



TWENTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

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COORDINATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
WHO'S HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Coordination on programmes and
action in the field of the environment



A very large variety of organizations within and outside the United Nations system are involved in environmental activities. WHO participates as appropriate in many of these activities. There are financial implications in this coordination for WHO.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Twenty-seventh World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA27.50,¹ requested the Director-General to collaborate with and provide assistance to the various national and international programmes, agencies and ministries, as appropriate, concerned with the improvement of the human environment; and to strengthen collaboration with UNEP, particularly within the Environment Coordination Board and also with UNDP, UNICEF and the specialized agencies as well as other intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies concerned and to maintain WHO's leading role in respect to environmental activities that promote human health. The resolution also requested the Director-General to keep other international organizations informed of relevant decisions of the World Health Assembly and of the programmes of the Organization, and to report to the Twenty-eighth World Health Assembly on the progress achieved in this respect.

The Twenty-seventh World Health Assembly, in its resolution WHA27.49,² further requested the Director-General to submit to the fifty-seventh session of the Executive Board and to the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly, for their review, a report containing a summary of progress achieved in the implementation of the Organization's human health and environment programme, and proposals for the future development of this programme.

The present report is submitted in response to resolution WHA27.50, and deals with matters of coordination. Programme matters will be the subject of a separate report to be submitted to the fifty-seventh session of the Executive Board and the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly, in accordance with the resolution WHA27.49.

2. PROGRESS IN COORDINATION

2.1 Objectives of coordination

The environment is one of the major fields of concern to the organizations and institutions of the United Nations system which requires continuous and effective coordination. Whereas some organizations within the United Nations system are primarily concerned with man's impact

¹ Handbook of Resolutions and Decisions, Vol. II (1st ed.), 1975, p. 20.

² Handbook of Resolutions and Decisions, Vol. II (1st ed.), 1975, p. 19.

on the environment, WHO is essentially concentrating on the impact of the environment on man and the measures that may be required for reducing or preventing adverse effects on health. This includes the impact which occurs as a result of man's alteration of the natural environment. In essence, the dual-faceted nature of man and the environment are so interrelated that it becomes inconceivable to envisage activities in one area without relating them to the other since, ultimately, it is man's well-being which is at stake.

It will be seen in the paragraphs below how WHO collaborates with and participates in the programmes of other organizations relating to the environment. Such collaboration and participation occur for the most part because of the preparatory measures which are taken in numerous committees, subcommittees, working groups, expert panels, etc. that have been established to ensure the greatest degree of harmony and complementarity between the projects and programmes of the different organizations concerned. The principal body for coordinating programme activities at the governmental level is the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and at the secretarial level the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972 for coordinating, promoting and furthering environment activities within the United Nations system.

Apart from the international and regional levels where a very wide range of activities are planned and pertinent information is exchanged, one of the major coordination problems related to the environment and health appears at the all-important national level. This is also true for other sectoral in-puts into environmental studies. It would appear that no country has been able to make arrangements for a responsible agency which could deal with all the environment-related activities having a beneficial or adverse effect on man's health. The implications for health may be found in a variety of national projects having an environment component. For example, land and agricultural development have implications for public health as well as for the ecological balance between man and nature, yet such development falls within the purview of the Minister of Agriculture with the Minister of Health and other national health authorities becoming involved only at a later stage, if at all. This is also true in the case of a man-made environment in factories, mines, etc. where occupational health is a major concern of the Ministry of Health as well as the Ministry of Labour. In view of this, the coordination of environmental activities at the international and regional levels must eventually find their counterpart at the national level for such activities to be as effective as possible.

2.2 Some examples of coordination

Although there are a multitude of programmes and organizations involved in the environment, the main bodies and programmes with which WHO cooperates are reviewed below. This is not a complete list, nor does it provide all details on collaboration with those listed.

2.2.1 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

2.2.1.1 UNEP priorities

At the first and second sessions of the UNEP Governing Council, it was decided that the programme policy of UNEP should satisfy some criteria and in particular should be action-oriented, based on the best possible scientific information, compatible with the United Nations Development Decade and the World Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology to Development, and strike a balance between the activities of the United Nations system and other organizations.

The following broad priority subject areas were determined:

1. Human settlements, human health, habitat and well-being
2. Land, water and desertification
3. Trade, economics, technology and transfer of technology
4. Oceans

5. Conservation of nature, wildlife and genetic resources

6. Energy

Under these broad headings, the Governing Council also decided to give discretion to the Executive Director in the implementation of the programme, but suggested certain specific subjects for action.

