

Preamble to the Constitution

of the

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The States parties to this Constitution declare, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, that the following principles are basic to the happiness, harmonious relations and security of all peoples:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States.

The achievement of any State in the promotion and protection of health is of value to all.

Unequal development in different countries in the promotion of health and control of disease, especially communicable disease, is a common danger.

Healthy development of the child is of basic importance; the ability to live harmoniously in a changing total environment is essential to such development.

The extension to all peoples of the benefits of medical, psychological and related knowledge is essential to the fullest attainment of health.

Informed opinion and active cooperation on the part of the public are of the utmost importance in the improvement of the health of the people.

Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures.

Accepting these principles, and for the purpose of cooperation among themselves and with others to promote and protect the health of all peoples, the Contracting Parties agree to the present Constitution and hereby establish the World Health Organization as a specialized agency within the terms of Article 57 of the Charter of the United Nations.

World Health Day

April 7, 1952

Healthful Surroundings Make Healthy People—the theme of World Health Day in 1952—points to a goal shared by all nations, and it shows where some of the problems lie which must be solved if efforts to improve health throughout the world are to succeed.

Despite the magnificent progress made by medical science, three out of every four men, women, and children in the world still suffer from diseases spread by unsafe water supplies, unsanitary excreta disposal, uncontrolled insects and rodents, and inadequate protection of milk and other foods. The responsibility for this tragic wastage of human life and energy rests with each of us, individually, in our threefold capacity as members of the family and of the local community and as citizens of a shrunken world.

Each of us needs to realize that sanitation is, after all, a way of life. Whether we live in a “developed” or an “underdeveloped” country, it is our duty both to ourselves and to our neighbors to practice certain elementary principles of hygiene which can be applied with little, if any, expense by individuals and families. By keeping a clean home, a clean shop, a clean factory, and a clean neighborhood, we are meeting one of the first requirements for our own health and for a healthy community.

But we must go beyond this; we must also support fully the establishment and develop-



World Health Day

in the

UNITED STATES

World Health Day again gives the people of the United States an opportunity to salute the World Health Organization and its great objective, "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health." Today we will join with our friends throughout the world in rededicating ourselves to the cause of health at home and abroad.

ment of local and national programs in community sanitation. They deserve our support because they aim at providing services designed to protect us against the many dangers that may threaten health and life if conditions in our physical environment are unsatisfactory.

Finally, as citizens of a world where all men have become neighbors, we must share with one another the things we learn about promoting health and preventing disease through the techniques available to the modern science of environmental sanitation. Such an exchange of knowledge among all countries is justified on humanitarian grounds as it is essential for reasons of self-interest. The World Health Organization has, from its beginning, given a high priority to international measures for raising standards of environmental sanitation. Along with its other activities, WHO will continue to support and encourage local, national, and international efforts directed towards helping people to achieve a reasonable control of the physical features of their environment.

I earnestly hope that the observance of World Health Day on April 7 will serve to make clear to men, women, and children everywhere the value of healthful surroundings and their importance for the health of all peoples.

*Brock Chisholm, M.D.,
Director-General,
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The World Health Organization can look back with pride at its achievements during the past year. Death rates are declining wherever work has begun in earnest. Malaria, one of the most serious handicaps to cultural and economic development, is receding before the onslaught of organized action. Technical assistance programs have brought benefits to countries most in need.

The theme of World Health Day for 1952 is "Healthful Surroundings Make Healthy People." In this way, the World Health Organization calls special attention to the importance of environmental sanitation.

Since its inception, the World Health Organization has promoted the improvement of all aspects of environmental hygiene. Through its programs, it has emphasized sanitary living and working conditions as a basic requirement for human health.

The Secretariat of the World Health Organization, its Expert Committees, and its Regional Offices have enhanced respect for human life and helped to make the world a safer abode for man. We in the United States are happy to participate in these efforts which bring within reach an ideal dear to all Americans.

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