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DE LA SANTÉ

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EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

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Provisional Verbatim Record

PRESIDENT: Rajkumari AMRIT KAUR (India)

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Note: This provisional record contains the originals of speeches delivered in English and the interpretations of other speeches. All speeches will be published in the final records of the Assembly in either the original or an authentic translation.

Corrections to the provisional record should reach the Editor, Official Records, Division of Editorial and Reference Services, World Health Organization, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland before 14 July 1950.

1. FOURTH REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT: The meeting is now open. The first item is the fourth report of the General Committee, document A3/121 Rev.1.

Has anybody got any comments to make on this? In the absence of any objections I take it that it is adopted.

2. ADDENDUM TO TENTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND LEGAL MATTERS

The PRESIDENT: Item 2 is an addendum to the tenth report of the Committee on Administration, Finance and Legal Matters, document A3/117 add.1. This is purely an informatory document, so it does not need to be adopted.

3. COMMUNICATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY

The PRESIDENT: There is one more item which needs to be dealt with by this Assembly. In document A3/112 you have been informed of the text of a communication from the Minister of Social Affairs of Hungary, notifying the Director-General that this State no longer considers itself a Member of the World Health Organization.

I assume that the Assembly would like to deal with this case in a manner similar to that followed in the resolution concerning the action taken by other countries with respect to membership of WHO. I would therefore propose the adoption of a resolution reading as follows:

The Third World Health Assembly,

Having noted the communication received from the Minister of Social Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Hungary,

RESOLVES that, while the World Health Organization will always welcome the resumption by that Member of full co-operation in the work of the Organization, it is not considered that any further action at this stage is desirable.

Is that acceptable to the Assembly? In the absence of any objections then I take it that that is adopted.

4. FINAL SPEECHES BY DELEGATES

The PRESIDENT: I will now call on the chief delegate of Italy to come to the rostrum.

Dr. CANAPERIA (Italy) (interpretation from the French): In the name of the delegation of Italy I want to take this opportunity of thanking the Assembly for the honour they have done my country by choosing it as one of those entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board. We have been greatly moved by this honour, which I regard as an additional proof of the fact that our organization, whose only aim is the improvement of the health of peoples, does not accept any measure of discrimination among States Members of our Organization, even if they have not yet been received into the family of the United Nations.

Italy has always taken the greatest interest in international health problems. Our country has played a very important part in the many international conferences which have been held since the latter half of the last century and which built the foundations of international co-operation in the field of health. This co-operation has found its best expression and concrete realization in the World Health Organization.

The position of Italy which can be considered as a bridge between Europe, and

the Near East and Africa; the varied character of the population groups in different parts of the country, explain the interest which our country takes in a close co-operation in health matters and in the common fight against disease and suffering.

At times the delegation of Italy has felt called upon to make certain comments on the activities and work of WHO. However, such observations or such criticism always went side by side with constructive proposals, and whenever we did voice such criticism we did so only because we are entirely devoted to the welfare of WHO and because we hope that the Organization will be able to improve its activities in all fields, so as to obtain the best possible results and to meet the innumerable needs of the world in the field of health.

The undoubted progress which the Organization has made during the first two years of its existence give us great faith and confidence in its future, particularly if, in the light of experience acquired already and the suggestions which have been made, we are able to change our plans as may be necessary, and if we succeed in strengthening further and further this general atmosphere of mutual understanding and solidarity which is the one indispensable condition of international collaboration.

Our delegation therefore will always be more than happy to collaborate to the best of its ability in the development and improvement of this most important instrument, which has been created for the welfare and health of peoples.

Dr. KHALIL, Bey (Egypt): At this final meeting of three weeks' continuous work one cannot help thinking of the net results of the efforts made by the delegates of sixty countries in the field of world health. My own feeling is that the delegates of all countries, big and small, ought to be congratulated on a successful and a fruitful Third World Health Assembly.

