



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



45th DIRECTING COUNCIL

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Arrangements for the Panel Session on

Celebrating Alma-Ata Renewing our Commitment to Primary Health Care

Tuesday, 28 September 2004, 14:30 – 16:00

- The panel session will take place Tuesday afternoon, 28 September 2004.
- The session will begin with a video on primary health care, followed by opening remarks of Dr. Mirta Roses Periago, Director of the PASB.
- Six ministers of health, representing different subregions, will each give 10-minute expositions on the importance of primary health care for the country and subregion they represent, focusing on plans and challenges for the future with a brief summary on celebratory activities that have taken place. The ministers are:

Hon. John A. Junor
Minister of Health
Jamaica

Dr. Pedro García
Minister of Health
Chile

Dr. Julio José Frenk Mora
Secretary of Health
Mexico

Hon. Vildo Marin
Minister of Health and Communications
Belize

Dr. Ginés González García
Minister of Health
Argentina

Sr. Dr. José Ramón Balaguer
Minister of Public Health
Cuba

- The session will close with remarks of Dr. Jong-wook LEE, Director-General of WHO.
- During the coffee break, the Director will commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Declaration of Alma-Ata with a special cake with 25 candles that will be lit by Dr. Roses, Dr. LEE, and the Ministers of Health.

Theme

The PAHO/WHO Resolution CD44.R6, which was passed during the 44th Directing Council in September 2003, called for Member States to adopt a series of recommendations to strengthen primary health care. It also called for the Director to:

- (1) Take the principles of primary health care into account in the activities of all technical cooperation programs, especially those related to the Millennium Development Goals.
- (2) Evaluate the different systems based on primary health care and identify and disseminate the best practices.
- (3) Assist in the training of health workers for primary health care.
- (4) Support locally defined primary health care models that are flexible and adaptable.
- (5) Celebrate the 25th anniversary of Alma-Ata in a year-long process that would end in September 2004.
- (6) Organize a process for defining future strategic and programmatic orientations in primary health care.

In order to address the year-long celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Alma-Ata, a Task Force on the Celebration was created with representation from PAHO Headquarters and country offices. The work of the Task Force focused on the following objectives:

- promoting celebrations in the countries,
- providing materials to support country and regional activities, and
- producing a special issue of the *Pan American Journal of Public Health* dedicated to primary health care.

PAHO country offices, together with national authorities and various organizations, held special seminars, meetings, conferences, and other events where primary health care was a topic of discussion and celebration. Visits undertaken by the PASB Director were also opportunities to highlight the celebration and the renewed focus on primary health care and its relationship with the millennium development goals. Information on country activities was shared through a special Internet page. Several countries produced special publications including videos. At subregional and regional meetings and events, celebratory activities were facilitated. Of particular note is the

Special Meeting of the Health Sector of Central America and the Dominican Republic (RESSCAD), which was held in the Dominican Republic, in July 2004, where countries shared their perspectives on lessons learned from the implementation of primary health care over 25 years; and the Declaration of Boca Chica was signed.

Parallel to the celebratory activities, a Working Group on Primary Health Care was created to examine and reaffirm the conceptual dimensions of PHC as contained in the Alma-Ata Declaration; to develop operational definitions of concepts relevant to PHC; and to provide guidance to countries and the Organization on how to reorient the Region's health systems and services following the principles of PHC in the context of health sector reform processes. The Group will draft a declaration on primary health care that reflects current realities and the way forward. It will be presented for approval to PAHO's 46th Directing Council in September 2005.

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