



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



40th DIRECTING COUNCIL
49th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Washington D.C., 22 - 26 September 1997

RESOLUTION

CD40.R13

**HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTERS
CAUSED BY "EL NIÑO"**

THE 40th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Considering the grave consequences for health and the economy caused by "El Niño" in 1982 and 1983 in almost all the countries of the Region;

Concerned that the new manifestation of "El Niño" might be even worse than in the years mentioned;

Aware that the damages caused by this phenomenon affect several countries simultaneously, without respecting borders; and

Mindful of resolutions CD24.R10, CD26.R36, CD27.R40, and CD32.R10 of the Directing Council, which confer on PAHO the mandate to provide technical cooperation for health emergency preparedness programs to deal with disasters, for personnel training, and for the assessment of health needs in emergencies, and which request the Member States to allocate personnel and a budget for disaster relief in the field of health,

RESOLVES

1. To urge countries affected by "El Niño" that have not already done so to update their contingency plans to provide an adequate response to the health problems arising from this phenomenon.

2. To request the Member States to:

(a) take the necessary steps to develop effective coordination among sectors and mutual cooperation among countries in the spirit of regional integration;

(b) strengthen and integrate their systems for early warning, epidemiological surveillance, and the control of communicable diseases, particularly water-borne and vector-borne diseases, and disseminate this information freely through the Internet and other modern means of communication.

3. To request the Director to:

(a) continue technical cooperation with the Member States for emergency preparedness to enable them to deal with any emergency or disaster caused by "El Niño," coordinating actions in the health sector with subregional institutions such as the Hipólito Unanue Agreement and with other multisectoral institutions;

(b) ensure that the priorities of this cooperation are focused on analyzing epidemiological risk, coordinating the preparation of contingency plans, integrating responses among the countries, exchanging information for decision-making and public awareness, and training both medical and public health personnel.

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