The magnitude and the variety of the subjects dealt with is really astounding. The deliberations and discussions were occasionally animated, divergent points of view were sometimes expressed, and an exhibition of passionate feeling was occasionally evident, but the ability and the goodwill of the chairmen of the committees assured a solution of all the problems. These manifestations are evidence of life and vitality, for if all delegates were in agreement on all questions there would be no necessity to convene meetings to discuss health matters.

It is natural that the impression caused by disappointment to individual delegates outweighs the impression left by agreement. Those of us who reviewed the total achievements after the last meeting held on Thursday find a great satisfaction at the results achieved. No other mechanism that can deal with such a problem is available to the world than the World Health Organization. Discoveries in the field of sanitation, prevention of disease and therapeutics are available, but only a small fraction of the inhabitants of the world are benefiting from them. This is due to lack of funds, lack of technical assistance, lack of medical personnel or even to ignorance as to the existence of this means of saving life, allaying human suffering and prolonging life. It is through the World Health Organization

that knowledge, technical assistance, expert advice, medicaments and public-health equipment can be provided for the undeveloped areas of the world.

I wish in this connexion to thank the French delegation for withdrawing a proposal to limit such assistance to the value of the contribution paid by each country. In doing so, France is maintaining its traditional humanitarian attitude. The World Health Organization is indeed unique amongst all the institutions of the world, past and present, in that, although all countries have equal voting rights, those that contribute most to its funds are those that benefit least by its help. At the top of the list of these countries is the United States of America. It has repeatedly demonstrated that the high standard of economic development and the advanced standard of living are associated with, and may be the result of, a high standard of health.

The less developed countries of the world ought to be, and I believe are, very thankful to the more favoured countries for the help they receive through the different activities of the World Health Organization. This help is not of a material nature only, and expert advice and demonstration projects are perhaps more important. The expectation of life of a child born in the undeveloped areas of the world sometimes does not exceed 37 years, while in some of the advanced countries it is about 70 years. The World Health Organization intends to better the chances for a longer and happier life for those unfortunate children.

The countries represented here may differ in their opinion on the merits of the United Nations as an instrument to ensure peace and prevent war, but all of them are of one opinion as to the humanitarian and beneficial work done by the World Health Organization, although it is yet in its infancy.

I believe that the World Health Organization was fortunate in the selection of its Director-General, Dr. Brock Chisholm who has proved to be an able pilot in steering the vessel in the right direction and in laying a strong and stable foundation for the grand edifice that we have today. He has surrounded himself by a capable staff worthy of such an important institution. I have attended many international congresses and, in the capacity of Secretary-General, have organized several congresses, and I believe that I am able to judge. The efficiency, promptness, punctuality and documentation exhibited here cannot be rivalled anywhere else. The spirit of the officials, their co-operation and readiness to help, are excellent. It has been repeatedly said that this administration is expensive, but all valuable and reliable goods are.

Looking through the records of the two previous World Health Assemblies, I noticed that only the elections to the Executive Board were criticized. I venture to say that it is considered by some delegates as a token of prestige from the national point of view. The present Third World Health Assembly has stressed without any shadow of doubt that the members of that Board are meant to act as experts and not as delegates of their countries. It is only natural that the big countries have more experts and contribute most to the funds. I

was particularly interested in the speech of the delegate of Norway, who insisted on the rotation of election to the Executive Board. He made an exception in favour of the United States of America and I fully agree with him, although he did not mention his reasons for doing so. Is it the scale of its contribution, or its capacity in experts, or both?

I wish, however, to propose another exception in favour of those undeveloped countries that are repeatedly menaced by world epidemics. They are often more capable in these fields. This is not due to special capacity or intelligence, but to the fact that they pay more attention to these questions, which are vital to their nationals. Many of the advanced countries seldom devote any serious effort in this direction, because they find there is no need to do so. The standard of sanitation and personal hygiene in their countries is a safeguard against such diseases. The countries in which these diseases are endemic sometimes suffer from the contempt bred by familiarity. I hope that this point of view will be taken into consideration.

Before ending, I wish to express the admiration of the Egyptian delegation to our President, the Honourable Rajkumari Amrit Kaur of India. She has conducted the meetings in an exemplary manner. It has been a source of joy and pride to all of us who come from the East that she was elected President. We wish to thank especially the delegates of the rest of the world for this significant honour.

