committee confirmed the amendments to the Staff Rules of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

The Executive Committee was brought up to date in detail on the progress of the work of the Review Team appointed by the Director in compliance with Resolution XXX of its 82nd Meeting for the purpose of studying the employment systems at the Pan American Centers (item 25). Since this work had not yet been completed, it was agreed that no resolution need be adopted on the matter for the time being.

The Secretariat made a presentation on the subject of the reimbursement of travel costs of Representatives to WHO Regional Committees (item 26) and of the decisions that might be taken on it. Following a brief discussion, the Executive Committee came to the conclusion that absenteeism had never been an issue in the Region of the Americas, and that it was preferable that travel expenses continue to be borne by the Governments themselves in order to spare funds of the Organization that were better invested in program activities for the countries. Accordingly, the Committee unanimously adopted Resolution XXIV, in which it recommends to the Council the endorsement of this decision.

Under Item 27 (Other Matters), the members of the Committee heard a Secretariat report on the International Year of the Child, 1979, in which UNICEF served as coordinator. Among other things, it was told of the part played by PAHO as executing agency for projects financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and of its participation in meetings relating to the International Year of the Child, and in the preparation of several publications. It was felt that no resolution needed to be adopted on these matters.

It now remains for me only to report on two developments which, not being on the agenda, I have preferred to leave for the end, which does not mean by any way that I attach less importance to them.

The first development is an unusually grave one, of which we learned at the opening of the fourth plenary session on 24 June, when the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau told the Executive Committee that Dr. Carlos Tejada and Mr. Richard M. Newman, Director and Administrator of the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), respectively, had just been kidnapped in Guatemala by a group calling itself the "Guatemalan Workers' Vanguard." It was immediately decided to appoint an Emergency Subcommittee of the Executive Committee, consisting of its Chairman and the Representatives of Brazil and the United States of America, to support the steps to be taken by the Director and cooperate with him in any urgent action that might be needed to negotiate for and save the lives of the two kidnapped PASB officials, in the event that the problem had not been solved by the close of the 84th Meeting of the Executive Committee.

The second development is that at, the opening of the sixth plenary session the Ambassador of Spain to the Organization of American States officially presented to the Executive Committee the request of his Government to participate as Observer in the Pan American Health Organization. The Ambassador referred to the special ties that exist between Spain and America and to his Government's participation since 1962 in the technical cooperation programs of the OAS, where it had had Permanent Observer status since 1972. He then read out a letter conveying this request from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain to the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

Dr. Acuña said he would transmit the request of the Government of Spain to the Member Governments of PAHO and would place it on the agenda of the present meeting so that the Directing Council might consider the wish of this sister country.

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I hope that the deliberations and recommendations of the Executive Committee may be of use to you in your proceedings. My distinguished colleague, Dr. Nelson Vargas of Chile, and myself will be at all times at your disposal to provide any additional information that may be of interest to you on any one of those questions discussed during the last Executive Committee meetings. Before closing these remarks I would like to thank all of you for your kind attention and I would also like to express my appreciation for the great honor which was given to me to preside over the destinies of the Executive Committee for the last two years, namely since October 1978. My thanks also to those Members of the Committee over the last two years and to the Observers who attended the four meetings I presided for the excellent collaboration they offered me.

Thank you Mr. President.

Michel Careau
Washington, 22 September, 1980