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:

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 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-

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.