

ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE XII MEETING  
OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL OF THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION,  
XII MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

National Capitol  
Havana, Cuba  
14 August 1960

---

1. Address by Dr. José R. Machado Ventura, Minister of Public Health of the Republic of Cuba
2. Address by Dr. Luis Patiño-Camargo, Representative of Colombia
3. Address by Dr. Abraham Horwitz, Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau
4. Address by Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cuba

ADDRESS BY DR. JOSE R. MACHADO VENTURA, MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE XII MEETING OF THE  
DIRECTING COUNCIL OF THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION,  
REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mr. President of the Republic  
Mr. Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Delegates  
Representatives of the National and International Organizations  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is our beloved Cuba's turn to act as host to the health authorities of its sister nations in the Americas. During their two-week meeting, they will discuss, plan, and coordinate everything concerning public health in the Hemisphere and, by drawing object lessons from the past, will plan for the future with but one aim in mind; to raise the health standards of all our peoples.

This XII Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization is of capital importance to Cuba and, we hope, to the entire Hemisphere. Our distinguished visitors will see that--despite the fact that Cuba is still far from its goal of achieving the kind of health level that every nation, every people, and every citizen is entitled to, and despite the time wasted in the past--Cuba has now, not with words but with deeds, made greater strides in public health during but 19 months than during all the previous 56 years of the Republic's existence. The representatives will be able to verify this fact during their stay in our midst, and we should like it to be known that all these great improvements in our health conditions are the direct consequence of our Revolution.

As physicians and as those responsible for our people's health, it should be our aim that health shall have no frontiers and that the comparative

statistics or indices shall not be merely the result of the geographical situation, which usually means not just location but the economic and social situation as well, because with our scientific progress and the shrinking of distances by modern transportation the world no longer has any frontiers. Our aspiration should be life in a united world, a world without ambitions, a happy world, a healthy world. This means that if one country makes great strides in health, the factors that made this advance possible should be carefully studied in order that they may be applied in other countries of similar economic, social, and political conditions. For our first duty is to learn to give each patient the treatment proper for him in the light of his true condition and of his possibilities.

Our problems, with only slight variations, are the problems of Latin America. Our nations are now suffering, or have suffered in the past, from the very same diseases. Our experiences should therefore be similar when we apply preventive or curative methods.

We can state with pride that Cuba has found a means by which it will solve its basic health problems within a very short time. This will not be because of the improvements and benefits relating to our Ministry, but because the nation is emerging--through new reforms, through basic revolutionary laws, and through the logical concept of taking advantage of our natural resources--from a situation it could never have solved without the complete and profound revolutionary process.

We would be doing nothing in public health had there not been a reform in our educational system aimed at eradicating illiteracy and ignorance among our people.

We would be doing nothing if our fortresses and barracks had not been converted into cultural centers and if 17,000 new classrooms, many more than in all the rest of our republican era, had not been established. These numbers are still too small, but thousands of teachers are now being trained along both revolutionary and cultural lines in our glorious Sierra Maestra, in order that from the very beginning they may know what their task and their final goal are. For it is precisely in that remote region that our people have been most neglected; that children died every day, without receiving even the most elementary medical care; that children died illiterate, the offspring of illiterate parents--all of which will never again happen in our country.

We could have made no progress in the field of health without a just and necessary agrarian-reform law. This law of ours, by eliminating the large landholdings that typified our countryside up to as little as 19 months ago, has given to the oppressed agricultural worker the land on which he worked for so many long years without earning any more for it than the right to pay his debts of the previous year. Thus our people lived: working today to pay for yesterday. We might never have come out of this state of injustice and exploitation.

We would be accomplishing nothing in public health by merely increasing the budgets of our ministries. Nothing would be gained by sending sanitarians, nurses, physicians, no matter how well qualified, if they were to approach the problem only from the physician-patient point of view.

