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REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE CONTINENTAL PLAN OF COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY
AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The community water supply program of the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization is three years old. It dates from the meetings in 1959 of the Directing Council and the World Health Assembly in which resolutions were adopted establishing the importance of activities leading to a more rapid provision of safe and adequate water supplies for all the people. The reports which have been presented to the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization in 1959 and 1960 reflect the activities which were developed initially to get the water supply program underway in the region of the Americas.

Since the report of last year, clear evidence is at hand to indicate the success of programs undertaken in the first two-year period. As with any program a period of development has to be anticipated and results cannot be achieved within a period of a few months. This is clearly evident in noting that the report presented for 1959 showed no international investment for water in Latin America during that year; in 1960 there were no loans; but in 1961 and early 1962 a total of US\$128,000,000 was committed by the Inter-American Development Bank. Additional loans were made by the EX-IM Bank; and others are under study by the World Bank.

It is interesting to note also that the expenditures of Governments for water supplies appear to be rapidly increasing as reflected in the commitments, during the past year, of over US\$100,000,000 from national budgets, an amount which is for the most part in addition to the regular amounts normally budgeted for water construction.

The new construction financed from loan and national funds will benefit over 10,000,000 people.

It will be recalled that the initial resolution establishing the water program took note of the fact that the financing problems were the ones which were most severely limiting the construction of water systems throughout the Latin American countries. It will also be recalled that in the Technical Discussions of the Directing Council in 1959 related to

the problem of water supply, the conclusion was reached that investment in water systems would be realized only when the administration, management, and fiscal policies are sound. It was, therefore, on the basis of these conclusions that the Pan American Health Organization adopted the basic philosophy which has guided its operations throughout the past three years. This policy, in brief, has been that the Organization can best assist in the solution of water problems throughout the Latin American countries by concentrating on the creation of sound water organizations having good management; by concentrating on mechanisms of revenue production through realistic water rate structures; and by building the confidence of investors in water supply operations. The Pan American Health Organization, therefore, has placed great emphasis in its programs for development of sound management and fiscal policies. It has conducted a number of courses, seminars, and symposia. It has rendered advisory services all in fields which would ensure that these particular principles could have the maximum opportunity for understanding. In the future programs relating to water supply these activities will continue to carry a high priority. The fact that in 1960, 1961, and 1962 ever-increasing amounts have been invested in water supplies by international banks is evidence of the fact that lending institutions have assurance that the funds loaned will be recovered from the water operations. The task now confronting countries is that of insuring that this confidence is well placed.

It has been pointed out that the international sources of money are inadequate to solve the water problems of Latin America or any other areas of the world, and that these problems must be finally resolved through the utilization of local resources. If the loans which have been made for water supply serve a catalytic effect in demonstrating the feasibility of establishing sound water operations in the various countries, the funds will have been well expended.

A brief review of the status of certain aspects of the over-all water program in the Americas will indicate the situation as of the date of this report:

A. Status of PAHO Special Water Fund

In the year 1961, contributions to the Special Water Fund were pledged in the following amounts: U.S.A.: US\$150,000; Uruguay: 20,000 pesos. In 1962 to date, the contributions pledged have been as follows: Colombia: US\$5,000; U.S.A.: US\$300,000. At the present levels of expenditure, all funds contributed for the water program will have been expended by January 1, 1963. As shown in Annex 1, these funds are being used primarily for direct consultant help to governments. Part of the funds have been or will be used for regional short courses and study groups; part for short travel fellowships; and part for special studies of regional interest.

The importance which must be placed on the Organization's efforts to achieve good management; and the requests being received from governments

for technical support of all types, far exceed the limited funds available from the regular budget and will necessitate continuing support of the Special Water Funds if concentrated work is to continue in the water field.