The Egyptian delegation associates itself with its colleagues in thanking the Swiss Government, the French Government and all the different institutions and individuals for their hospitality, which have certainly contributed to the success of this Assembly by enabling us, through the pleasant hours spent away from work, to face the arduous tasks of long meetings and intricate debate. Finally, I wish to thank all the delegates for their courtesy and

friendliness, and look forward to meeting them again during the next Assembly.

Dr. TABA (Iran): Today the Third World Health Assembly, and with it our corresponding duties, come to their close. The Iran delegation followed the work with keen interest, hoping for promising practical results. I am happy to declare that we are satisfied with the outcome. In various committees delegates have had heated discussions, differences of opinion and occasionally perhaps feelings of resentment, but the general goodwill and the valuable spirit of genuine collaboration always prevailed at the end and we got through the job in a speedy and efficient manner.

You, Madam President, as well as the chairmen of the main committees, shouldered the responsibilities of the Chair in a most admirable manner, and this no doubt contributed substantially to the smooth running of the proceedings. The Director-General and the staff of the Secretariat also helped us greatly to achieve our task in such a short time, and much of the credit is really their due.

During these 20 days, administrative and financial problems of the World Health Organization were discussed and approval was given to an elaborate technical programme planned to deal with the most serious and pressing health problems confronting the various parts of the world, especially in the under-developed areas. I do admit that the programme is perhaps modest, but our Organization is still very young and with the present budgetary limitations we must face unavoidable shortcomings.

But let us hope that, as the successful results of the worldwide attack against disease gradually come to light, the peoples of the world as well as their governments will voluntarily contribute more towards WHO; and then this "World Health Ministry", if I may be allowed to call it so, will be able to deal fully with the health needs of its more than two hundred thousand million inhabitants, giving them higher levels of health and more happiness

My country, the very existence of its population having all too often been menaced, considers it its sacred duty to participate in world health plans as well as in any other international intercourse and collaboration.

Would you expect any other spirit to govern Iran, when you bear in mind what our great poet Saadi said more than seven hundred years ago?

"Humanity all over the world has the same origin, and forms the parts and members of the same body. If you have pain in any one section of your body the whole of it craves with aches and ailings. How could we be called human if we do not care or mind about the illness and sufferings of our fellow creatures?" I must apologise for this very rough and unworthy translation, which by no means does justice to the beautiful words of our great poet-philosopher, but I do hope that it did convey the meaning.

That is what Saadi said seven hundred years ago. The same doctrine is still fervently adhered to in my country and I think that I can go back there with a message to the people that in years to come WHO will do much to help the realization and fulfilment of that aim.

Dr. RAJA (India): The Third World Health Assembly which is closing today has a special significance to India in that her Health Minister, the Honourable Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, was awarded the highest honour that the Organization can confer, namely the presidentship of the Assembly. This is undoubtedly a fitting recognition of the great services she rendered to WHO at the two previous sessions of the Assembly as the head of the Indian delegation in helping this young organization to find its feet and develop on proper lines. Her elevation to presidentship is a matter of gratification to India and I am sure to other Asian countries as well.

The Third Assembly covered a large ground in its deliberations, and I shall refer here only to one or two aspects of its activities. It has become clear to all that a small budget of six or seven million dollars is altogether insufficient for this organization to expand and develop its activities into the many desirable channels through which alone WHO can hope to realize progressively the great ideals for which it stands. The need for more funds is therefore urgent and it is gratifying to note that the United States of America has given the lead to other countries by sponsoring a technical assistance programme which will embrace the activities of WHO and other specialized agencies of the United Nations and towards the financing of which the United States will contribute a substantial amount and will invite other nations to follow her example. This is indeed a commendable step.