We would be accomplishing nothing if, after discovering the causes that gave rise to ill health and sending a physician and an ample supply

of drugs, we were to leave the patient with no school and no land to cultivate for the food he needs.

Health is not based only on physicians and experts:

Public health is practiced by eliminating illiteracy and obscurantism,

Public health is practiced by providing food and by working toward an adequate and stable living for each citizen.

Public health is practiced by raising the economic level of our poorest classes.

Public health is practiced by attaining the fundamental, permanent conditions necessary to prevent our rural population from having to go barefoot.

All these circumstances, which might seem side issues in connection with a health plan, were the outstanding issues in our country, because our people often became ill owing to the lack of health education, to malnutrition, and to the almost primitive living conditions that prevailed--all of which is being solved by our Revolution.

That is why I say with pride that the Cuban Revolution, as a whole, is doing more for the people's health than the Public Health Ministry itself.

Our Social Medical Service has brought medical care to the remotest corners of our countryside and has achieved tremendous success not only in treatment but in the educational, preventive, and social fields as well. When our young physicians identified themselves with the affliction and misery they had never before pictured with such starkness, many of them became teachers in the communities. Thus, at the same time that they cure, they also point out solutions and frequently participate in them themselves,

in order that such conditions will not be repeated. Cuba, which was grossly misinformed as to the number of its physicians and experts, having been led to believe that they were numerous, learned only through the Revolution how false that assurance had been when it realized that 80 per cent of the population lacked medical care.

We are now engaged in training new and better professionals in all branches of medicine. It is only now, as of one month ago when a Technical Budget was established--that is, one for actual projects based on social and economic requirements--that for the first time we have the true picture indispensable for undertaking an integrated public health project with which we can hope to succeed. We have seized the opportunity and have already started a carefully planned health-promotion and disease-prevention project in our westernmost province, which we hope to extend throughout the island.

On the international level, also, our Government is attending to its commitments. Thus, in February 1959 it concluded the Agreement that links it to the world-wide malaria eradication campaign, despite the fact that malaria is not endemic in the country to a serious degree. Through the Revolutionary Government Cuba is also stepping into the front ranks of the Aedes aegypti eradication campaign by increasing its budget for this activity from \$115,000 to a total of \$804,000. We feel confident that we shall eradicate this vector, and thereby pay the greater homage to our illustrious scientist, Carlos J. Finlay, who was its discoverer and a pioneer in the search to discover other insects that might be disease transmitters.

All this has needed saying because we believe that if our evils have been the evils of Latin America, then our solutions must be the future solutions for other countries with similar conditions, underdeveloped countries that aspire to--and have a right to--a more stable present and a more solid future.

We extend a greeting to all the distinguished visitors present and we wish to express our appreciation for the technical advisory and material services provided to us by the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, and UNICEF.

Gentlemen, as Public Health Minister, I warmly welcome you to our country, which I hope you will learn to know in all its aspects. Cuba is more interested than anyone else in having the truth about herself known. Talk with our farmers, our laborers, our students, our professionals, and the man in the street. Ask them for their opinions, visit our villages, our schools, our rural teachers, and our cooperatives. It is our dearest wish that all our American brothers may come to know us. Cuba desires the friendship of all the peoples of this Hemisphere, because many of you may still find conditions similar to those among your own peoples, but you will also find solutions and results such as those you will have to apply and situations similar to those through which you will have to pass.

Gentlemen, may your endeavors bear the finest fruit, and may you have a happy sojourn in this country, which every day wishes to become more sovereign, more friendly, more Cuban and more Latin American.

Havana, Cuba  
14 August 1960

ADDRESS BY DR. LUIS PATIÑO CAMARGO, REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA, AT THE  
INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE XII MEETING OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL OF THE  
PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION, XII MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE AMERICAS

Mr. President of the Republic of Cuba, Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado  
Mr. Minister of Public Health, Dr. José R. Machado Ventura  
Ministers of the Executive Office  
Ambassadors  
Mr. Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Dr. Abraham Horwitz  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

As a greeting to the people of Cuba and their Government, I should like to invoke the august memory of Charles J. Finlay and of José Martí, the Cuban sons whose superior work shed glory upon the world. I do this in the name of the representatives of the Western hemisphere, who are meeting in council to promote and coordinate the efforts of their countries in combating illness, prolonging life, and improving the physical and mental health of their peoples.