2.2.1.2 Coordination

The Environment Coordination Board (ECB) established by General Assembly resolution A/RES/2997(XXVII) under the auspices and within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) is the body in which coordination between the various United Nations specialized agencies is assured. WHO participated in the two ECB meetings held in 1974.

Following its review of inter-organizational cooperation and coordination, the Board felt that programming was essential to its work; that its views on how environmental problems are perceived and programme formulated were of interest to the Council; and that, to ensure coordination in the programming process, there was a need for interagency working groups or task forces as appropriate to report to the Board. The Board recognized that the consultations with its members in the UNEP programming process would be paralleled by similar opportunities for UNEP to be consulted at an early stage in member's own programming process. It was agreed that the UNEP should play an active role in consideration of the environment dimensions in the programmes of members of the United Nations family. However, the proliferation of coordinating machinery without regard to existing mechanisms and institutions and the roles assigned to them in particular by the General Assembly was a matter of special concern to the Board.

WHO and UNEP have also held inter-secretariat meetings at the policy-making level and UNEP has been invited and has accepted to be involved in the preparation of the report which the Director-General will submit to the fifty-seventh session of the Executive Board and the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly on WHO's human health and environment programme in accordance with resolution WHA27.49. Similarly, WHO has made suggestions for the formulation of the Environment Programme and particularly for activities which might be included in the Programme during 1975 and following years. The representative of the UNEP Executive Director attended the fifty-fifth session of the Executive Board and made a statement.¹

During these consultations, it has become apparent that the constitutional mandates overlap in so far as relationships of health in environment are concerned, but that this overlap can and should be exploited in a positive way by complementary and mutually supportive action leading to greater impact and better utilization of resources. Coordination with UNEP is envisaged to continue at the policy level, at the programme level, as well as the technical level; the latter to involve technical officers and experts from both agencies to deal with the specific content of the programme including programme formulation, implementation and evaluation. Mutual exchange of information is considered of primary importance. Technical meetings on specific subject matters of joint interest will, no doubt, play an important role in UNEP/WHO collaboration. Among other things, the two agencies have agreed that relevant meetings be planned in advance by mutual consultation and that understanding should be reached regarding the type of expertise each agency would be expected to provide.

2.2.1.3 Programmes and projects

(a) Some programme areas of major interest to WHO

There are a number of areas in the United Nations Environment Programme in which WHO has a major interest. Some of these are reviewed below.

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Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org., No. 223, p. 173.

1. Endemic diseases

The UNEP Governing Council resolved that a concerted programme for the eradication of endemic diseases be developed, paying particular attention to the control of vectors with a water-borne phase, and to developing methods of control by other than chemical means. WHO and UNEP are consulting on the convening of two meetings in 1975, one on schistosomiasis in Egypt, and one on malaria in Peru. The meeting on schistosomiasis will be part of a conference on the broad aspects of the disease sponsored by the Government of Egypt, held in Cairo in October 1975, and cosponsored by WHO, UNEP and probably others.

2. Environmental health effects

The UNEP Governing Council invited WHO to give high priority to its programme for the development of environmental health criteria and standards, and along with FAO to develop food standards for the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Also, it resolved that the United Nations Environment Programme should pay due attention to the development of indices for the monitoring of environmental health effects and epidemics. WHO has accepted this task which is in line with several resolutions of the World Health Assembly and programme activities have already been started with the support from the Environment Fund as referred to below.

3. Basic environmental sanitation

The UNEP Governing Council gave priority to the development and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies, among other things, methods of waste disposal and regrading, water supply and sewage treatment, with the view to finding solutions for the human settlements problems. Pre-programming activities are already under way in this respect as shown below. However, more support from the Environment Fund is sought in this respect.

4. International registry

The UNEP Governing Council also decided that steps be taken for the establishment of the International Registry of Potentially Toxic Chemicals and UNEP has subsequently convened a meeting of governmental and international experts to make proposals for the objective, scope and mechanism of this Registry. WHO participated in the meeting with the view to coordination between this programme and the WHO environmental health criteria programme, and has subsequently suggested that close liaison between the two organizations be established for the implementation of the proposals made for the Registry.

