



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL
P. O. Box. 2932, MANILA

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Twelfth Session
Wellington
31 August - 5 September 1961

TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

WP/RC12/TD10
4 August 1961

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SELECTION OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR THE
THIRTEENTH (1962) SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Technical Discussions, held during the seventh (1956) session of the Regional Committee, reported¹ that the discussion group made, inter alia, the following recommendation:

"In selecting topics for future Technical Discussions, consideration should be given to matters of regional interest which are particularly appropriate to the place of the Regional Committee Meeting."

The Technical Discussion group may wish to consider, among others, the following topics suggested by the Secretariat:

1 IMMUNIZATION IN THE CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

This topic is suggested because of the increasing importance being given to communicable diseases during World Health Assembly and Executive Board meetings. Communicable diseases still remain a problem in most of the countries of our Region. Discussion of the value of immunization in the control of communicable diseases may bring to the foreground not only the importance of immunization but also the need for health education of the public to obtain optimum results and focus attention on the subject at various levels of the national health administration. Epidemiological considerations, particularly the implications of the changing pattern observed in a number of communicable diseases, potency of vaccine and ways of conserving them in the field, the need for international standardization of vaccines, research, priority considerations, selection of groups to be immunized, the organization necessary and many other factors need to be reviewed in the light of present knowledge and experience. It is hoped that such a discussion will bring into light related problems as they occur in the countries of the participants and may well pave the way towards a realistic reorientation of views and approaches to national programmes, as well as serving as a conditioning factor when seeking WHO technical advice.

/2 THE ROLE ...

¹ Unpublished document WP/RC7/TD8

2 THE ROLE OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLIES

The World Health Organization is engaged in a "spearhead" programme for the improvement of community water supplies. During the Twelfth World Health Assembly, the Assembly recommended that countries give priority to the provision of safe and adequate water supplies to their populations and mobilize all their resources to contribute to this end. WHO is providing leadership in a co-ordinated global programme of community water supply and is providing technical and advisory services when so requested by governments.

The role of health services in Member governments should be clearly understood in the improvement of water supplies since the co-operation and co-ordination of many governmental agencies will be required to make such a programme successful. Although procedures will vary according to the political, legislative, economic and social structures of the individual countries, certain basic principles will apply to all national efforts in this respect.

Environmental sanitation has never been the subject of a technical discussion at the Regional Committee meetings and the subject mentioned above or a variant of it might be both timely and appropriate.

3 RADIATION HEALTH

The increasing use of atomic energy, radioactive materials and other sources of ionizing radiation in many countries makes it essential for public health workers to study how accidents which might result in the exposure to radiation or radioactive contamination of large numbers of people can be prevented, or dealt with if they occur. Radioisotopes are being employed more and more in medical practice and in general factories outside of atomic energy organizations. Atomic reactors are also being set up in several countries in the Region and the control of radioactive waste has been a matter of concern for public health authorities. Experts who have studied radiation hazards appear to have been somewhat surprised to note that by far the highest contribution to the average population dose of radiation is through the medical use of X-rays, particularly in diagnostic radiology. Efforts are now being made to persuade X-ray manufacturers to produce equipment which would give maximum protection against radiation to both the patient and the operator.

Radiation health is therefore suggested as a topic for the Technical Discussions to highlight these hazards and to consider how they can be prevented.