B. Status of Long-Range Plans for Water Supply

1) Urban Water Supply

Several countries have completed ten-year plans for water supply in their urban areas. In most instances these plans will require additional engineering studies before construction activities can be started. Needed changes in organization and management practices have been undertaken in some instances while in others, much still remains to be done.

In general, the urban water program is progressing and it would appear that if the present level of activity continues, the goals set in the Charter of Punta del Este for urban water supply will be realized in many countries.

2) Rural Water Supply

The outlook for rural water supplies and the possibilities for reaching the Charter goals in ten years are less optimistic than those for urban water. The reason for this less favorable situations are several. The most important, however, are:

a) Ministries of Health have not the engineering personnel and organization to undertake a work of this magnitude.

b) Rural project financing is more difficult than urban and requires greater concentration on efforts to involve local sources of money.

Neither of the above obstacles are insurmountable but unless attention and action are immediately given, the rural objectives will not be met. The actions needed ought to include at least the following:

1. An immediate strengthening of the environmental sanitation services of the Ministries of Health by:

- a) Raising the level of the engineering services to a position which is directly responsible to the Minister.
- b) Providing the budget and the posts needed to staff the environmental sanitation services at national and local levels.
- c) Providing salaries and career opportunities for engineers in the health services which will attract and retain competent personnel.

2. Utilization to a maximum of local sources of funds for rural water supplies by:

- a) Involving engineers, health educators, sanitarians, nurses, doctors, and other health personnel in programs of mass education in the need for, and ways to obtain safe and adequate water for rural areas.
- b) Stimulate local self-help projects.
- c) Develop local committees whose objective, among others, will be to find local funds to help pay for water facilities for their community.
- d) Assignment to the Ministry of Health Engineers the task of studying new approaches and methods of financing applicable to local conditions.
- e) Concentration of action on rural communities where people are in greatest need and show the greatest interest in helping themselves through contributions and work.

In summary, the rural water objectives of the Charter can be reached in each country but only if engineering services of Ministries of Health are immediately strengthened and if local participation by the people is stimulated to the maximum.

C. Status of Projects

Water Projects, both urban and rural, are now underway in many countries. In about 26 projects international funds are involved. These projects have required, and will continue to require, time after approval of a loan and the beginning of construction. This is true because final engineering plans and specifications have to be completed, equipment and construction contracts let, and supplies delivered. Management and organizational changes involving legal actions frequently are involved which also require time.

Therefore, it is important to stress that in the development of any sound project, it will require years rather than months from beginning to completion.

The action being taken by governments to insure the good management on which success of water projects hinges, is presently less than could be hoped for.

D. Present Status of Water Works and Sanitation Personnel

Limited numbers of trained personnel in most countries need not prevent development of water programs immediately. To achieve ten-year goals, the personnel requirements will be in excess of present supply and steps must be taken in each country to immediately utilize to the maximum all existing engineering personnel and to begin to train the additional numbers required. As mentioned earlier, the organization and conditions of employment must be substantially improved or engineering personnel will be discouraged from working as members of the health team.

E. Status of Loans for Water

It can be predicted that in the period to follow, conditions for international loans for water supplies will become more rigid. In the past year and a half, new policies and procedures had to be developed. This period is ended. Sound projects able to show good organization leading to good management will have excellent chances to receive money. Poor projects will have poor success in obtaining funds.

Good management and fiscal responsibility will become ever increasing in importance.

