



# Pan American Health Organization

Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization

In Reply Refer To: FCH/IM-10-7657

30 July 2010

Professor Donald Henderson, MD, MPH  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Pier IV Building, Suite 210  
621 East Pratt St  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Dr. Henderson:

In celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Global Smallpox Eradication and of the creation of the PAHO Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) will be holding a commemorative ceremony during its 50<sup>th</sup> Directing Council.

Recognizing your leadership during the global smallpox eradication, as well as your broad support for the development of the PAHO Revolving Fund, we cordially invite you to take part as a panelist in the ceremony that will take place on 28 September 2010, under the theme *The legacy of the smallpox eradication program to public health in the Region*. The ceremony will take place from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room A at PAHO Headquarters, in accordance with the attached agenda.

As part of the celebration, awards will also be presented to individuals and institutions that have provided outstanding support to rubella elimination in the Americas. In addition, a bust of Edward Jenner, on free loan from the Edward Jenner Museum, will be unveiled.

We do hope you will accept our invitation.

Sincerely yours,



Mirta Roses Periago  
Director

Attachment

- Representative of the GAVI Alliance
- Dr. Guillermo González
- GAVI Country Member States

16:00

CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANIVERSARY OF THE PAHO  
RADIOLOGICAL HEALTH PROGRAM (Room A)  
Speech by Dr. Gerald Hanson, Former program coordinator

Thursday 30 Sept.

8:30

PRIVATE MEETING OF HEADS OF DELEGATION (Room B)

Friday 1 Oct.

14:00

147TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Room B)



50th DIRECTING COUNCIL  
50.º CONSEJO DIRECTIVO  
50º CONSELHO DIRETOR  
50<sup>e</sup> CONSEIL DIRECTEUR

50th Directing Council,  
62nd Session of the Regional Committee  
of WHO for the Americas

27 September – 1 October 2010

E V E N T S

Pan American  
Health  
Organization

Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization

Date and time	Event & Place
Monday 27 Sept.	
8:30	Preliminary Meeting of Heads of Delegation (Room B)
9:00	INAUGURAL SESSION (Room A) Podium: •Dr. Esperanza Martinez, Minister of Health of Paraguay and Outgoing President of the Directing Council •Dr. Mirta Roses Periago, PAHO Director •Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of the OAS •Mrs. Kei Kawabata, Social Sector Manager of the IDB •Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the WHO (video) •Mr. Bill Corr, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services of the United States of America
10:00	LAUNCH OF EXHIBITS (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Lobbies) •Launching of the Health Observatory: Progress from data to information - information to knowledge - knowledge to action - Innovation in data presentation communication The Health Observatory is available at: <a href="http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=blogcategory&amp;id=2395&amp;Itemid=2396">http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=blogcategory&amp;id=2395&amp;Itemid=2396</a> •30th Anniversary of Smallpox Eradication and the Establishment of the PAHO Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement: Time line from the big smallpox pandemic - the vaccine creation - the smallpox eradication •50 Anniversary of the Radiology Program: Radiology and Radiation Protection Program history from 1960 to 2010 - Patient Radiation Protection - Health Technology - Imaging Services - Radiotherapy Services - Radiological and Nuclear Emergency
12:30	DIRECTING COUNCIL HEADS OF DELEGATION OFFICIAL PHOTO (1 <sup>st</sup> floor Lobby)
16:00	AWARDS CEREMONY (Room A) •PAHO Administration 2010: Dr. Elsa Yolanda Palou Garcia (Honduras) •PAHO Champion of Health: Fernando Javier Sendra (Argentina) PAHO/PAHEF Awards: •Abraham Horwitz: Dr. Carlos Monteiro (Brazil) •Manuel Velazco Suarez: Dra. Paulina Taboada (Chile) •Sergio Arouca: Dr. Maria Fátima de Sousa (Brazil)
18:00	LAUNCHING OF THE SAFE MOTHERHOOD INITIATIVE AND INAUGURATION OF THE PHOTO EXHIBITION "MOTHERING" (MATERNIDADES) (Marcus Garvey Room, OAS) •HRH Infanta Doña Cristina of Spain, "la Caixa" Foundation •Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of the OAS •Ms. Marcela Suazo, Regional Director of the United Nations Population Fund and secretary of the Regional Working Group on Maternal Mortality •Dr. Mirta Roses, Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau
18:30	PAHO/PAHEF AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN INTER-AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH 2010 (Hall de las Américas, OAS) •Cocktail Reception •Dinner and Awards Presentation •Dessert Buffet Reception <i>By invitation only</i>

