

Report to IMIA General Assembly 1998

Agenda topic 10: Professional Associations

WHO Report 1998

Jean-Raoul Scherrer

IMIA was represented by Dr Vincent GRIESSER at the following sessions:

1. WHO 101st Executive Board, Geneva, 19 January 1998
2. WHO 51st World Health Assembly, Geneva, 11 May 1998
3. WHO 102nd Executive Board, Geneva, 19 May 1998.

WHO 101st Executive Board, Geneva, 19 January 1998

The Board had a heavy agenda to go through; the most important items being consideration of the draft global health policy for the 21st century, WHO reform, and nomination of a new WHO Director-General.

- Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway, was nominated to become the fifth WHO Director-General in the 50 years of the Organisation's existence.
- The Board considered the new global health policy – **Health for all in the 21st century** – which has been debated at the World Health Assembly.
- Finally, the Board has examined and proposed for adoption by the Fifty-First World Health Assembly a number of resolutions regarding : tuberculosis drug-resistant strains; ethical, scientific and social implications of cloning in human health; blinding trachoma; WHO revised drug strategy; and infant and young child nutrition.

WHO 51st World Health Assembly, Geneva, 11 May 1997 : WHO turns 50 !

The World Health Report 1998: "Life in the 21st century. A vision for all".

The Report reviews health trends during the last 50 years, assesses the present situation and provides an optimistic view of health in the next 25 years.

WHO's 50th anniversary

The anniversary was officially observed on Thursday, 14 May. The centrepiece of celebration was a Forum for Heads of State or Government on the theme "Health for all in the 21st century".

Election of the new Director-General

The Assembly has elected the proposed new Director-General Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland. The five-year term of office starts on 21st July 1998.

The critical financial situation of WHO : reform on budget allocation

One of the most difficult items on the agenda was related to WHO's budgetary allocations. The WHO Executive Board proposed a redistribution of programme resources to countries based primarily on a development index. After two days of heated discussions, the delegates agreed that future programme budgets would be based on an objective and transparent methodology and that reductions for any region would not exceed 3% per year over a six-year period.

Assembly resolutions

The Assembly adopted resolutions on a range of subjects including noncommunicable disease prevention and control; emerging and other communicable diseases; antimicrobial resistance; ethical, scientific and social implications of cloning in human health; global elimination of blinding trachoma, health promotion; tuberculosis; elimination of leprosy as a public health problem; and concerted public health action on antipersonnel mines.