

14th WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THREE-WEEK SESSION

The 14th World Health Assembly opened in New Delhi on 7 February and ended on 24th. February 1961. The President was Sir Arcot Lakshman-swami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, and Chief Delegate for India.

The Assembly was attended by delegates from WHO's 109 Member and Associate Member States, including those from one new Member, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and from two new Associate Members, Tanganyika and Ruanda Urundi.

The World Health Assembly adopted a programme of work for 1962, with a working budget of 23 607,180 dollars. This figure comprises the Director-General's original proposal of 20,852 000 dollars, plus several additions approved by the Assembly, including an amount of 2,000,000 dollars towards financing the field activities of the worldwide malaria eradication programme, 797,347 dollars for the administrative and operational services costs of the malaria eradication programme, 110,033 dollars for assistance to the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville), and 21,400 dollars for the use of Russian as a working language in the European Region. A deduction of 203,000 dollars was made by the Director-General from his original proposal, following the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to reimburse WHO for the book value of its investment in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, WHO'S present headquarters. A new headquarters for WHO is at present being built in Geneva.

The budget adopted for 1962 reflects attempts to preserve the continuity of WHO's evolution in recent years, with particular reference to the increasing importance of the stimulation and co-ordination of medical research; the continued need to concentrate efforts on the world-wide eradication of malaria; the efforts to strengthen basic public health services and the wish to accept fully the responsibility which a very substantial increase in membership places upon the organization.

Twelve countries were elected to designate a person to serve on the WHO Executive Board. They are: Chile, Iceland, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Senegal, Spain and the United States of America. The twelve other members of the Board are from the following countries: Argentina, Ghana, Ireland, Jordan, Korea, Luxembourg, Nepal, Peru, Sudan, Thailand, United Kingdom and Venezuela.

Among the topics which received particular attention were :

Assistance to newly independent States : In its penultimate session the Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution concerning the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. Welcoming the attainment of independence by new States and their entry into WHO and stressing that WHO has an important part to play in promoting the right of colonial peoples to freedom and independence through assistance in raising levels of physical and mental health, the resolution appeals to the Member States of WHO to introduce or develop in their health education programmes the teaching of the principles of racial equality and non-discrimination with a view to promoting good mental health and in recognition of the fundamental right of every human being to health.

The Assembly also adopted a resolution voicing satisfaction with the speedy assistance given by WHO to the Congo and requesting the Director-General to give similar assistance to all newly independent States who become Members of WHO.

Malaria eradication : The Assembly approved a scheme to transfer gradually, over a period of three years, the cost of field operations in the world-wide malaria eradication campaign from the special voluntary fund to WHO's regular budget. Efforts to obtain voluntary contributions to the Malaria Eradication Special Account, from Governments and private sources, would continue. It was also decided that, beginning in 1961, the administrative and operational services' cost of the malaria eradication programme should be financed from WHO's Regular Budget.

These measures were designed to ensure that the technical achievements in malaria eradication, with which the Assembly expressed satisfaction, would not be hampered by lack of funds.

Radiation health : A resolution defining the role of WHO in radiation health, including the protection of mankind from ionizing radiation hazards, whatever their source, was adopted by the Assembly. The resolution notes that present scientific knowledge provides data on the harmful biologic and genetic effects on human beings of massive doses of ionizing radiation, voices recognition of the anxiety of WHO Member States concerning increased exposure to ionizing radiation and approval of the action of the United Nations General Assembly relating to the immediate cessation of nuclear test explosions.

Smallpox eradication : It was reported that the world-wide efforts to wipe out smallpox are making good progress and that most countries in which the