



## Technical cooperation among developing countries

### Report by the Secretariat

1. Resolution WHA42.37 requests the Director-General, *inter alia*, to promote programmes for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and to identify areas of cooperation. The concept and practices of TCDC are being reviewed in the context of rapid global changes. WHO is defining new criteria for itself and working with countries to define a more strategic approach to TCDC in crucial areas such as poverty alleviation and public sector reform. The links between TCDC and economic cooperation among developing countries are close and shaped by the expansion of South-South trade and the strengthening of the private sector in many developing countries. The role of nongovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector is now widely recognized as vital for the development of TCDC, in the perspective of the emerging global economic system.

2. Globalization and trade liberalization have reinforced the significance of, and given renewed impetus to, cooperation among developing countries, especially at regional and subregional levels. Two decades after the launching of TCDC, it is clear that this type of South-South cooperation has grown considerably. Regional trade groupings, for example, are not confined to issues of trade alone: the development of the social sector is an integral part of their agenda. It is evident that more and more countries, especially the middle-income developing countries, are using TCDC as a political means of expressing solidarity and expanding collaboration and trade. The role of the United Nations system in the promotion of TCDC has also expanded.

3. The Twenty-third Meeting of Ministers of Health of the Non-Aligned Movement (Havana, June 1998) and the subsequent summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries (Durban, South Africa, September 1998) identified four areas of joint activities with WHO:

- social values as a basis for policy formulation
- globalization and health for all
- health sector reform
- the revised drug strategy.

In this perspective, and in order to ensure that health is brought into the mainstream of action for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, a task force on health and poverty reduction has recently been established. In addition, WHO has increased its support in order to give the necessary impetus to TCDC as the main modality of technical cooperation. In view of the growing importance of regional and subregional cooperation, WHO is responding in ways that will strengthen regional dynamics.

4. WHO is approaching TCDC in a more strategic fashion, promoting collaboration in the areas of health services and disease control, and addressing the challenges of globalization. It is recognized that TCDC should be used to position health at the core of the development and political agendas. Similarly, horizontal cooperation should be promoted in the broader determinants of health, such as poverty reduction and improved nutrition, and in sustainable development as a whole.

**ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

5. The Health Assembly is invited to note the report.

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