Date and time	Event & Place
Tuesday 28 Sept.	
7:30	BREAKFAST WITH WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS (PAHO, Room 1010) •Dr. Mirta Roses, PASB Director •WHO ADG's •Member States of WHO/EB
14:00	30TH ANNIVERSARY OF SMALLPOX ERADICATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAHO REVOLVING FUND FOR VACCINE PROCUREMENT (Room A) Panel: •Dra. Gina Tambini.- Panel introduction •Dr. Donald A. Henderson.- Legacy of smallpox eradication in public health programs in the Region •Dr. Ciro de Quadros.- Creation and history of the Revolving Fund •Dra. Esperanza Martínez.- The Revolving Fund as an element in the success of national immunization programs •Dra. Mirta Roses.- The Revolving Fund and the elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases
15:30	RECOGNITION CEREMONY TO HONOR KEY PAHO MEMBER STATES AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS IN THE RUBELLA AND CONGENITAL RUBELLA SYNDROME INITIATIVE IN THE AMERICAS (Room A) Recognitions: •Dr. María Luisa Ávila-Agüero, Minister of Health, Costa Rica •Ambassador Javier Sancho, Ministry of Health and Social Policy, Spain •Ambassador Allan Culham, Canadian Agency of International Development •Dr. Brent Burkholder, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, CDC, United States of America •Dr. Cyrus S. Poonawalla, Serum Institute of India
17:30	UNVEILING OF THE BUST OF EDWARD JENNER (2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Lobby) •Semblance of Edward Jenner, the creator of the vaccine Dr. Socorro Gross - Assistant Director, Pan American Health Organization •Description of the sculpture of Jenner. Ms. Sarah Parker - Director, Edward Jenner Museum. •Unveiling of the sculpture: Dra. Mirta Roses Dr. John Andrus Dra. Socorro Gross Dr. Donald Henderson Sra. Sarah Parker Dr. Ciro de Quadros
18:00	US-HHS / PAHO RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE (1 <sup>st</sup> floor Lobby): •The 50th Directing Council •The 30th Anniversary of Smallpox Eradication and the Establishment of the PAHO Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement •The 50th Anniversary of the PAHO Radiological Health Program
Wednesday 29 Sept.	
12:30 - 14:00	GAVI COUNTRIES LUNCH MEETING (State Plaza Hotel) Participants: •Dr. Socorro Gross •Dr. Cuauhtémoc Ruiz Matus

## **PAHO Directing Council – opening presentation, 28 September 2010**

Director Mirta Rosas, (introducers), Colleagues, Friends

I thank you for asking me to join with you today in providing opening remarks on the occasion of this commemorative event – an opportunity to reflect on a remarkable past and to look ahead to even brighter futures.

30 years ago a special WHO Global Commission met to review final comprehensive reports about smallpox provided by countries throughout the world. 22 different international committees had visited 79 countries and confirmed the absence of smallpox. The Commission reported to Director General Candau and the Assembly that it was confident that smallpox had been eradicated and that no cases had occurred anywhere in the world for more than two years. The Assembly approved the Commission's report and advised that vaccination everywhere should cease.

Never before had a disease been eradicated. Mankind was at last freed of a scourge that had maimed, blinded, and killed since the dawn of written history. Lest we forget – this was a disease more feared than any of the great pestilences – more than plague or yellow fever or cholera or malaria. The earliest records of smallpox go back more than 3500 years – Egyptian mummies show the typical pustules of smallpox, each having died during the acute illness. During subsequent millennia, smallpox relentlessly spread from person to person, from country to country, in every climate and in every season of the year. In many traditional cultures -- from Japan and China to India and West Africa -- smallpox gods and goddesses were worshiped. In fact, it is the only disease that played such an important role in the lives of peoples that deities and temples were especially created. It was no less lethal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During that century, an estimated 300 million people died of smallpox — more than twice the death toll of all the military wars of that century. Indeed, until the proclamation of eradication, most countries continued to conduct smallpox vaccination programs and international travelers carried special certificates indicating that they had been vaccinated within the preceding 3 years.

The scope of the smallpox program was unique. It required the cooperation of all countries and the active participation of more than 50. It required a universal effort unlike any that mankind had ever undertaken. National antipathies were set aside. Even through the darkest days of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States fully collaborated.

Eradication was no less a challenge to WHO. It required new leadership capacities and an ability to sustain the confidence of member countries over the many years of the campaign.

The program changed the lives and careers of many national and international staff who participated. I was one of those. It was transforming to witness how much could be achieved, how inexpensively, and how rapidly in controlling smallpox— and to see what a difference it made to communities. Surprisingly few added resources were required -- the addition of a comparatively small number of health staff, a few vehicles, and supplies of a protective vaccine. The formula for success was a simple but well-supervised mass vaccination campaign -- and the establishment of a surveillance system that could quickly discover cases and outbreaks and control them.