The Third Health Assembly has also given its approval to a plan to collect funds for WHO on a broader basis by invoking the goodwill of the peoples of Member States, the governments of which were invited to issue a World Health stamp, or stamps, of more than one denomination for purchase by the people on a voluntary

basis, and by the celebration of a flag day in association with the World Health Day. It is to be hoped that the response to these efforts will be generous and that, apart from the money made available to WHO to further its beneficent activities, the interest of people all over the world in the Organization and the objectives for which it stands will be stimulated.

While thus every effort should be made to improve the financial status of WHO and to expand its activities, it is equally desirable that a continuous watch should be kept on expenditure and that as much money as can be made available should be devoted to the provision of actual services to the people. It is only in this way that WHO will establish that intimate contact with those for whose benefit it exists and that it will be able to build its future on a firm foundation of goodwill from all the peoples of the world. Various suggestions were put forward during the deliberations of the Assembly for ensuring that economy is effected in desirable directions and it is hoped that ~~these suggestions~~ will receive full consideration from the Executive Board.

A decision of great importance for the future working of WHO on sound lines was the endorsement which the Assembly gave, in clear and unmistakeable terms, to the continuance of the present character of the Executive Board, whereby its members retain their individual character and approach questions which come before it in a manner which will exclude national considerations as far as may be possible in arriving at conclusions. This was indeed a wise step and the decision is bound to exercise a beneficent effect on the working of the Organization on proper lines.

The Organization has now been in existence for four years, and the lines of work which have developed have shown that WHO is ramifying its activities into far too many channels in relation to its available resources. It seems, therefore, desirable that the Director-General, the Executive Board and the Fourth World Health Assembly should consider seriously the question of reducing the range of activities of the Organization to certain specific objectives and of concentrating on the achievement of definite results during a specific period of years. Now that the labours of Geneva are ended, we shall all be going back to our own countries and it is incumbent on us to do our best to promote the interests of the Organization in our countries in all possible ways. It is only this way - by periodical meetings of the representatives of the nations of the world to formulate common lines of health policy - which will bear fruit that we can enable WHO to assist effectively in raising the standard of public health throughout the world.

Professor DUJARRIC de la RIVIERE (France) (interpretation from the French):
At the very beginning of this Assembly, the French delegation stated their ideas on the principles - and on the scientific application of those principles - which could be undertaken by WHO. We need not go over this again. The only question which still arises is, did the Assembly carry out well the work which it set out to do? My dear colleagues, I think we can say that, under the chairmanship of our President, thanks to the advice we received and thanks to the work done by the Secretariat, a great deal of the work that the Assembly set out to do has, in fact, been accomplished. I know very well

that nothing in this world is ever perfect and that a very great deal still remains to be done. Perhaps we can say that we have left a great deal of work now to the Executive Board and I think we could thank them now for all the work which we have asked them to do and which, I am sure, they will do.

Looking at matters from this point of view, the delegation of France wants to thank all of you for the confidence which you have shown the French delegation in allowing it to become a part of the Executive Board.

During discussions in our Assembly, some statements of opinion were perhaps somewhat energetic. May I remind you of the fact that Pasteur, who was the father of international medicine - since without him no measure of prophylaxis and therefore no measure of hygiene or sanitation, and no economic development would have ever been possible in the world - Pasteur, who had to struggle like a giant to see his ideas prevail, often said that he was an enemy of some ideas but never the enemy of any man. May I tell you that, as I see matters, this is how we ought to feel ourselves, and I am therefore somewhat perturbed when I hear talk of great and small nations: there are only nations, and all have the right to make their voices heard in the same way, to work in the same manner, to state their views together. Only union among us can ever be fruitful and only union will ever allow us to see this World Health Organization, which we love and care for, progressing. We love it because we know that it is the best example of international solidarity.

Dr. SCHEELE (United States of America): Now that we are bringing the Third World Health Assembly to a close, we in the United States want to tell you that we still subscribe to the principles which guide this organization. We are strong supporters of the World Health Organization's Charter and Preamble and we believe that the flag of these principles should be kept flying high at all times. There have been some unfortunate incidents - "expressions of opinion" I think is a good way to put it - which carried us a little bit off base. They introduced a new kind of politics into our deliberations which, while not serious at the moment, could be serious if continued.

