

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

ORGANISATION MONDIALE
DE LA SANTÉ

SECOND WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

A2/VR/5 Corr.1

20 June 1949

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Provisional Verbatim Record

CORRIGENDUM

Page 11, line 6:

Insert full stop after the word "displacement"; delete from "arising" to the end of the sentence and substitute:

"brought about by the insurgents, of 700,300 inhabitants".

DEUXIEME ASSEMBLEE MONDIALE
DE LA SANTE

A2/VR/5 Corr.1

20 juin 1949

ORIGINAL: FRANÇAIS

CINQUIEME SEANCE PLENIERE

Compte rendu in extenso provisoire

CORRIGENDUM

Page 13, ligne 12:

Lire comme suit la fin de la phrase, après le mot "Grèce" :
"en raison du déplacement de 700,300 habitants, provoqué par les
insurgés".

Même page, ligne 18:

Insérer après la phrase se terminant par le mot "regrettable"
le membre de phrase suivant : "Cette question touche aux problèmes
de la santé, c'est pourquoi je l'évoque ici et"

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

ORGANISATION MONDIALE
DE LA SANTÉ

SECOND WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

A2/VR/5 ✓
15 June 1949

• ENGLISH

✓ FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Palazzo Venezia, Rome

Wednesday, 15 June 1949, at 9.30 a.m.

Provisional Verbatim Record

PRESIDENT: Dr. K. EVANG (Norway)

CONTENTS

1. Discussion of the report of the Director-General and the reports of the Executive Board (Continuation)
2. Announcements by the President

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 be sent to Mr. Richards, Room 203, within 48 hours of distribution. Unless the issue of immediate corrigenda is expressly requested, minor corrections will simply be noted for the final records.

CONFIDENTIAL
A2/VR/5
page 2

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

1. DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND THE REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (Continuation)

The PRESIDENT: I shall ask the interpreter to translate into French the speech of the representative of Ceylon which was given at the end of the last meeting.

The speech of the representative of Ceylon (see document A2/VR/4) was interpreted into French.

Dr. CLAVEAUX (Uruguay) (Interpretation from the Spanish): I have been greatly encouraged by a letter from the Director-General in which he solicits the assistance of the Ministers of Public Health represented in this Assembly. The Director-General stresses the necessity of adopting resolutions on a transcendent plane and of forming a common front with all the nations of the world in dealing with health problems. He emphasizes the urgency of treating concrete problems such as the budget of the Organization, the tradition and character of the regional agencies, the agreement necessary as to the future administration of the International Emergency Children's Fund. I have temporarily laid aside my exhausting task of Minister of Public Health for Uruguay in order to be able to contribute as well as I can towards the solution of all the problems with which we are faced. I have come here also for moral reasons, in order to collaborate systematically with those persons and institutions who consider the problems of public health their dominant preoccupation, the basis of their policy and as the foundation stone of civilization. I have come here for practical reasons of administration, but also in a spirit of philosophical enquiry, with the deep conviction that in this Assembly, with the administrative resources at its disposal, we shall reach a solution of those important problems which in the physical, the moral and the social sphere control the future of man on this tormented planet.

I have not come here specifically to defend regional, and much less, purely national interests. I have come here as citizen of the world to collaborate in ...

a universal effort. Uruguay as a country will not attract to any large extent the attention of the Assembly and of its executive committees, because from many points of view fate has placed us in an exceptional position. It is a country of uniform race, with a temperate climate and a favourable topography which facilitate communications between all parts of the Republic. Uruguay is absolutely free from yellow fever, malaria, typhus, bubonic plague and smallpox. The people have been vaccinated on a large scale against diphtheria, typhoid fever, and tuberculosis. Delegates from this Organization who have recently visited the country under the auspices of the expert committee have recognized the perfection of the methods by which tuberculosis is located and the efficacy of the results achieved in this field. The intensive treatment of venereal disease by antibiotics and other means is such that we can now localize this problem and make optimistic estimates of the results to be obtained. Mortality in general and in particular is regularly decreasing in Uruguay. The standard of life is increasing on a parallel scale. The food situation in Uruguay is excellent and the the food of highest quality. Considerable quantities of meat, milk and green vegetables are available. The cost of living at the moment is one of the lowest in the world. Socially speaking, an effective democracy must guarantee of protection for the individual in all its various aspects. Average legislation and standards of legislation which have been existing for quite a number of years have given us, up to the present, the possibility of reaching this present level without any violence and without social upheaval.