The eradication effort in 20 West African countries was among the earliest successes. That area included some of the world's most heavily infected nations and those with the most limited health services and communications. Nevertheless, the last case was registered only three years and five months after the program began. It was a dramatic demonstration of the effectiveness of the new smallpox strategy. More than 100 million people became smallpox free as a result of the work of national directors and staff with technical assistance provided by only 50 international public health advisers.

In April 1971, the last case of smallpox in the Americas was detected in Rio de Janeiro. Two years later, an international committee certified the whole of the Western Hemisphere to be smallpox-free. This was the first major geographic area that was able to be so certified.

These achievements provided courage to health authorities everywhere to pursue the ambitious goal of eliminating smallpox in just 10 years. However, countless, all but insuperable obstacles regularly threatened success -- civil wars, floods, famines, refugees, shortages of vaccine and funds, bureaucracies and red tape. The challenges required imagination and creativity to overcome. ●n more than one occasion, the ultimate outcome hung in the balance.

The eradication goal of 10 years was missed – but by only 9 months and 26 days. During the program, many field staff, stimulated and intrigued by the potential for public health, saw new opportunities and many altered their own career plans. Their subsequent

achievements both nationally and internationally have been extraordinary. A number of them are here with us today.

In the course of the program, new operational tools and methods were perfected, one of the most valuable being the development of surveillance networks to provide weekly reports from all health units. The data were invaluable for measuring progress and continually perfecting strategies.

Equally important, the program catalyzed a new era during which interest in vaccination for disease prevention grew rapidly. When smallpox eradication began in 1967, vaccines were not widely available or used outside of industrialized countries. When epidemic smallpox occurred, campaigns were launched and then abandoned as cases decreased. A few countries administered yellow-fever vaccine and some provided limited amounts of DPT and the BCG tuberculosis vaccines. However, there were no established programs for any vaccine that were intended to extend throughout the whole of a country and to vaccinate all citizens.

Smallpox eradication called for systematic, monitored vaccination programs extending throughout endemic countries with a goal of reaching 80% of the population. In almost all areas, vaccination was not only accepted – it was welcomed. Resistance was rare. Where local political authorities, teachers, and religious leaders provided support, a health worker could readily vaccinate 500 or more persons per day.

The question arose as to why not administer other vaccines at the same time. Latin-American health staff in cooperation with CDC had previously completed a number of studies demonstrating that several vaccines could be given simultaneously with safety and efficacy. Therefore, in December 1970, WHO convened a group of national health leaders here in this building to consider a new course of action. They endorsed the creation of dedicated vaccination programs using such as mobile teams that would undertake national programs that included, in addition to smallpox vaccine, DPT, polio and measles vaccine. Thus the name –“Expanded Program on Immunization” (EPI).

This proved to be the beginning of a marked transformation of interest in vaccine programs. In fact, some have referred to this as the beginning of a Vaccine Era.

The World Health Assembly approved the EPI initiative and UNICEF subsequently accepted the program as a priority. Rotary International agreed to cover the costs of polio vaccine. A goal was set -- to vaccinate, by 1990, 80% of the world's children with polio, measles, and DPT. To many, this seemed unduly ambitious but, surprisingly, the goal was effectively met. Other vaccines have now been incorporated for administration on a population-wide basis in an increasing number of countries -- including vaccines against hepatitis B, rubella, mumps, rotavirus, and Haemophilus influenzae b. Pioneering these new efforts have been the countries of the Americas.

At the 1985 meeting of this Directing Council, it was decided to eliminate polio from the Americas within 5 years. It was an ambitious target. Many doubted that it could be done but the goal was reached. Meanwhile, the strategies and methods for polio eradication, as developed here in the Americas, began to be applied, essentially unchanged, in a global eradication effort.

Thus began the new era which we celebrate here as well, an era during which vaccines have grown in number and efforts are made to assure vaccine protection for all citizens, however remote their residence and however poor they may be. Tens of millions have been spared death and disability; polio is nearing global eradication and, here in the Americas, measles transmission has been stopped; rubella is nearing that goal.

I am regularly surprised to learn, however, that few today, appreciate the fact that it was here in the Americas that most of the new approaches and developments originated and their effectiveness demonstrated. It is due time that we salute the imagination, vision, and creativity of you, the health leadership of the countries of the Americas and the dedicated field workers who have made this possible. And to pay tribute to the special contributions of Dr. Ciro de Quadros, long-time director of EPI in the Americas, and his staff, plus PAHO Regional Directors, Dr. Carlisle Macedo, George Alleyne, and Mirta Rosas who have been strong supporters at times when others doubted.