I want to remind you that the United States has been a strong supporter of this organization. We have believed firmly in the principle that the underdeveloped countries should be assisted by those more privileged. I think you had some little evidence of some of the actions of our Congress on this score in this very week. We subscribe fully to the principle that we should openly discuss the problems that come before us, with nations and people - and nations are people. WHO is nations, and its people shall present and debate their views in open forum. Those views may be divergent, but we have the open form of discussion and we need not be vindictive about attitudes. We finally vote on our resolutions and I am sure we all - I know the United States does - willingly accept the decisions that we arrive at.

I want to say that we are very pleased with the action that this Assembly has taken in reducing the United States' percentage contribution from 36 to 35%. We appreciate the willingness which this Assembly has shown to follow through on the proposal which was adopted last year. We believe that this will in the long run come back to the credit of WHO and will in the long run - from our side at least - aid us in giving even greater support on the monetary side to the Organization. We certainly, in the United States Public Health Service, which I have the good fortune to head, will continue to give all the technical and personal assistance that we can to the continuation of this programme.

I want to express disappointment however over the fact that this Assembly has not, for reasons we all know, found it possible to suggest to the Board that it select the site for the next Assembly somewhere in North America, and has not put it in a position to decide that the meeting should be held in the United States. We had hoped that you would be with us next year. However, that apparently is not to be, and so we only want to repeat that we feel very strongly that the nations, the delegates from the nations, and the Secretariat too, would gain greatly by having an opportunity to have meetings occasionally in other lands than this fine one in which we are meeting today and we hope therefore that the next World Health Assembly will show some interest and desire to meet abroad; we hope some day, of course, that the United States might be that site.

Finally, we want to say to the Secretariat that the entire United States delegation is proud and pleased with the work which they collectively have done. We have to be furnished with numerous documents and other things necessary in conducting a programme of the type we have during an Assembly. It seems to us that the job has been exceedingly well done and that we all owe a deep vote of thanks to the entire Secretariat.

We have studied the various recommendations of the Board which we have reconsidered here, and it seems to us apparent too that the Board is fulfilling its purposes, that the Board has made real progress since the last Assembly in Rome in serving us well in the intervals between Assemblies; and we wish too to compliment the Board.

And finally we want to thank, as all of you do, the Confederation of Switzerland, the Republic and Canton of Geneva, as well as all of you who have made our stay here in Geneva so pleasant and indeed so fruitful.

Dr. DAENGSVANG (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation, I thank you for the opportunity you have given me of expressing before all delegations our feeling of pleasure and satisfaction at the successful termination of the Third World Health Assembly. All we delegates have been here together for about three weeks and we have had excellent opportunities of meeting each other and discussing the activities of WHO. This will also promote better international understanding, not only on medical and health services, but also on other international activities, which I am sure will lead to world peace. We shall go back to our homes with pleasurable and successful impressions of the activities of this organization; the work has been of a somewhat hard nature, but as we are all fully aware, the World Health Organization is only in its third year of existence.

We should therefore expect to have many new lessons to be learned and practised. Naturally such a large family, with many young children, will not agree unanimously on every lesson, but we are all united in our desire and purpose to see this organization go forward, bringing to peoples all over the world the highest possible levels of health and greater happiness.

I can assure you that the Thai delegation will carry back to their homes the good message to our people - that the World Health Organization has given and is continually giving many valuable aids in health and medical services not only to the people of one country, but to the people of the whole world. Therefore this organization is a source of continuing strength upon which national health services may call for counsel and aid. We shall also report to our government that a sound programme of this organization for 1951 has been successfully worked out and approved by the Third World Health Assembly.

I wish therefore on this occasion to express our sincere thanks to the President, the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Rapporteurs, the various committees and working parties, the representatives of Executive Board, the Director-General and his staff for their initiative and their unremitting labours, to which is due the very great success of the World Health Assembly.

I wish again to give thanks to the Swiss and French Governments for their hospitality and generosity in welcoming us and entertaining us with an affection which we shall never forget.