Mr. President of the Republic, in the name of the XII Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization, please accept and convey to your co-workers the deep gratitude of the representatives of the Hemisphere for the splendid way in which we have been welcomed to Cuba and for the facilities that we have been afforded to carry out the work of our meetings.

For those charged with watching over the health of their people, Havana is an appropriate site to meet in discussion and debate. It was here that Finlay, with his genius, his infinite patience and perseverance, proved that a common household mosquito was the carrier of that black



disease--a disease that meant certain death in his day; to work in the tropics was equivalent to digging one's own grave. And here, following in the path of Finlay's discoveries, yellow fever has been conquered, thanks to the skill of public health experts and officials, who have succeeded in eradicating the vector of this dread pestilence, the Aedes aegypti mosquito. Cuba has thus become the paradise of humanity.

Public health specialists have profited by this example, and the Pan American Health Organization, with a record of more than fifty years of productive life, has already won decisive campaigns against man's three greatest enemies, namely, hunger, disease, and death.

Gentlemen, here are a few of the topics on our agenda:

Topic 18--Report on the Status of Malaria Eradication in the Americas. It seems a dream, but it is reality. Malaria, already eradicated in vast island and continental areas, will soon be but a memory. The significance of this achievement in terms of lives and money is almost immeasurable. It means the saving of thousands upon thousands of human lives; the increase of work capacity once the intermittent fevers have been stamped out; and the incorporation into the national economy of regions formerly infested with malaria, which are in the majority in tropical America, and which are precisely the regions rich in oil, platinum, and gold, or which produce cacao, rice, cotton, coffee, and sugar cane.

Topic 20--Status of Smallpox Eradication. Mass vaccination has done away with this scourge in many countries, and in others, the disease is on the wane. In 1954 Colombia had 7,203 cases of smallpox, that is to say

66 cases per 10,000 inhabitants. A campaign of mass vaccination was inaugurated, and the morbidity index dropped to 7-1/2 last year, and to 1-1/2 this year so far.

Topic 23--Status of Aedes aegypti Eradication in the Americas.

Several countries, among them Colombia, have already done away with the mosquito that transmits urban yellow fever, and the entire hemisphere is engaged in the campaign to eliminate this enemy. People who travel into the jungle are immunized against the disease with a yellow fever vaccine that the Carlos Finlay Institute in Bogota prepares among others, and with the simple and practical scarification process, it has been possible to reduce the severe problem of virus propagated by tree-dwelling mosquitoes.

We shall devote a large portion of our time to discussion of the urgent problems of environmental sanitation, such as those having to do with pure water supplies, and waste and garbage disposal--both basic to civilized living.

We consider health education a fundamental part of the work being carried on in this whole field, and are therefore preaching our creed to all concerned, in an effort to enlist the cooperation of people of good will in this worthy task of improving man's welfare.

May the figures of those who pioneered in public health and who have already gone beyond guide the members of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization in faithfully and loyally fulfilling its worthy mission of bringing health to all peoples and countries of the Americas.

ADDRESS BY DR. ABRAHAM HORWITZ, DIRECTOR OF THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU,  
AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE XII MEETING OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL OF THE  
PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION, REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Just as events make a deep impression on man, tending to change his concepts and attitudes and enabling him to better interpret life, so do ideas create tradition as they are handed down from generation to generation. The same is true of institutions. The passage of time is not as important as the nature and consequences of the things accomplished and the impact that these accomplishments have had upon society. The firmer the moral and philosophical basis of an idea, the more possibility it has of being perpetuated. Ideas directed toward the common good, rather than toward serving special interests and empty convention, give rise to currents of opinion, conduct, and action that are disseminated over a period of time.