As Minister of Public Health for Uruguay, I hope to find in the World Health Organization the technical collaboration, the guidance, the documentation, the advice on the methods to be followed and the regulations to be framed in order to solve our health problems by means of our own resources. From the complete information that has been presented by the Director-General on the activities of the World Health Organization during the first four months of its existence, on the operations which have been carried out in technical services, and on the formation, co-ordination and organization, it is very easy to appreciate the enormous field of work covered by this Organization and the need to plan its activity in advance. It is also necessary to allocate specifically the resources which it can use in a given

M. VILLARAMA (Philippines): Reference has been made to the historic city of Rome as the depository of culture and progress. Realizing that the World Health Organization is dedicated to the dissemination of health promotion and disease prevention and that it is holding its Second World Health Assembly in this wonderful city, the delegates representing practically all nations of the earth cannot fail to realize that we are here in answer to the beacon light that was once Rome's engineering feat and to other specialized knowledge that will put to shame even what are considered to be the achievements of the Modern Era. The art and the sciences of today have yet much to learn from the masterpieces everywhere we see in Rome.

In mentioning these facts I have in mind the annual report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, who has shown full grasp of the subject-matters which are believed to be within the province of our Organization. His ability and foresight can be appreciated by a perusal of this detailed and itemized report; this to a great extent portrays the ideal that he has conscientiously followed in discharging the responsibilities of his high office, in the execution of which he puts service above himself. In fact, in all problems of public health, the report is exhaustive and has such a telling effect on anyone who may read it that we can say that if there was the Rome of antiquity and the citadel of Christendom, our present era has a World Health Assembly for the promotion of health and prevention of disease in all parts of the world, without distinction to colour, race and creed.

This is, indeed, a young Organization, it is young in the sense that we have to harness all peoples of goodwill throughout the world and make them contribute what they can, so that the funds thus raised may be distributed (as indicated in the report of the Director-General) to regions that need them most.

We, of the Far East, have always taken it that the occidental people have always been the leaders in any movement, although in reality civilization started in the East. By the process of evolution and in accordance with recorded memory and the histories of nations, the Eastern Hemisphere has somewhat taken the attitude of relying on the ability and leadership of the Western Hemisphere, so that progress in the East has given rise to the expression, "the lightening of the white man's burden".

In this world movement it is not out of place to mention that the financial and the technical assistance extended to us by the Western people have been very significant. But certainly in the implementation or in the carrying out of the objectives of the World Health Assembly there may be honest differences of opinions. It is presumed that there can be no universal formula to meet all ills, and the report of the Director-General is very clear on this point. Local or regional problems will arise and the central organization of the World Health Organization should be condescending, not to say understanding and sympathetic, enough with the people affected in that area to give them a chance to solve their own problems and tribulations. Of course, the needed supervision is necessary and probably also the technical skill, but for the proper orientation and better efficiency of the service, may I say that there should be unity of purpose. That unity of purpose should find a responsive chord through the central office, which will set up a branch or agency or headquarters of the Organization in a particular region so as to develop and propagate the principles of better health and better medical care.

I have no doubt that you have anticipated my desire in advocating a regional headquarters in Manila with Japan, Korea, China, and the Philippines forming that region. The unsettled status of Japan and the fratricidal civil wars in China will leave South Korea and the Philippines to form the block. The peoples in these countries are not exactly backward peoples, but I say that they are progressive peoples waiting only for encouragement and help that other sister nations could afford to give.

