Venezuela, and Argentina, with the collaboration of experts from the Salk Institute (California, U.S.A.). Approximately 200 people participated in these workshops, including professionals from all Latin American laboratories producing vaccines.

2. During 1995, two validation workshops were conducted, in Brazil and Mexico, the latter with the support of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). All the DTP-producing laboratories in the Region were represented, as were professionals from the Mexican National Control Authority.

3. A Regional Workshop on Management of the Vaccine Production Laboratory was held in Venezuela. Management is one of the most important deficiencies among public laboratories, and special attention must be paid to improving this aspect.

4. An Expert Group for the Certification Program was organized. In November 1995, it made its first technical visit to the Instituto Nacional de Higiene/GGByR of Mexico and to the Instituto de Salud Pública of Chile. Certification is an essential step toward the organization of a technical cooperation agreement among DTP vaccine producers.

During 1996 PAHO's Special Program for Vaccines and Immunization (SVI) will continue to conduct GMP workshops in the Region. An additional activity, which has been targeted as very important, is the development of specific and detailed manuals on GMP and the preparation of validation, auditing, and standard operational procedures.

In conclusion, the prospects for some Latin American countries to establish national self-sufficiency in essential vaccines are encouraging. It is quite possible that regional self-sufficiency will be achieved in five years.

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World Health Day 1996: Healthy Communities

The theme of this year’s celebration of World Health Day was creating healthy communities. Worldwide, activities were carried out in commemoration of the day with the goal of stimulating the launch of healthy communities programs and celebrating the achievements of those already under way.

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1 World Health Day is observed annually on 7 April, the date the constitution of the World Health Organization was formally adopted in 1948.

2 For more information, see the report “Healthy Municipios in Latin America,” Bulletin of PAHO 29(3), 1995, pp. 272-275.
conference, the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe launched a project it called "Healthy Cities." The idea has subsequently spread worldwide to produce more than 1,000 initiatives launched under a number of names and with a variety of manifestations.

Whatever they are called—or whether they have a formal designation at all—these initiatives are characterized by broad community participation to improve local health and well-being. The benefits can extend far beyond the local scene, since many communities have joined together in Healthy Cities networks to share experiences within a country or a region, or even between regions.

Healthy communities projects can be found in all parts of the Americas. In Latin America, Healthy Municipios initiatives have been under way since 1989. They have spawned networks and various related activities, such as Healthy Borders proposals. In the Caribbean, the healthy communities and islands concept has been gaining momentum, especially following the creation of the Caribbean Health Promotion Charter in 1993. Several islands have begun community-based projects to tackle specific health problems. Canada's early championing of the health promotion strategy has helped spur the healthy communities movement in that country. For example, the Healthy Cities and Towns Network in Quebec, begun in 1988, includes 101 municipalities and is still growing. In the United States of America, Healthy Cities networks began in 1988 in Indiana and California and have since expanded to other states. Healthy communities projects are found in such diverse environments as the inner city of Washington, D.C., and the farming community of Tillery, North Carolina.

The slogan selected for the U.S. commemoration of this World Health Day was "Creating Healthy Communities—Together." The slogan emphasizes the key feature of these initiatives: the active engagement of people from every sector of a community in efforts to define and meet their own needs.

WORLD HEALTH DAY CELEBRATION AT PAHO

At its headquarters in Washington, D.C., PAHO—in collaboration with the American Association for World Health (AAWH), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—held a ceremony to mark World Health Day.

The celebration began with a unique event: a skit called "No Time to Lose," written and performed by PAHO staff members. Set at a town meeting, it dramatized the importance of public participation in identifying the needs and determining the future of a community.

The ceremony then continued with welcoming statements from Dr. Richard L. Wittenberg, President and CEO of AAWH, and Dr. George A. O. Alleyne, Director of PAHO; a message of support from the President of the United States, presented by Dr. Philip R. Lee, Assistant Secretary for Health, USDHHS; and the reading of the Mayor's proclamation of World Health Day in the District of Columbia by Dr. Harvey Sloan, the city's Commissioner of Public Health. Following these statements, Drs. Alleyne, Lee, and Sloan participated in a panel discussion on healthy communities, along with Dr. Leonard J. Duhl, Professor at the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco, and founding director of the International Healthy Cities Foundation.

The panelists were "interviewed" by students from a local middle school (grades 6 through 8). When asked to define a healthy community, Dr. Lee said that it is one in which social, physical, ethical, and educational aspects are conducive to health. A healthy community not only nurtures and cares for sick individuals but also pays at-
tention to early childhood development and education. The people in it work together to achieve common goals.

Another student asked what should be done if people won’t work together, and how the medical community can help persuade them to do so. Dr. Duhl responded that there is always someone with what he called “an entrepreneurial spirit” who is willing to take the lead in a campaign to build a healthier community. The enthusiasm of such individuals should be tapped as a starting point. Even in the face of hostility or divisive social issues, actions toward building a healthier community are possible. Dr. Lee cited the example of the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco, when doctors were instrumental in raising public awareness and concern for victims of the disease. Dr. Alleyne pointed out that people come together for two main reasons: to help others and to help themselves. The initiators of a healthy community project should always clearly show people the benefits of their participation.

When asked what was the single biggest problem that needed to be addressed in order to improve people’s health, the panelists had a variety of responses. Dr. Duhl said it was lack of cooperation among diverse population groups; Dr. Sloan believed it was destructive lifestyles and behaviors; Dr. Lee said that poverty was the root problem; and Dr. Alleyne signaled inequity within societies. Ending on a positive note, Dr. Duhl pointed out that even the poorest communities had assets that could be put to use to improve health — the most important asset being human energy.

Several World Health Day Awards were presented to recognize outstanding work related to this year’s theme. The first one was awarded to the Healthy Municipality Movement in Campinas, Brazil, for its innovative programs and leadership in Latin America. Another recipient was the National Civic League of the United States of America, which has entered into a partnership with the U.S. Public Health Service to provide technical assistance and encouragement to local groups concerned with improving health in their communities. The Health Care Forum (San Francisco) was also recognized for its work, including sponsorship of an annual summit on healthier communities and provision of both printed and on-line information about the movement. The final award was presented to Dr. Duhl for his many years of activity in this area.

The ceremony’s keynote speech was delivered by Dr. David Satcher, Director of CDC, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Dr. Satcher’s definition of a healthy community included the following components: healthy air, water, and land; a healthy start for every child and the opportunity to grow up healthy; partnerships that bridge ethnic and economic lines; optimum utilization of resources, including investment in disease and injury prevention; and jobs, which are essential for eliminating poverty. The national government could not and should not assume responsibility for the health of communities, but it did have a role to play. It should use its resources wisely, make available the sound scientific information that allows informed decision-making, and help bring people together.

The ceremony at PAHO closed with an energetic performance by the African Heritage Dancers and Drummers, a group of Washington, D.C., teens and young adults who perform ceremonial music and dances from various countries of Africa. By involving at-risk youth in constructive and creative leisure time activities, this program strives to prevent juvenile delinquency and teen pregnancy and is an example of the innovative ways that can be found to promote a healthier community.

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