Thus tradition is created. As a rule, history records the most outstanding achievements, those making the deepest impression, though not always possessing the greatest human significance. Equally as valuable as the written word is oral communication-not only of ideas themselves, but of the doctrine that gives those ideas form and substance and of the work of the institutions that carry them out. Through this process of communication, the tradition of each age is consolidated in the spirit of men, whose values are guided by the moral standards and social responsibility of the individual.

The Pan American Health Organization has had today fifty-eight years of uninterrupted life, during which its policy and its work have created a tradition in the Americas. Although this is a relatively short

period of time for an enterprise of continental importance, the principles that govern the Organization, and, above all, the humanitarian principle, have warranted its continued existence since almost the beginning of the century. They were regarded as visionaries -the men who, at the First International Sanitary Convention of 1902, laid the groundwork for joint action by the Americas on behalf of the health of its people. On the indisputable premise that disease recognizes no geographic or political frontiers, these men established a code of responsibilities for mutual protection and also a special agency -first known as the International Sanitary Bureau, today as the Pan American Sanitary Bureau- to coordinate these responsibilities and to serve as adviser to each government.

It should be pointed out that during the fifty-eight years that have followed the first convention, the Governments of the Americas have not only preserved the international organization that they created, but they have also progressively fulfilled its aims by extending the scope of its activity into new fields of individual and collective significance and by perfecting methods of solving problems according to their nature and the prevailing circumstances. The undertaking has remained sound, despite the vicissitudes that have befallen the Continent and each country individually, proving that determined purposes of common good are a profound inspiration to men to work together for the welfare of many.

The Pan American Health Organization reflects the culture of the nations that compose it, their way of life, and their unity of thought and

action in progressively solving existing problems, especially those that affect a number of countries. It has been and continues to be an admirable forum that has stimulated creative imagination, enterprising spirit, and decisive action on the part of Governments in carrying out works of social improvement. In 1949, the scope of the Organization's activities was broadened when it joined the World Health Organization. Since that time, both organizations -with ideals, objectives, and work methods in common- have had a single executive organ, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, which also serves as the Regional Office of the World Health Organization for the Americas.

As in the past, the Bureau carries out the policy established by the Member Governments of both organizations, and its activities are essentially of an advisory nature. Briefly, it is a clearing house for the exchange of ideas and experiences, both general and specific, derived from varying cultures and adapted to the needs of each particular community. Since a spirit of brotherhood inspires its members, the Bureau's aim is to counsel without imposing, to demonstrate without boasting, and to make recommendations according to latest advances in knowledge and the dictates of its own experience.

To fulfill its responsibilities, the Bureau closely follows scientific progress in all fields related to the cure and prevention of disease and to the promotion of health. It participates in and stimulates scientific research, particularly that which is directly linked to the solution of problems that occur frequently in the Americas and that are cause for concern on the part of Governments.

In each period, the Bureau has been guided in its activities by the nature and extent of health problems, as well as by the policies of the Member Governments and their trend toward social progress. In each period, also, certain problems have been highlighted, either because of their continued prevalence, or because the solution of others has made it possible to cope with them more successfully. During the course of this century, the dependence of individual and collective health upon other factors that condition well-being and economic development has become increasingly apparent. This relationship is today clearly defined in the Americas, which avidly seek knowledge, experience, and funds to develop vast natural resources, to produce capital and consumer goods, and to provide the services necessary to ensure a better future for the people. As communities receive benefits the demand for additional services increases, and thereby the responsibility of Governments. The situation is conditioned in large part by population growth, which in the Americas has reached a higher rate than in the other regions of the world. Thus, a serious imbalance has been created between needs and available resources, both human and material. All activities of Governments are today pivoting on a general policy of economic development, upon which they depend and which they support. Matters of health are no exception to this rule; on the contrary, we feel, in fact, that they play an important role in the whole process. Since what is being sought is the well-being of the individual, the family, and societies, and since social progress derives from the healthy man who is capable of producing and consuming, this statement has validity.