F. Status of Water Projects for the Future

An evaluation of the activities carried out by the Organization in the water supply program over the past three years leads to the conclusion that considerable activity has developed along the lines which have been recommended and which will insure the channeling of ever increasing funds into the urban water program. Because of the necessity to insure that these loan funds will be properly utilized and that the water systems that receive them will be in a position to become self-sufficient and demonstrate the soundness of the philosophy of good organization and management it is believed that continued emphasis must be given to programs which will assist the Member Governments in those activities which will strengthen the organization and management activities of these water systems. While at the same time permitting the expansion of the program within countries to cover water systems which are entirely locally financed. An evaluation of the programs also indicates that because of the marked progress being made in the urban field ever increasing attention must be given to the smaller communities and rural component. Therefore, in terms of the activities of the Organization increasing stress will be placed on the mechanisms which will assist governments in better meeting the problem of the rural communities. Studies are now underway and will be continued in finding mechanisms of finance and administration suitable to the local rural area water systems. Such a program will therefore broaden the preliminary objectives of the Organization to cover the entire gamut of water supplies both urban and rural. Throughout all of the future programs great stress will be placed upon the training of personnel to undertake at local levels the work that is confronting governments and in providing the maximum local

resources possible. Attention will also be given to the in-service training of engineers through the mechanisms of short courses, seminars, symposia, and travel fellowships. Through the improvement of existing staff and the better utilization of all personnel it is believed that the existing limited resources can be concentrated in a manner which will best insure the successful implementation of the planned programs.

It is believed that the actions of the previous Directing Councils and World Health Assemblies in noting the importance of water to health, and in providing for priority programs to help solve the world problems of water shortage, have done much to focus the attention of world leaders on the importance of water to social and economic development. The importance of water to housing, tourism, industry, and urbanization further impress national planners on the necessity to give water a high priority. It is therefore believed that as of the time of this report, water is firmly established in the minds of economists, bankers, and national officials, as a priority item to be developed in all national plans.

It is for Ministries of Health to take advantage of the opportunity and to exercise their duties and responsibilities.

SUMMARY

This brief report has attempted to set forth the activities of the Pan American Health Organization in the regional program of water supply. The activity which has developed in practically every country of the region during the past year is a clear indication that the basic philosophies which have been a foundation of the Organization's program, are sound and that in almost every instance those governments which have established ten-year plans for water supply will be able to meet their goals if the present level of activity is continued.

Increasing emphasis will be placed by the Organization in finding solutions to problems of rural water supplies, making available this information to governments with the hope that the ten-year goals for the rural water supply program can also be realized in many areas. The Organization will continue to offer services of all types to the Member Governments in finding solutions to the many problems with which they are confronted in both the urban and rural water supply programs.

Annex

Activities during the past year in water supply

Activities of the Organization during the past year in the field of water supply have been concerned with the following:

1. Advisory services to the Governments of Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, in the field of long-range national plans for water supply.
2. Advisory services in water supply design to the Governments of Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, St. Lucia and Venezuela.
3. Training in water supply design for engineers from El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.
4. Advisory services in water supply accounting to the Governments of Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.
5. Assistance in the field of water supply management to the Governments of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela.
6. Support was provided in the technical design problems of water supply in Belize, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, St. Lucia and Venezuela.
7. Assistance in the preparation of documentation for loan submissions was given to the Governments of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.
8. Consultant services were provided to the Governments of Colombia, Peru and Venezuela in the field of public information and education in water supply.
9. Assistance was given to the Government of Honduras on matters related to establishment of a water supply laboratory, and a general assessment was made in six other countries on the general situation relating to water laboratories and water quality control.
10. Engineers from all countries of the region were given the opportunity to provide information on water supply design criteria and opportunity to discuss such criteria will be given at a regional seminar to be convened in September 1962 for this purpose.
11. Assistance was given to the Governments of Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala on problems related to the fluoridation of water supply through the utilization of fluorspar.

12. Assistance was given in the field of water rates and water supply financing to the Governments of Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, St. Lucia and Venezuela.

13. Joint activities carried out between the Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank in the field of technical assistance have been rendered in the countries of Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay and Peru. These have ranged from preliminary engineering studies to management assistance after loans.

14. Assistance has been given in the field of the technical development of well drillers and ground water development in the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, British Guiana, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela.

15. Assistance in revision of plans and loan presentation have been given in the Washington Office to delegations from the countries of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.

16. General consultations relating to the development of water supply programs have been held in Barbados, British Honduras, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and St. Lucia.