You all know of Japan before the last world war; China may be no longer the sleeping giant that she has been and Korea shows signs of promise and hope for the future. My country, the

Philippines, has a population of 20,000,000 with an area of around 110,000 square miles; it is bigger than many of the countries of Europe. You know that it was under Spain for over three centuries and then under the United States of America, who did not rule us, who did not govern us, but who have cradled us to the democratic institutions that Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and lately Franklin Delano Roosevelt had indoctrinated into the American people. My people, therefore, represents an occidental culture, nourished and guided by the altruistic American nation. Incidentally this is an appreciation and acknowledgement before the whole world that if it were not for the United States, my country, which was devastated by the cruellest war of all times, could not have had a semblance of rehabilitation by this time. Our principal cities were reduced to ashes; Manila, the capital, was reputed to have been even more devastated than Warsaw. In 1945, therefore, we started from scratch with increased sanitary problems. But the United States lent us funds for the ordinary functions of government. The War Damage Act augmented our funds for health matters. The Williams-Waterman Funds made possible our investigations in beriberi. Recently we were granted three fellowships by the World Health Organization; three demonstrators were sent to the Philippines, their expenses being shared on a fifty-fifty basis. We are grateful for all the help that we have received so far. Of course, we are not expecting and we should not expect that WHO will do miracles for us, but my country and my people, I believe, have a right to expect that you will not turn a deaf ear to our pleadings, as we still need further help from your Organization for the purpose of better control of preventable diseases.

The Philippine Government has started a tuberculosis control programme. The French Government has given us BCG vaccine, with which to initiate our BCG vaccination scheme. We are now engaged in general immunization work, following the success in the South American republics and the inspiring lectures of Dr. Gumersindo Sayago of Argentina during the last quarter of last year. We have now a Fellow in Copenhagen being trained for this work. Dr. Naffziger did splendid demonstrations in neurosurgery during his stay in the Philippines. Dr. Steele has given hope and faith to hypertensives. Dr. Amador Guevarra of Costa Rica, a venereal diseases

specialist, has been given a prolonged assignment with us. All these representatives of WHO have given us encouragement.

Lastly, may I bring to the attention of this Assembly that one Filipino dies of tuberculosis every 15 minutes and that there are approximately 60 Filipinos falling sick of malaria also every 15 minutes. In other words, the mortality of tuberculosis and the morbidity of malaria show startling and glaring figures, undoubtedly deserving serious consideration. These are priority public health problems in the Philippines. May we expect substantial help in reducing to the minimum the toll of human suffering which my country is paying for these scourges every year.

Dr. KARABETSOS (Greece) (Interpretation from the French):

Mr. Chairman, my dear colleagues, I would like to extend my heartiest thanks to the eminent members of the expert committees and the Executive Board - and especially to its President, Sir Aly Shousha, Pasha - for all the work they have accomplished during the limited time they had at their disposal while they were in session. They have presented us with a wide range of scientific matters of great importance, answering the questions put by the First Health Assembly and elaborating and submitting to the Second Health Assembly a complete programme which on the one hand deals with the economic possibilities at the disposal of our Organization, and on the other enables us to face the most urgent problems of immediate interest to public health from an international standpoint.

I would like also to express my heartiest thanks to the eminent and untiring Director-General, Dr. Brock Chisholm, for the study he has made of all the questions and the help he has brought us in our task; and also for his remarkable report, which accompanies the programme submitted for 1950 by the Executive Board for discussion and approval by the present Assembly.

In his report, the Director-General has outlined the path we have to follow in the hard fight for the betterment of the health of the peoples, and I am sure that this path will be approved by all of us.

The Director-General states that this fight will not be won by defensive tactics such as have been used until now in most cases, but by offensive action. Who can contradict this? Furthermore, the enemies of health are very often alive to the ignorance of the masses, to their defective standard of life and perhaps even to the indifference of competent authorities; but if we do not want to fail, we must be very careful in our first approach to these problems. For the enemy is strong and ruthless, and exerts its powers on almost the whole of the globe, whereas our means, our financial means especially, are inadequate to our needs. The situation thus calls for carefulness; a concentration of effort is necessary, especially at the beginning of our fight, if we want to combat the diseases which make most victims and threaten the health of whole nations.