Specialists in public health and in the various fields of medicine

cannot remain isolated from the changes taking place in the communities where they carry out their mission or from the general trend of the economic policy followed by Governments. The eradication of certain communicable diseases, improvements in environmental sanitation (particularly the provision of water supplies), in the care of the sick, and in the training of experts for functions that are as varied as society itself -today all these things require huge sums of capital. The same can be said about problems of nutrition, housing, general education, and recreation- all of which have a bearing on the over-all process of health and economic growth.

These are the considerations that govern the activities of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and that reflect the policy of the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization. The Bureau follows closely the general economic problems of the Region in order to counsel the health authorities of Member Governments more adequately and advisedly.

It thus demonstrates the dynamics of its responsibilities, the clear intent to maintain its lofty objectives within the framework of the culture of the Americas, and the intent to carry out these objectives in keeping with the tenor and possibilities of the times. Though adhering to tradition, the Bureau also provides guideposts for the future.

The policy of the Pan American Health Organization has become defined at the periodic meetings of its Governing Bodies held during the course of this century. Now it is Finlay's homeland that is host to one

of these meetings. During our study of the topics on the agenda, we shall have with us the spirit of a man whose intuition amounted to genius--a man who was the more remarkable for having lived at a time when epidemics and other disasters affecting large numbers of people were still explained in supernatural terms. Beyond the far-reaching significance of his discovery, what is impressive about Finlay is his admirable spirit of observation and the meticulous quality of his deductive methods, which finally led him to his transcendent conclusion. Likewise, we must admire Finlay for his absolute faith--faith in his ideas regarding the relationship of seemingly unconnected facts and in the methodical arrangement of natural phenomena. In a word, his faith in mankind. Of equal significance was his perseverance in struggling alone against the crushing dogmatism of a period in which originality could not be readily expressed because the scientific method was far from being popular. It is gratifying to be able to say today, one hundred years later, that the majesty of Finlay's talent has presided over the elimination of the urban yellow fever vector in a vast area of the Americas.

It is fitting to mention the interest shown by Cuba in the Pan American Health Organization from its inception to the present time. We need only recall the distinguished Member of its First Directing Council of 1902, Dr. Juan Guiteras, whose knowledge and experience contributed much toward laying the foundations of this agency that has continued to the present time. In the same spirit of international cooperation in matters of health, the Government of this country has afforded our Bureau every facility for holding this XII Meeting of the Directing Council, thus auguring a further step forward in the cause of continental health. We



are happy to state this fact and to express our sincere appreciation to the Cuban authorities for providing us with a suitable environment for our work.

All topics on the agenda are of interest to the Governments and serve as a basis in enabling them to perform their primary duty of establishing policy with respect to given problems, of approving the program of work and of reviewing the general progress of the Organization.

"There is only one way to defy Time", said George Bernard Shaw, "and that is to have young ideas, which may always be trusted to find youthful and vivid expression." This is equivalent to saying that we should preserve from the past that which is worthy and, by utilizing our abilities to the maximum, create the society to which we aspire.

Havana, Cuba  
14 August 1960

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA,  
DR. OSVALDO DORTICOS TORRADO, DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION  
OF THE XII MEETING OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL OF THE  
PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION, XII MEETING OF THE  
REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE AMERICAS

Mr. Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

As evidence of the Cuban Revolutionary Government's interest in problems of health and in the strengthening of mutual cooperation, technical interchange, and effective coordination of efforts among the Member Countries of the Pan American Health Organization, we take great pleasure this day in inaugurating the XII Meeting of its Directing Council and especially in offering to the Representatives the warm hospitality of our people and our undivided attention in and support of the resolutions and decisions they will adopt in the course of their deliberations.