5. Global environmental monitoring system

The Governing Council in its second session also authorized the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with governments, to continue to design, develop and begin to implement the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) for the priority pollutants to which reference was made in Annex III of the Director-General's report to the Twenty-seventh World Health Assembly.¹ WHO has participated in the first meeting of the inter-agency group established with respect to GEMS and has made suggestions with the aim to strengthen certain aspects of monitoring of pollutants where they may have direct impact on human health (e.g. urban air, water used for drinking and other community purposes, and food), which are of great interest to human health in all countries and which do not seem to receive adequate attention. WHO aims at close coordination with GEMS and at obtaining UNEP support for monitoring activities undertaken or planned by WHO in the field of air (in consultation with WMO), water, food (jointly with FAO), the work environment (with ILO), and environmental radiation (with IAEA).

6. International referral service

With respect to the International Referral Service the Executive Director of UNEP is authorized to undertake development on the basis of consultation with governments. WHO collaborates with UNEP with the aim of making use of the services, contributing to it, and to harmonize information system design as planned by the two agencies.

¹ Document A27/14 and Corr.1, WHO's Human Health and Environment Programme.

7. Ocean

In conjunction with UNEP's programme and coordination of activities for the protection of the marine environment, WHO has stressed the need to give adequate attention to the coastal area, both off-shore and on-shore, where the impact of pollution on human health is most strongly felt. As part of these efforts, UNEP has already supported a meeting organized by WHO in December 1974 and dealing with the health aspects of coastal pollution of the Mediterranean.

(b) Specific projects

Annex V.A of document A27/14 lists 11 projects of health significance carried out by WHO as participating agency and receiving support from the Environment Fund. Two additional project documents have been signed by WHO and UNEP since, respectively for holding a workshop on coastal pollution of the Mediterranean, and for the preparation of a guideline on handpumps suitable for use in rural areas of developing countries. Requests for 17 additional projects and project extensions have been submitted late in 1974 emphasizing the elaboration of environmental health criteria, environmental planning, development of environmental health manpower, food standardization and contamination monitoring, the monitoring of health effects and associated improvement of health statistical services and the classification of environmental hazards to health, air and water pollution monitoring of health significance, air and water pollution control and management, human settlements health criteria, water supply and sanitation, the analysis of environmental carcinogens, and the assessment of the carcinogenic risk of environmental chemicals.

2.2.2 United Nations

WHO is collaborating with the Centre for Natural Resources, Energy and Transport of the United Nations on the organization and preparation of the background documentation for the United Nations Water Conference which is to be held in 1977 in Buenos Aires. This conference will deal with four major items, namely Resources and Needs: Assessment of World Water Situation; The Promise of Technology: Skill and Ingenuity; Enlarging the Range of Alternatives: Policy Issues; Action Proposals. WHO will be responsible for the preparation of the information and background documentation dealing with all subjects in which health and well-being of man are directly affected by the need or use of water, as, for example, in the assessment of resources, quality of water, urban and rural water demand, the application of technologies, general aspects of pollution, special consideration of toxic materials, reuse and recycling of water.

The general objectives of the United Nations system in the water resources field are to harmonize action at the international level and to assist Member countries, in particular developing countries, in their achievement of national goals and plans. The system is guided by the basic objectives of water resource development suggested by the Committee on Natural Resources in the guidelines drawn up at its second session. The United Nations and specialized agencies have identified respective responsibilities and competencies of the agencies concerned. Most recently for consideration of the Committee at its fourth session in Tokyo, 24 March to 4 April 1975, WHO, together with other agencies, have prepared a Comprehensive Plan of Action for and Coordination of Programmes within the United Nations System in the Field of Natural Resources Development - Water Resources. Health functions and responsibilities related to water resource development and use have been specified.

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT), established by General Assembly resolution 3001(XXVII) will be convened in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976. Its purpose is fivefold: to focus attention on the problems of human settlements, both now and in the future; to compare successful experiences in dealing with these problems; to develop new and scientific approaches; to establish international norms which will be helpful to governments in mounting international programmes; and to mobilize the widest possible public support for all efforts to ameliorate the condition of the most deprived strata of urban populations. The Director-General has established a multidisciplinary working group representing various organizational units in WHO to ensure the full involvement of the Organization with respect to relevant health considerations. WHO's contribution to HABITAT

will have three elements: a comprehensive paper entitled "Human Settlements and Health" to serve as a source of information for the preparation of the official Conference documents; a contribution, dealing with health and sanitation, to the report on the World Situation of Human Settlements which the United Nations is making to HABITAT; and the Technical Discussions at the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly on the subject "Health Aspects of Human Settlements", as approved by the fifty-fifth session of the Executive Board. In addition, provision has been made in the regular budget for an inter-regional seminar to be convened in November 1976 on the subject "Health Aspects of Human Settlements", for the purpose of transferring information pertaining to human settlements and health and emanating from HABITAT, and of interest to public health officials.