Tuberculosis, malaria, venereal diseases, mental diseases - these are the main enemies of the nations' health. The toll they levy is a heavy one and it is against those enemies that our fight has to be continued with perseverance and by all possible means. On the other hand, the important infectious diseases - cholera, pests, typhus etc. - should also constitute one of our main tasks. Moreover, public health services, and maternal and child health, should also demand our immediate attention, because upon them future generations depend.

The effort we must make should thus be both concentrated and of adequate scope if we are to attain the aim of our Organization. This effort imposes on us a long-term task and necessitates considerable financial means; we must especially keep the people informed, because no enduring result can be achieved without their active help. We must unite our efforts, as the Executive Board suggests, in order to win the fight against the most dangerous enemies; and let all our help be given to the peoples who are attacked by them, and who for that reason, and also because of war devastation, are the poorest in material resources. It is among those peoples that Greece has the sad privilege of being numbered. For centuries she has been fighting for her independence, for the liberty of the individual, freedom of thought and freedom from fear. It is for those ideals that she has had perforce to spend the greatest part of her economic potential, already very much reduced on account of the aridity of her land, so that no margin has remained for any other needs, not even for health needs, and meanwhile, unfortunately, events for which she was not responsible have continued to lay their burdens on her. Thus has been perpetuated a vicious circle in everything concerning the health of her people.

Nevertheless, before the last World War Greece had accomplished important progress in the domain of health equipment, through the reduction of all other expenditure. This progress, unfortunately, was stopped. Thanks to the help brought by our friends and various organizations, but thanks especially to the generous help of the United States of America - help which is still

continuing - we have managed to rebuild and even expand our health equipment. But we are still far below an adequate standard, because the normal expenses necessary for the development of our health equipment are every day superseded by other considerable expenses which we cannot face. At the present time we have in Greece a most urgent problem to solve due to the displacement, arising from the rebellion, of persons whose number now attains 500,000. The situation of those refugees, most of them without any dwellings and living in extremely precarious material conditions, particularly demands attention. The nation has to find as rapidly as possible ways and means of stopping this deplorable state of affairs. This subject is essentially bound up with the nation's health, and it is for this reason that I mention it. That is why I ask the Assembly to discuss this problem in its debates and to request the Executive Board to consider it at one of its next meetings with a very special interest. Because I know that our Organization does not have at its disposal the necessary means, I ask that the question be submitted to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in order that it may come to the help of Greece, to enable her in a very short time to bring a favourable solution to this problem, which is particularly urgent and painful. But we believe that other countries are in a similar condition, and are in urgent need of help.

As a doctor, I feel it necessary to remind you of something: we have been called upon, as you know, by the United Nations to create our Organization with the aim of raising the standards of all the peoples to as high a level as possible. I suppose that we have the right to ask the United Nations to give us a better basis on which we might plan the foundations of the World Health house.

As doctors we are nearer to the pains, the sorrows, the fears and the privations of mankind. We are thus in a better position to evaluate the bad influence of all those factors on physical and mental health. As to the way in which technical, scientific and financial help is to be given, our delegation will make certain remarks when this matter is being discussed, especially as far as financial help is concerned. But now we wish to stress

that no State is able to meet all its health needs with the financed furnished by its regular budget, and we therefore have to find the means of creating a special credit for this purpose. This can only be done if social insurance, and particularly health insurance, is extended to cover the whole population, with contributions proportionate to income tax. This would be in conformity with the principles of insurance, according to which those better placed pay for others, and would also accord with the principles in the New Testament.

I ask that this proposal be considered in due time, and I would like also to express my thanks again to the Director-General and the Executive Board for the task they have accomplished. I wish from the bottom of my heart the greatest success to the work to be carried out here in the Second Health Assembly.

The PRESIDENT: The last speaker on my list this morning is the representative from Finland.