It could not have been otherwise: neither halfheartedness nor indifference toward your efforts could have been expected of our Government, but on the contrary, only enthusiastic support and cooperation, and a renewed interest in the wise counsel and vast experience that the Organization can contribute to our country's labor toward a high standard of health. It could not have been otherwise because to the Cuban Revolution, in its endeavor to attain important and justified goals, the human being is the most precious of all objects and it is the highest ideal of our revolutionary movement to attain the physical and mental well-being of our people.

For this reason, the Revolutionary Government of Cuba has planned, and is executing with careful attention, a public health program that will be increasingly expanded, despite the country's economic limitations. Our Government is glad to acknowledge its gratitude for all the help the Pan American Health Organization is able to lend toward the development of that health program. We appreciate also your presence here today and the opportunity it offers for you to witness the magnitude of our people's justifiably impatient efforts to attain a high standard of civilized living, which the old, outmoded economic, social, and political conditions in the country had made impossible.

You are visiting us, gentlemen, at the very start of our endeavors to raise the standard of public health in Cuba, and we are fully aware that in spite of the many advances made during the 19-month existence of our Revolutionary Government, we still have a long way to go and will have to utilize many resources to achieve our aspirations in the matter of health. But we are optimistic because we firmly believe that the Revolution itself, with its changes in the economic and social life of the country, will generate the conditions necessary to win the inspiring battle for health.

The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau in his inaugural address very rightly said that "during the course of this century, the dependence of individual and collective health upon other factors that condition well-being and economic development has become increasingly apparent." Nowhere is this statement more valid than in the case of Cuba.

And this is so not only because the old regime of political power, of traditionally poor public administration practices, of corruption, of misappropriation of government funds prevented the development of serious efforts to improve public health, but, even more importantly, because a country with an economic and social system based on enriching the minority at the expense of the majority cannot aspire to high standards of health, for they are incompatible with a painful situation in which poverty reigns, hunger destroys lives, and ignorance prevents the adoption of adequate health habits.

Is it possible for our countries of the Americas to aspire to better health conditions so long as the number of their unemployed and illiterate continues to be high, and the number of decent houses and of opportunities for making a sufficient living off the land continues to be low? What health program could possibly be successful in a country where the greater portion of the urban population lives under subhuman conditions and the daily threat of financial insecurity owing to cyclical or permanent unemployment?

Fortunately, gentlemen, you who are engaged in improving the health of this Hemisphere are better able than anyone else to comprehend these facts and it would be good if, within the technical limits and specific functions of your Organization, you would not let an opportunity go by without proclaiming, as your Director has proclaimed, that individual and collective health depends essentially on the economic development of nations, and that the highest ideals of your Organization, which the Revolutionary Government of Cuba shares with you, cannot become a reality

in our Hemisphere so long as the social and economic conditions prevailing today do not undergo the transformation indispensable to the economic progress of our peoples, which is tantamount to the welfare of our peoples.

To you, gentlemen, who are eager for experiences, we offer the inspiring scenes of our countryside and invite you to visit those places where only 19 months ago poverty and hunger, parasitism and ignorance, used to destroy the lives of our rural inhabitants, and where today villages with adequate housing and schools are springing up and hospitals are being built so that civilization may advance.

There is much that you can do to raise the health standards of our people through the contribution of your accumulated experience, through technical advisory services, and through the coordination of plans. But you can also do much to raise the health standards of all peoples of the Americas by telling them of the results of our efforts, not only in the field of health plans and programs, but even more importantly in the revolutionary changes that can promote the welfare and economic development on which, as had been stated here tonight, individual and collective health is based.

I repeat, gentlemen, the cordial welcome extended to you by our Government, our cooperation toward your Organization's aims, and the sincere wish that you may honor our country, the site of your meeting, with the results of your labors, in the assurance that Cuba has introduced to the Americas the ways that lead to social progress, the highest aspiration of which is man's welfare.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your presence here. On behalf of the Revolutionary Government I wish you a successful meeting and personal happiness to all of you.