Once more may I express my deep appreciation for the great honour all delegations of Member States to the present Assembly have conferred upon Thailand in making it a member of the Executive Board. Finally I wish you all a good journey, success and happiness.

Dr. De LEON (Philippines): The Philippine delegation wishes to express its greetings and congratulations to the President for the very able and conscientious way in which she has presided over and conducted the affairs of the Third World Health Assembly. We wish to commend, also, the splendid effort and efficient co-operation of the Director-General and his staff, in the setting up of an administrative machinery which responds with clockwork efficiency to the trying demands of an international assembly of this type, especially with regard to furnishing the proper information needed by the members, the difficult task of preparing and distributing documents in time, and the unusually brilliant ability displayed by the interpreters in the translation of the lengthy speeches during the session. Then, too the solicitous and courteous manner shown by the employees of the administration in affording help and service to the members of delegations deserves full commendation by this Assembly.

The Third World Health Assembly itself deserves to be congratulated in full for the extensive deliberations by the delegates on the health problems and needs of the respective countries, and the spirit of cordiality which pervaded the discussions. This Assembly has made many important decisions and made allocation of funds to countries needing help to solve their health problems. This Assembly has become a rich source of vital health information to everybody. It is indeed a great opportunity for the Philippine delegation to be able to be with you on this occasion to learn so much about the health situation of the world and to be able to participate in the discussions on vital problems which affect humanity.

We are particularly grateful for your generous act of approving without abstentions the establishment, as soon as possible, of the Western Pacific Regional Organisation, in which our country and government is very much interested. We feel a little guilty of having been too insistent and persistent during the discussion of this item of the agenda, and for that we offer our delayed apologies. I wish however to ask a little more of your indulgence to inform you why we are especially partial in this respect. In the Far East area the countries that suffered more during the last world war were those situated in the central portion of this Western Pacific area, in which the Philippines is included. As a matter of fact, the Philippines experienced with painful and devastating effect the brunt of the enemy invasion, being directly situated in the path of its furious attack, towards the extreme south. It is admitted that the famous defence at Bataan and Corregidor by Filipinos delayed critically the time-table of the enemy's invading army just enough to allow the Allies the breathing space required to gather together enough strength to reverse the direction of victory. In this heroic attempt to stem the tide of a savage and vicious invasion, the Philippines most of all, and neighbouring countries to a lesser degree, suffered devastation and suffering that cannot be appreciated at all by countries which had the good luck to miss the terrible effects of such an invasion. When one adds to this situation more destruction in the wake of the liberation army, you cannot imagine a far worse picture of the war - devastation of cities, towns and countryside.

This is, in brief, a picture of our position after the liberation. The physical destruction of the country is being gradually re-established but the health and social situation is still impaired. Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, venereal disease, intestinal parasitic infections, nutritional diseases which were under control before the war, have gained renewed vigour and greater speed of spread because of the extensive and rapid movement of civilian and military population from infected to clean areas, and have been favoured by the lack of food and necessary drugs. It has been fortunate that owing to the three-yearly systematic vaccination before the war, which has protected the population, cholera and smallpox have not been re-introduced into the Philippines.

Now, colleagues of this Health Assembly, can you blame us for our insistence on the establishment of this Western Pacific Regional Organization? Feeling the need of more immediate material help, our neighbours in the Western Pacific Region, have already been leaving or are intending to leave our regional area and to realign themselves with another already established regional group in the hope thus to expedite relief. By your approval of our request to establish the Western Pacific Region you are not only expediting the much-needed assistance to under-developed and devastated areas but also protecting at the same time the more prosperous, undamaged and well-developed countries from the danger of infectious and epidemics which would result if the under-developed countries were left alone unaided to become the foci of diseases which can be transferred with more rapidity from one country to another, now that air transportation facilities are developed, making those who were before distant neighbours, now only next-door neighbours.

I will repeat that your endorsement of the request to establish the Western Pacific Region is very timely, and for that action you should be many times blessed by the countries of the Western Pacific Area.