Dr. SAVONEN (Finland): I am grateful for your permission to say a few words at this meeting on behalf of Finland. The international health work carried out by such a mighty organization as WHO is of great importance, especially to the small nations. They cannot carry out scientific research work on as large a scale as the big nations, but the smaller nations have the possibility of applying in practice the results of science achieved elsewhere. For instance, in the BCG vaccination campaign Finland has with the generous help of the Scandinavian Red Cross organizations, UNICEF and WHO, come probably further than any other country in the world. About 75% of all tuberculin "negative" persons in the age groups from 0 to 25 years have already been vaccinated.

Finland has been fortunate in receiving great help from WHO and its Interim Commission during the last two years in the form of fellowships, visiting experts and medical literature. We are very grateful for all this assistance which has been a strong stimulus to the development of public-health services in a country that for several war years had been isolated from international co-operation and from the new

achievements in medical science. Over twenty fellowships allocated by WHO have enabled us to send most of our best public-health doctors and nurses abroad to brush up their knowledge and to bring many new and stimulating ideas for the intensification of various public health programmes. The benefit of these fellowships and of the visits of the excellent WHO expert consultants has been doubled because of the fact that the whole public health legislation in Finland has been renewed and revised during the last few years. As a result of this recent development, the following facts may be mentioned: today over 90% pregnant women and about 60% of infants are registered in health centres and visited in their homes by midwives and public health nurses. In addition to the earlier health centres, over 200 new health centre buildings with living accommodation for public health nurses and midwives have been constructed during the last two years and 100 - 200 additional ones are under construction.

In order to create the closest possible collaboration between our country and the World Health Organization, about half a year ago the Finnish Government appointed a special permanent committee called the WHO Committee of Finland. This committee, which has a Secretary employed for this particular purpose and whose Chairman is the Director-General of the State Medical Board, has members from all important governmental and voluntary offices and organizations dealing with public health matters. The candidates for fellowships are selected by this committee. In the same way the committee makes proposals concerning Finland's participation in congresses and conferences dealing with medical and public health matters; it receives and takes care of visiting consultants, and it is, in general, a connecting link between Finland and WHO and other international organizations in this field. The committee is planning, among other things, the celebration of the World Health Day.

Lastly, as a sidelight, it may be mentioned that this committee has had a co-ordinating effect on the relations between the different public health organizations, governmental and non-governmental, inside the country itself. The committee has already shown its great practical importance and I am bold enough to ask whether perhaps there might not also be reason for other countries to appoint similar committees. At least in Finland our experience was that it hitherto was not sufficiently clear and evident which body had the proper responsibility in matters now belonging to this WHO committee in my country. We in Finland are convinced of the great international importance of the World Health Organization and we wish it all possible success. Thank you.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: There are now eight more speakers on my list for the general debate. However, several of these speakers have said that they would like to speak tomorrow. Therefore the general debate will go on in a plenary session tomorrow morning at 9.30. It is now absolutely necessary for the Chair to know whether more speakers would also like to take part in this general debate, and I would therefore ask you to indicate whether you would like to prolong the list now, and to announce your names to the Chair, if possible today.

As regards the other meetings for today: the General Committee will meet at 12 noon today - in a quarter of an hour - in Committee Room D. Only persons elected to the Committee will meet. At 3.30 this afternoon, the Committee on Programme will meet in the Sala del Mappamondo. And also at 3.30 this afternoon the Committee on Constitutional Matters will meet in this room and I would like, in this connexion to quote Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure: "Each delegation shall be entitled to be represented on each main committee by one of its members. He may be accompanied at meetings of the committee by one or more other members, who may be accorded permission to speak but shall not vote."

I have a last announcement to make. If delegates prefer to speak in an official language which is not French or English, then we would ask the delegate to facilitate the work of the Assembly by presenting an extra copy at once. That will make it possible to make translations in the booths in the two working languages, French and English, simultaneously. And I would also like to recall to the members that we have a tremendous amount of work before us, that the time is short and that therefore all delegates should try to make their statements as short as possible.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.