WHO participated in the first session of the Preparatory Committee for HABITAT and continuing contact with the United Nations, the other specialized agencies and with the Conference Secretariat is being maintained.

WHO is also assisting in the preparation of the documentation to serve for the report which the Secretary-General of the United Nations is to submit to implement the ECOSOC resolution 1802 (LV), which relates to uses of the sea; coastal area development; and the ACC Report to ECOSOC on Programmes and Spheres of Competence. In addition, WHO has participated in a Committee of Experts organized by the United Nations Office of Ocean Economics and Technology on a systems approach to coastal area development.

WHO has participated in inter-agency meetings on arid zones to give effect to ECOSOC resolution 1898 (LVII) wherein the Secretary-General has been requested to take the necessary steps to convene through UNESCO an ad hoc inter-agency task force to undertake an inventory of current research and development actions and programmes in respect to arid zones. A draft document has now been prepared by UNESCO, to which WHO has given inputs dealing with the health aspects.

WHO also collaborates with UNIDO stressing the need to introduce occupational health and safety engineering measures to prevent health impairment of workers wherever new industries are established in developing countries, emphasizing the importance of other measures to protect environmental health in the process of industrial development; and providing information and expertise related to training programmes for industrial workers.

Close collaboration is maintained between WHO regional offices and the Regional Economic Commissions. For example, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Economic Commission for Europe promote the development of intergovernmental and other forms of arrangements dealing with environmental health problems of concern to ECE Member States. WHO is collaborating with the ECE on the preparation of a manual on industrial air pollution, and in a task force on fine particles in air, as well as a symposium on the same subject in 1977. This subject has significant health aspects and it is envisaged that WHO will provide suitable input into this project. There is also close liaison with the ECE Committee on Water Problems, and other aspects of interest to both organizations such as noise, housing, traffic accidents.

The World Health Organization has regular contact with the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) and is running, in collaboration with the United States Atomic Energy Commission laboratory and institutes for pathology in a number of tropical and subtropical countries, a programme of collecting human bones from autopsies which are then analysed for their content of Strontium-90. The results are made available to UNSCEAR for their evaluation and estimation of the world-wide dose commitment of populations. Similarly, information on the medical uses of radiation and radioisotopes and the results of personal monitoring of radiation workers, particularly in medical services, have been made available to UNSCEAR, and were considered in their 1972 report. A study of radiation doses received by the gonads of patients undergoing X-ray diagnostic procedures and radiotherapy is on-going.

2.2.3 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

WHO is the executing agency for a sizable number of country and interregional projects in environmental pollution. These projects include providing assistance to Member States in investigations of specific geographical problem areas, the establishment of national pollution control programmes, the development of environmental health research centres and capabilities and the conduct of training courses. Most of these projects are inter-media oriented, e.g. they are concerned with the study and control of all types of pollution - air, water, soil and noise. The emphasis is put on training the staffs of the national authorities. Country projects in environmental pollution are being carried out, for example in Brazil, Mexico, Greece, Poland and Romania. An intercountry programme on environmental monitoring is undertaken in Latin America.

UNDP has provided funds to WHO as an executing agency in a number of occupational health projects of which the following projects are mentioned because of their unique nature. In Poland, an industrial toxicology centre is developed within the Institute of Occupational Health in Lodz for carrying out experimental and epidemiological investigation on intoxication of workers in industry, and for establishing permissible limits of exposure, particularly of neurotoxic agents. In Indonesia and Bolivia institutes and laboratories of occupational health are developed with UNDP support to respectively developing comprehensive health services for working populations at the central and regional level, and for establishing a programme of prevention of silicosis in mining in high altitudes.

Pre-investment planning for basic sanitary services is part of the direct assistance provided by WHO to Member States in developing the basis for securing financial support from national, international or bilateral sources for the development or improvement of urban and rural community water supply and waste disposal services with full recognition and safeguards of public health implications. Over the past decade, UNDP has been the prime source of support in these pre-investment activities, and over 40 countries have been assisted with such projects. In 16 countries in which projects have been completed and 390 590 000 of capital investments made, over 19 million more people were provided with previously unavailable basic sanitary services.