Finally, before we disperse to our respective home countries, the Philippine delegation, in the name of the Republic of the Philippines, wishes to express its gratitude to the delegations who have extended them hospitality, and would like to extend to you all our greetings in the Filipino way, with the word "Mabuhay", which means long life and prosperity to all.

Dr. IOAKIMOGLU (Greece): In spite of a very hard war that lasted for nearly ten years, my country has made in the last four years some real progress in the field of public health. For instance, our campaign against malaria was a remarkable success. The World Health Organization has helped us in many cases to solve our public-health problems. I am very pleased to avail myself of the opportunity that is offered me today of expressing before this Assembly the gratitude of my country for the help it has received from the World Health Organization. I can assure this Assembly that the Greek Government will do all it can to co-operate with this organization within the spirit of its constitution.

Dr. SAM (Haiti) (interpretation from the French): The delegation of Haiti is not in a position to make a substantial contribution to the work of this Third World Health Assembly, but nevertheless it has followed with great interest discussions which, from the beginning to the end, were very interesting.

It has recorded the efforts made towards finding satisfactory solutions to the complex problems discussed by the various committees. Our delegation takes the opportunity of expressing its gratitude to the World Health Organization and offering its thanks to the various organizations which joined their efforts in order to improve the health of the people of Haiti by implementing a programme for the eradication of yaws and syphilis. The people of Haiti has the greatest hopes of these efforts due to the initiative of the Regional Office for the Americas. The Haitian delegation hopes that at the next Assembly Haiti will be able to submit a favourable report of the results of this campaign. It sincerely hopes for the success of this undertaking which will strengthen the authority of the World Health Organization and increase the confidence which the nations, great and small, have placed in it.

5. CLOSING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: Yet another session of the World Health Assembly is about to end and I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating all those who have contributed to its success and enabled the Assembly to come to decisions, mostly unanimous and always in a spirit of accommodation.

The problems of world health are intricate and immense. It must naturally be so in a world where standards of life and wellbeing vary enormously. Much remains to be done, even in the most advanced and prosperous countries of the world, and then there are those vast and heavily populated areas where we have to build up almost from scratch, as it were. In the ultimate analysis, the

true wealth of a nation is its people and their quality. The strength and prosperity of a nation depend necessarily on the standard of physical and mental health of its people. Where these standards are low it naturally follows that social progress - and I use social in the widest sense of the term - is greatly hindered or indeed made impossible, and what is applicable to a nation is equally applicable to the world. We who are assembled here know quite well how to contend against disease and ill health, but the tragedy for us is that we have not, in adequate measure, the sinews of war wherewith to battle against the enemies of humanity. It must have been heart-rending to each one of us, connected as we all are with the carrying-out of health measures in our own countries, to see what are obviously absolutely necessary programmes having to be ruthlessly cut down because of lack of money. And yet, living as we do in a world of reality, we have to face facts. Nevertheless there is no reason to be downhearted. Three years is nothing in the life of a world organization. Indeed we may take a legitimate pride in the fact that WHO realized from the beginning that it was work in the field and not in offices that was going to be the determining factor in its life and that it has already acquired much valuable experience through its field operations. It is these that have caught the imagination of the governments and peoples of the various countries and I am sure the Executive Board, on whom has fallen the grave responsibility of adjusting our expenditure according to our meagre assets, will do so in such a way that our programme activities suffer as little as possible.

It must be the aim of each one of us also, on returning to our homelands, to see to it that WHO gets the publicity which I do not think it has so far received in adequate measure, so that it becomes a people's concern. Everyone values good health, and I am quite sure that if the people of every country get to understand what we want to do, if they see with their own eyes what is being sought to be done, there will be money forthcoming for our work. It is on the people's pennies, rather than on governmental donations, that we will thrive.

It is good to feel that we are increasing our collaboration with the other specialized agencies of the United Nations. It is difficult, nay, impossible, to separate one nation-building activity from the other, for the work of each is too indissolubly linked with its neighbours. There can be no health without food or education or proper living conditions and, inasmuch as there can be no hope for the world if we cannot build up the health of our children, I am sure we are all particularly glad of the continued opportunities of service in this vital field, which are open to us in collaboration and co-operation with UNICEF.

