MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

This item was placed on the agenda of the Health Assembly by the Executive Board, in the light of resolution AFR/RC12/R17 adopted by the Regional Committee for Africa at its twelfth session, the text of which reads as follows:

"REASONS WHY THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE HAS MET AT THE WHO HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA, AND MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO AVOID THE RECURRENCE OF SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES

The Regional Committee for Africa,

Considering that the government of the Republic of South Africa, in spite of its long association with the World Health Organization, accepts and practises the policy of apartheid, which policy subjects indigenous African citizens to racial discrimination to the detriment of their physical, mental and social well-being, in contravention of the principles, aims, and purposes of the Constitution of the World Health Organization,

Considering the increasing trend on the part of the Member States of the Region to refuse to admit on their own territory the representatives of the Government of South Africa or to sit side by side with them in regional meetings,

Considering that such a situation is liable in the near future to paralyse the functioning of the Regional African Organization and to prevent the Regional Committee from fulfilling its constitutional functions,

Recognizing that the Constitution does not provide for the cessation of the membership of a State,

Being conscious however of the needs of the South African population and of the necessity for the World Health Organization to be able to assist this population,

1. REQUESTS the Director-General to draw the attention of the next World Health Assembly to this situation; and

2. REQUESTS the World Health Assembly to study the appropriate measures to put an end to this situation, but without prejudicing the health rights of the South African population."
This resolution is therefore transmitted to the Health Assembly for consideration.

For the information of the Health Assembly, there is annexed to this document the text of Part IV(a) of the Report of the Regional Committee.¹

¹ Document AFR/RC12/14 Rev.1
PART IV (a) of Document AFR/RC12/14 Rev.1
(Report of the Regional Committee for Africa, twelfth session)

(a) Reasons why the Regional Committee met at the WHO headquarters in Geneva and measures to be taken to avoid the recurrence of similar circumstances

The Representative of Senegal summarized the reasons why the twelfth session of the Regional Committee could not be held in Dakar as had been decided. The addition of this new item to the agenda had been agreed upon because it was by no means impossible that a similar case might occur again. If so, the logical answer would be to hold sessions in Brazzaville, the Regional Head Office, since the provisions of the agreement made between WHO and the Congo (Brazzaville) in its capacity as host government, conferred the necessary privileges and immunities on the Organization.

After a considerable debate the Regional Committee decided to designate a sub-committee to draft a resolution. This resolution was the subject of further discussion 48 hours later.

The vote on the resolution (AFR/RC12/R17) was taken in a call-over giving the following results:

For the resolution: Cameroon, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Leopoldville), Dahomey, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanganyika, Togo, United Kingdom, Upper Volta

Against the resolution: South Africa

Abstentions: France, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Spain

Absent: Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon, Ghana

Not taking part in voting: Portugal

Number of Members present and voting: 17
Simple majority: 9
For the resolution: 16
Against the resolution: 1
Abstentions: 4