2.2.4 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Close collaboration has existed between WHO and UNICEF in respect to rural water supply and sanitation for a number of years. In 1969, a joint global evaluation of WHO/UNICEF assisted rural water supply and sanitation project was undertaken as a result of decisions by the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy. Causes of failures and successes have been examined. A WHO guide on planning of national rural water supply programmes is ready for publication.

UNICEF is receiving contributions from Member States, some of which are ear-marked for specific programmes and countries, and rural water supply and sanitation has become an increasingly important part of this work including not only the supply of equipment, but also assistance in the broader aspects, including training, the development of infrastructure and field testing of low-cost equipment. The close collaboration between UNICEF and WHO of the past is continuing and the two agencies now cooperate even closer in the broader context of complementary inputs to country programmes. WHO staff are also assigned on the merit of each case, to assist UNICEF in the execution of specific projects, while by way of general collaboration with UNICEF, the Organization makes available the technical know-how and experience stemming from its assistance in rural drinking-water supply and sanitation including planning and implementation of the training of manpower, research, field testing and advanced technological and operational techniques, and its experience in health education and community participation in this type of programme.

2.2.5 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

In addition to collaboration on education, life sciences, and health education, WHO and UNESCO have been collaborating in the field of the environment, focusing upon the UNESCO "Man and the Biosphere Programme" (MAB) which found its origins in studies of the arid and semi-arid lands in the 1950s, and continuing programmes of natural resources research. MAB, which is an intergovernmental, multidisciplinary global programme aimed at coordinating national plans and activities designed to help man to arrive at a better understanding of the natural environment, is presently composed of 14 projects. It is foreseen that the following projects will be more closely scrutinized by WHO to determine the extent the Organization can contribute to this comprehensive undertaking by UNESCO; interactions between environmental transformations and genetic and demographic changes; educational activities; ecological assessment of pest management and fertilizer use on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems; ecological effects of increasing human activities on tropical and subtropical forest ecosystems; pollution monitoring and research; ecological effects of human activities on the value and resources of lakes, marshes, rivers, deltas, estuaries and coastal zones; perception of environmental quality; and studies on the development of the arid and semi-arid zones.

WHO took active part in some of the projects carried out under the International Hydrological Decade (IHD). A joint UNESCO/WHO working group on the hydrological aspects of water pollution was established. Its primary effort was concentrated on the compilation of a guide for water quality surveys with emphasis on the health aspects involved, which will be published in 1976. Participation of WHO in the International Hydrological Programme, the continuation of the IHD, is foreseen with the view to maintaining the emphasis on relevant environmental and health aspects of international hydrological studies.

In response to a recommendation of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, UNESCO, with UNEP financial assistance, and after consultation and agreement with the other international agencies, convened a series of meetings in 1974 and in January 1975 aimed at the elaboration of an international programme in environmental education. WHO participated in this work with the view to strengthening activities for environmental health manpower development. The formulation of the overall framework and directions of a cooperative international programme on the subject have been achieved.

2.2.6 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The WHO Food Standards (Safety) Programme is aimed at developing food safety information and at assisting Member States in its utilization for the protection of consumers' health. A report on this subject was submitted by the Director-General to the forty-seventh session of the Executive Board.¹ Many activities in this programme are carried out in collaboration with FAO. For example, the evaluation of food additives and pesticide residues is made by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues. Over the past years some 400 food additives and contaminants, and 150 pesticides have been evaluated. International standards for foods are elaborated by the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme with the Codex Alimentarius Commission being the principal organ. The Commission has a membership of 111 countries as at 1 February 1975. It has elaborated 70 food standards and a number of codes and methods. In order to extend its work to matters of more direct regional significance, the Commission has created Regional Coordinating Committees for Africa and Latin America and a food standards conference for Asia will be held in 1975. The Commission has also amended the acceptance procedure in order to facilitate the acceptance of standards by Member States. In the field of food, FAO and WHO are now embarking on an effort to develop an internationally coordinated programme for the monitoring of food contaminants with the support of UNEP.

¹ Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org., No. 190, p. 186.

Close liaison is maintained with FAO in matters concerned with the safe and effective use of pesticides in agriculture including the impact of environmental contamination on human health. Joint activities are undertaken particularly in the holding of seminars in collaboration with the FAO Industry Cooperative Programme and in the production of data sheets on pesticides, issue of which began in early 1975. Both organizations prepare specifications for pesticides and this work is coordinated. Where particular problems arise, such as in the use of organomercurial seed dressings, joint meetings are convened. The gravity of the world food supply was extensively reviewed during the World Food Conference in 1974, and one of the efforts expected to be made to increase the food supply will be a greater use of pesticides in agriculture. The safety and trade barriers resulting from the pesticide residues in food will thus receive increasing attention. The intense interest in the joint efforts of FAO and WHO in this field was evident at the recent meeting of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and in the preparation of the FAO Ad Hoc Government Consultation on Pesticides in Agriculture and Public Health, to be held in Rome in April 1975.

