



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



50th DIRECTING COUNCIL

62nd SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 27 September – 1 October 2010

Provisional Agenda Item 4.15

CD50/19 (Eng.)

26 August 2010

ORIGINAL: SPANISH

ROUNDTABLE ON URBANISM AND HEALTHY LIVING

Background

1. World Health Day (WHD) is celebrated annually on 7 April, the day which marks the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO). In recent years, a roundtable on the theme of that year's World Health Day is included on the agenda of PAHO's Directing Council. It is an opportunity to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health. "Urbanism and Healthy Living" is the theme of WHD this year and will be the topic of the roundtable at the 50th PAHO Directing Council.

2. Improving urban health is a mandate that originated from the Rio 92 meeting. A focus on finding a solution to the problem of urban health can be found in chapter 6 of Agenda 21: Protection and Promotion of Human Health (1). In 2005, the Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations: "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all," (2) highlights the need for freedom to live without misery in the face of the challenge of urban development: creation of jobs, improvement of slum neighborhoods, and a search for alternatives to prevent the development of such neighborhoods.

Situation in the Region of the Americas

3. By 2030, three-fifths of the world's population will reside in urban areas. Evidence suggests there will be even greater inequality in health in the future. The majority of urban dwellers will live in cities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Such cities are becoming ever more impoverished relative to the industrialized countries. It is predicted that this future urban shift will be characterized by greater movement of populations toward urban centers; slums will be home to a greater proportion of the

world's poor; and these expanded cities will create a dramatic impact on the environment and human health (3).

4. Since the 1980s, a number of studies have been conducted on urban health or healthy cities (4-10). These studies have evaluated aspects of: health in the world's cities, environmental factors, migration and immigrant health in cities, city health systems and services, equity, local governance, urban policy and planning, social innovations, care for the poor and hungry, and urban violence. The Region of the Americas has the largest economic disparities in the world. Disparities in social, political, climatic, and ethnic conditions also exist, especially in urban settings.

5. Urban health problems cannot be resolved by the public health sector alone. The problems are a consequence of the interaction of many other factors, such as transportation and housing. The health sector can and should lead the dialogue for the development of public policies that will contribute to healthy populations. The urban approach requires going beyond what an individual or a family can achieve. Such urban efforts also require viewing the city as a whole complex of social and environmental determinants of health. It is clearly not sufficient to work in isolation with one sector, one population, or one institution.

PAHO/WHO Collaborative Efforts

6. Since 2003, PAHO has promoted a series of activities in order to establish a common strategy that responds to urban health problems. Profiles of some cities of the Region were prepared and presented at the First Regional Urban Health Meeting in Santiago, Chile in 2004. At the same meeting, the first conceptual document, with the title "The City of Citizens," was presented (11).¹

7. In collaboration with its partners, PAHO presented a framework document on urban health at the first meeting of the Urban Health Forum in Mexico in 2007 (12).

8. Related to urban health, for years PAHO has been working on health promotion, especially through healthy setting initiatives such as Healthy Municipalities and Health Promoting Schools, among others.

9. PAHO observed World Health Day 2010 by including the WHO *1000 Cities, 1000 Lives* Campaign.² PAHO joined WHO and UN-Habitat in drafting the *Global*

¹ Document produced for the Pan American Health Organization consultation on urban health, Chile, May 2004.

² *1000 Cities, 1000 Lives* is a global initiative coordinated by the WHO Centre in Kobe, Japan, to encourage cities, towns, neighborhoods and individuals to conduct health-promoting activities on or around WHD. For more information, visit: www.paho.org/whd2010.

Report on Urbanization and Health; in the World Urban Youth Assembly, jointly organized in Brazil with UN-Habitat during the 5th World Urban Forum; and in Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China. Moreover, this year PAHO will participate in the Global Forum on Urbanization and Health in Kobe, Japan and prepare a report on the regional urban health situation, to be completed in time for analysis at the second meeting of the Second Regional Forum on Urban Health and the Third Regional Forum on Health Promotion, slated for October.

Attendees

10. Public health officials from Member States attending the Directing Council will be joined by representatives of academia, United Nations agencies, and civil society organizations.

Program Format

11. The roundtable will be of two hours duration and will be organized, as follows:

- Opening session
- Discussion panels
- Presentation of the report during the plenary

Opening session (30 minutes)

- Opening remarks by the President of the Directing Council.
- Presentation on global urban health by Dr. Jacob Kumaresan, Director of the WHO Center in Kobe
- Opening conference on the improvement of the health in cities by a special guest.
- Explanation of the methodology for the discussion panels by Dr. Luiz A. Galvão, Manager of the Sustainable Development and Environmental Health Area, PAHO

Discussion Panels (60 minutes)

12. After the opening session, discussion panels³ representative of each of the subregions and taking language preferences into consideration, will be convened to discuss the pertinent elements of this topic.

13. All panels will discuss the following questions:

1. *How to develop relevant intersectoral initiatives to modify health determinants in urban settings?*

Consider:

- How to establish a common objective.
- What instruments are required to exercise health sector governance in urban settings.
- What the existing capacities are and the capacities that are needed to achieve it.

2. *What role the Ministry of Health's play in planning geared to a healthy future for cities?*

3. *How should the health services and other relevant sectors act in managing cities to prevent and control the health risks associated with climate change?*

Consider:

- Actions in the medical services themselves.
- Integration of information for identifying the health impact of other policies linked with urban development.
- Competency, capacity, and methodology development.
- Instruments for creating synergies in other sectors relevant to urban development.

4. *What needs to be done for the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and the Member States to provide support and follow up in this area?*

³ Each panel will have a moderator, a motivational speaker, and a rapporteur.

DISCUSSION GROUPS:	
Discussion Group #1	
Moderator:	President of the Directing Council (TBD*)
Rapporteur:	Marilyn Rice, PAHO Adviser
Presentation of the discussion item:	Ministry of Health to be confirmed
Countries:	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, France, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America
Discussion Group #2	
Moderator:	Directing Council Vice President (TBD)
Rapporteur:	Carlos Santos-Burgoa, PAHO Advisor
Presentation of the discussion item	Ministry of Health to be confirmed
Countries:	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay, and Venezuela
Discussion Group #3	
Moderator:	Directing Council Vice President (TBD)
Rapporteur:	Carlos Corvalan, PAHO Adviser
Presentation of the discussion item	Ministry of Health to be confirmed
Countries:	Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Spain

* TBD: to be determined.

Presentation of the Report in Plenary Session (30 minutes)

14. The conclusions of the group discussions will be presented at a subsequent plenary session of the Directing Council.

Expected Result

15. The document with the discussions and conclusions will provide additional input and serve as the basis for PAHO to develop a regional plan of action on urban health with clear objectives, outcomes, and indicators for monitoring program implementation.

16. Report on the progress made in health by the countries of the Region, within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Action by the Directing Council

17. The Directing Council is invited to participate in the roundtable and take note of the report and its recommendations, and, moreover, to disseminate its results in other forums.

References

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