I would like to throw out a few suggestions for the consideration of the Assembly which I feel may stimulate and expedite our work next year. Every year adds to our experience and there is no doubt that our faith in international collaboration grows with each annual session. The excellent spirit which has pervaded our discussions this year is proof of this.

I wonder whether small working groups, composed of those Members who feel very strongly on certain controversial issues, could not be formed as early as possible after the main committees first meet, so that delegates may have the opportunity of putting forward their views at length. This might prevent the feeling of frustration that may exist in the minds of some and lessen to a large extent the difficulties of the chairmen of the main committees who are forced, because of lack of time, towards the end to limit discussions.

I feel that there should be ample time given to the committees for the proper adjustment of programmes and budget. It is, in my opinion, for the Assembly, and not the Executive Board to give express directives. I believe that we were unable to do so this year simply for lack of time.

I would also like to suggest the setting aside of, say, four, or at least three, evenings during the session for informal discussions. I do not believe that we know enough of each other's difficulties, nor enough of what WHO has accomplished in the various countries and what more it could accomplish. Such knowledge of each other's needs and experiences will, I am sure, be a source of cementing the bonds of comradeship in a great human endeavour and will also make us realize, as we should do, that the general good is our own good and that it does not matter so much who represents whom on the Executive Board, but that the interests of each one of us are safe in the hands of those who may come from countries geographically distant from us, but in reality with a real understanding of our problems and needs, because they represent international and not governmental and national points of view.

I have already spoken of more publicity for the work of WHO in our own countries. I believe too that it would be of value and interest to us all to see pictures of the needs of the various countries here. Visual demonstrations have a way of bringing home facts such as nothing else can. I am, therefore, glad that we shall have some films shown to us next year. Can we not all bring films or pictures with us? - and in particular I would like to appeal to those countries of Africa and Asia, whose needs in the health sphere are so very great.

In spite of the obvious difficulty for many of us to be absent for so long from our countries, I am of opinion that we must come to these annual gatherings with the determination to stay and work for a full three weeks. The value of personal contacts is inestimable. In working for the ideology of the United Nations lies the hope of a better world and I have no doubt that in spite of our differences, in spite of our temporary aberrations, we are all one at heart. There is plenty of goodwill in the world. WHO can and must make its own special and very vital contribution to the work of the United Nations.

In conclusion, may I thank the delegates for their unstinted co-operation and fine spirit of team work throughout the session? A special vote of thanks is merited by the chairmen of the main committees. Theirs was a herculean task and they have acquitted themselves well and enabled us to finish according to schedule.

And what of the Secretariat? On them really devolves everything. We know what a tower of strength we have in the Director-General and I am sure you will all join with me in paying a deservedly high tribute of our admiration and gratitude to him and his colleagues. The efficiency of the

Secretariat is unquestionable, and how they produce documents with such speed and accuracy is quite astonishing. But in addition to efficiency, it is their smiling faces and uniform courtesy that command our admiration also. And I may not forget the interpreters, on whom also lies a heavy burden. It is not easy always to interpret on the spur of the moment the thoughts of others, in particular when these are expressed in a language foreign to the speaker, and yet these friends seldom falter or fail. There are all the other members of the staff also to whom we owe a great deal. They add definitely to our comfort by their unfailing courtesy. To the press, the photographers, the radio, and indeed to everyone who has contributed to our comfort and wellbeing, I would like on behalf of all of us to express our gratitude. Last, but not least, WHO is extremely grateful to the United Nations for all their help and collaboration, without which our work would not have been possible. The Federal and Local Governments of this beautiful country also deserve our thanks for their kind hospitality.

I wish you all, friends and colleagues, bon voyage and every success in the work of WHO in your respective spheres. May we return to our countries inspired, and may we bring to WHO next year an abundance of hope in the way of both moral and material support for the great cause for which it stands and to the advancement of which we are pledged.

The session is now closed.

The session adjourned at 11.15 a.m.