Collaboration between WHO and FAO on water resources development projects for agriculture is longstanding. Such projects where FAO is the Executing Agency are routinely reviewed by WHO in respect of the health aspects. These arise out of possible introduction or aggravation of endemic diseases such as schistosomiasis and onchocerciasis as a direct result of the alteration in the hydrogeological conditions that in turn might create favourable breeding conditions for the vectors of these diseases. Community water supply and wastewater disposal services for the influx of population in the irrigated areas have also to be provided for. Preventive engineering measures for the control of these diseases, and to protect the health of the population can usually be undertaken much more economically if incorporated in water resource development plans from the start. A new formula is being developed jointly by WHO and FAO for coordinated planning and implementation of projects which can bring rural water supply and sanitation into the context of agricultural development schemes. In addition to the rural water supply and sanitation area, collaborative efforts are also being developed with respect to water quality, the reuse of liquid and solid wastes, and water-related disease vectors.

2.2.7 International Labour Office (ILO)

The ILO and WHO collaborate on occupational health matters, both at their headquarters and at regional level, and there is mutual participation in each other's meetings, seminars and projects. There are several field projects in which ILO and WHO collaborate, aiming at the development of national occupational health services, examples of which exist in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Ecuador and Argentina.

The joint ILO/WHO Committee on Health of Seafarers met in 1973 and adopted a number of recommendations including guidelines on occupational health and safety on board ships as well as the development of health centres for seafarers. The Joint ILO/WHO Sub-Committee on Occupational Health, Seventh Session, will take place on the subject of occupational health and safety of migrant workers in 1975. The ILO participates at all meetings of the WHO Environmental Health Criteria Programme, particularly those which are more relevant to occupational health and similarly WHO participates in ILO work on noise.

WHO is making use of the International Occupational Health and Safety Centre of the ILO in the preparation of technical reviews on occupational health under a contractual agreement between the two agencies.

2.2.8 World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

With respect to air pollution, WHO and WMO have been collaborating for many years with a view to adequately orientating their programmes to the various aspects of the problem, particularly air pollution monitoring. WMO has a primary interest in air pollution on the regional and global scale, whereas WHO's concern focuses on the measurement of air pollutants in urban and industrial areas where the impacts of pollution on human health are most direct. However, the two organizations work closely together at the impact level so that meteorological inputs into urban air pollution monitoring and control are adequately made and that cooperation between health, environmental and meteorological services at the national level be facilitated as needed for the design of monitoring systems, interpretation of results, forecasting of pollution levels, and in the design of control measures. The two organizations are planning to jointly deal with the problem of siting of impact monitoring stations and with the application of meteorology to air pollution problems in cities and industrial areas which was a subject of concern to the Executive Committee of WMO.

2.2.9 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

After some six years of collaboration under an informal arrangement initiated in 1964, WHO and the World Bank signed an agreement in October 1971 for collaboration between the two organizations in the field of water supply and wastes disposal. The IBRD/WHO Cooperative Programme has assisted Member States through sector studies to assess their priorities for water supply and wastes disposal on a national basis within established priorities. Formulation of national programmes which allow comparison between economic and social sectors and provide blueprints for national allocation of resources and anticipated achievements, avoid the former ad hoc project approach. The cooperative programme brings WHO staff into close contact with the requirements and procedures of IBRD and, at the same time, helps to ensure the health requirements are considered in its lending programmes. Countries in all regions have benefited under this programme. Some one hundred priority project proposals and studies have been identified in thirteen country sector study reports. A considerable number of these are being prepared or implemented by governments.

2.2.10 Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO)

WHO collaborates with IMCO on all matters concerning marine pollution and more specifically those which have a bearing on the quality of coastal water meant for bathing or shellfish culture, and participates when needed at technical meetings of the IMCO Committee on Marine Pollution, or, as in 1973, at the Conference on Marine Pollution Generated by Ships.

In accordance with recommendations of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Health of Seafarers at which IMCO participated in 1973, WHO is undertaking the revision of the International Medical Guide on Board Ships which provides guidelines for the protection of seafarers. IMCO is a joint author of this publication and is participating in its current revision.

