

IMIA Delegation to the
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

at the
49th World Health Assembly
and
98th Reunion of the Executive Board
Geneva, 20 to 28 May, 1996

For many years WHO has struggled with internal reform, budget difficulties and the fulfilment of its mission.

Concerning WHO's mission, those readers interested are advised to consult the "*World Health Report 1996 - Fighting Disease, Fostering Development*", which shows how infectious diseases are attacking us on multiple fronts. Together they represent the world's leading cause of premature death. The re-emergence of infectious diseases is a warning that the progress achieved so far, towards a global security in health and prosperity, may be wasted. Another important issue concerns the tobacco epidemic.

Concerning the budgetary and reform issues, WHO is still fighting the difficulties caused by external factors. The major problems being related to the high level of internal borrowings and the unprecedented level of outstanding contributions owed by Member States. The internal reform programme, with its associated reduction in personnel, has generated a high tension within the organisation.

These internal tensions are to be considered as the main reason for the amendment to "Rule 108" concerning the nomination and appointment of WHO's Director General (see Press Research WHA/11. p4). Due to a Japanese and UK reserve this amendment will not be applicable to the present DG.

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Geneva, August 9, 1996

Annexes:

- WHO Press Release WHA/4 (23 May 1996) - *Tobacco Epidemic*
- WHO Press Release WHA/11 (27 May 1996) - *World Health Assembly*