In addition, there have been a number of occasions when WHO participated in IMCO meetings, particularly those concerning exposure of seafarers and their exposure to toxic agents and to carrying dangerous goods.

2.2.11 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Close collaboration exists with IAEA in a great number of subjects and projects covering the environmental and biomedical aspects of nuclear energy, disposal of radioactive wastes, safe handling of radioactive material, management of radiation accidents, biological effects of radiation, medical applications of radioisotopes, radiation measurements for protection as well as medical and industrial application purposes, food irradiation and radiation sterilization of biomedical products, etc. A great number of expert committees, panel meetings, seminars and symposia were sponsored jointly by both organizations on the above subjects and publications were issued jointly. Networks of WHO collaborating centres have been established jointly with IAEA. Examples of joint activities are the Seminar on the Training of Medical Radiological Technicians and other Technical Staff held in Teheran, 1971, and a great number

of meetings and symposia primarily organized by IAEA, as well as joint publications including, for example, a manual on radiation protection in hospitals and general practice, the reports of the above-mentioned meetings, IAEA Safety Series, Number 20 (Guide to the Safe Handling of Radioisotopes in Hydrology), Number 32 (Planning for the Handling of Radiation Accidents), Number 36 (Disposal of Radioactive Wastes in Rivers, Lakes and Estuaries), and others. WHO's interest is focused on health protection in connexion with the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purpose, and in increasing proportions for the production of energy, and particularly the identification, evaluation and prevention of health hazards to which man may be exposed from environmental radiation.

2.2.12 International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

Coordination aims at formulating health requirements and developing guidelines for international traffic. Because of its multi-faceted nature, this collaboration extends to other international governmental and non-governmental organizations (such as the United Nations, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, the International Air Transport Association and the International Union of Official Travel Organizations), and international carriers and transport agencies.

Recent examples of collaboration include: the review and amendment in 1973 of Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation to include a recommended practice proposed by WHO relating to the supply of safe food and water and the effective and safe disposal of sewage and waste food; the revision of Annex V of the International Health Regulations (1960) concerning standards of hygiene on pilgrim ships and on aircraft carrying pilgrims, following a resolution of the IMCO International Conference on Space Requirements for Special Trade Passenger Ships of 1973; the preparation of WHO guidance material relating to hygiene and sanitation in international traffic, i.e. Guide to Hygiene and Sanitation in Aviation; Guide to Sanitation for Tourist Accommodation; an informal consultation (1973) initiated by WHO with IATA, recommended that the WHO Guide to Hygiene and Sanitation in Aviation (1960) be revised and updated; and an informal consultation in December 1974 with organizations concerned with international traffic to ensure appropriate coordination and implementation of measures to maintain at the highest level the management of food, water and sanitary facilities in international traffic. WHO and ICAO will also collaborate in the formulation of environmental health criteria for noise.

2.2.13 Other arrangements for coordination within the United Nations system

The ACC Sub-Committee for Water Resources Development on which the following organizations are represented is the body for coordination of water resources programmes: United Nations (including ECA, ECE, ECLA, ECWA and ESCAP), UNEP, UNIDO, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, IBRD, WMO and IAEA. Although progress has not been as rapid as one might wish in the development of a comprehensive plan of action for and coordination of water resource programmes within the United Nations system, it is felt that in the last three years substantial advances have been made. Through the mechanism of ad hoc working groups, it was possible to improve coordination in specific problem areas such as hydrology. In addition, bilateral and multilateral coordination among member agencies has given greater impetus to coordination in the very complex field of water resources developed.

WHO also actively participates at meetings of the ACC Sub-Committee on Marine Science and its Applications for the coordination of programmes carried out by United Nations agencies and in which the environmental health component is of importance.

WHO is a member of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution, other parties to which are the United Nations, FAO, UNESCO, WMO, IMCO, IAEA. This body, which advises the Director-General of the member organizations, meets usually once a year and discusses matters which are referred to it by any one of the member agencies. Since the inception of UNEP, it receives support from the Environment Fund, particularly for intersessional work. The Seventh session of GESAMP is considering matters such as: the evaluation of the hazards of harmful substances in the marine environment; the scientific basis for the disposal of waste into the sea by dumping; principles for developing coastal water quality criteria.

2.2.14 Coordination with other intergovernmental organizations

There has been a particularly close collaboration with the Health Protection Directorate of the Commission of European Communities (CEC) in the area of health effects assessment and development of environmental health criteria. An international symposium on recent advances in the assessment of health effects of environmental pollutants was organized in Paris in June 1974, co-sponsored by CEC, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and WHO. Seven hundred participants attended and about 150 papers were presented.

Working relations have been established between the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and EURO. There have also been preliminary discussions to extend this collaboration into the fields of environmental pollution control and the establishment of criteria and guidelines for standards of environmental quality.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has an active programme in environmental pollution. Collaboration has been maintained, particularly as regards environmental health effects criteria and measurement methodology. The Air Management Sector Group of OECD is engaged in the development of guides for the use of environmental health criteria in policy decisions relating to environmental quality and standards. WHO is participating in this effort by providing scientific expertise on the health effects of pollution.

The PAHO/WHO has a major collaborative programme in water supply and sanitation with the Inter-American Development Bank.

A memorandum of understanding is being concluded between WHO and the African Development Bank, for collaboration and joint activities with respect to water supply and sewerage projects for which the Bank will provide financial assistance. Emphasis will be given to the public health aspects involved in conjunction with projects that must be both economical and practical. It is also foreseen that WHO assumes responsibility for the execution of pre-investment studies, similar to those funded by UNDP. Missions to 12 countries are scheduled under this programme in 1975.

2.2.15 Non-governmental organizations

In the environmental field, WHO collaborates with a large number of non-governmental organizations. Not all details can be provided in the report; however, the following paragraphs will cover some of the most important examples.

The International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) has established a Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE). Subjects of common interest include ecotoxicology, environmental monitoring, human settlements and analytical matters, and contacts have therefore been established between WHO and SCOPE. SCOPE is currently contributing to the WHO Environmental Health Criteria Programme; discussions are also under way with respect to environmental monitoring both with respect to the selection of priority pollutants of public health importance and methodology.

WHO collaborates with the International Water Supply Association (IWSA) particularly in the Association's Standing Committees on Problems of Water Supplies in Developing Countries and Training of Waterworks Personnel. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Community Water Supply is also an active participant in the Congresses and the Standing Committees of the IWSA. As a result of this, greater interest than in the past has been evinced by delegates in recent Congresses in the problems of developing countries. WHO's activities in community water supply are given publicity in the IWSA Quarterly Bulletin "Aqua".

There are close contacts between the Permanent Commission and International Association on Occupational Health and WHO at regional and headquarters levels during scientific meetings and in the work of the specialized sub-committees of the NGO, particularly at the present time as regards the preparation of criteria on carbon disulphide; ergonomics; occupational mental health; health safety in the construction industry, in small industries, and others.

WHO also collaborates actively with the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) with respect to ergonomics and biomechanics applied to the safe design of vehicles, and in studies of vision and driving.

Collaboration with the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) was established in 1956. Of special interest to the Organization is the work of Committee 3 (external exposure) and 4 (application of recommendations) in which the protection of patients and staff during the medical applications of radiation were given priority. ICRP received WHO's support for research undertaken in connexion with these subjects as well as radiation dose related to internal radioactive contamination (Committee 2, internal exposure) and biological, including genetic, consequences of radiation exposure (Committee 1, radiation effects).

2.2.16 Other arrangements

WHO has joined with UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, IBRD, OECD and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for the development of an expanded programme in rural potable water supply and sanitation. In the early stages of the project, WHO made arrangements for the meeting of a technical panel and for a series of consultant evaluations of institutes in 14 developing countries. In the next stage of programme development WHO is responsible for preparing the detailed implementation plan for the technical components of the programme, (see Introduction to the report of the Director-General for 1974¹).

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF COORDINATION FOR WHO

The technical experts required by WHO for adequate coordination in the environmental field is presently sufficient when supplemented, on occasions, by experts from outside the Organization. Participation in the work of the United Nations Development Programme is funded either from project costs, particularly in the case of project personnel, and supported by staff funded from the WHO regular budget. The Organization's participation in the WHO/IBRD Cooperative Programme is funded from the regular budget on a shared basis and the same is expected for the participation of WHO in the work in the environmental health activities of the African Development Bank.

However, if WHO is to assume its full role in contributing to the overall effort being made in the field of the environment, greater participation is needed in the numerous meetings and joint activities with other organizations. Furthermore, greater clerical and senior professional support will be required to service projects financed by the Environment Fund. UNEP does not provide participating agencies with general overhead costs and expects that those other than direct project costs, be borne by them. Provisions in the WHO budget are not adequate to fully absorb these costs without prejudice to the Organization's regular budget activities.

¹ Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org., No. 221, p. 10.