



REFERENCE PAPERS

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CANADA AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The World Health Organization is one of 13 inter-governmental organizations that are linked with the United Nations through special agreements arranged by the Economic and Social Council and approved by the General Assembly and the organization concerned. The Specialized Agencies of the United Nations are expert in their respective fields: labour, health, education, food and agriculture, finance and banking, civil aviation, postal matters, telecommunications and meteorology.

HISTORY

The World Health Organization originated in a proposal made at the United Nations Conference held in San Francisco in 1945 that there should be created, within the framework of the United Nations, an international agency to deal with all matters of health. As a result, in 1946, representatives of 61 governments met at the International Health Conference in New York, drafted a constitution for the Organization and established an Interim Commission which served until April 7, 1948, when the Constitution came into force after the ratification by the required number of countries. The first World Health Assembly, which met in Geneva in June 1948, represented the culmination of efforts to establish a single inter-governmental health agency to replace and to inherit the functions of all antecedent organizations such as the Office International d'Hygiène Publique, the Health Organization of the League of Nations and the Health Division of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, as well as certain regional inter-governmental agencies such as the Pan-American Sanitary Organization⁽¹⁾ and the Pan-Arab Sanitary League.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Organization, as set out in Article 1 of its Constitution, is "the attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health".

The Constitution and activities of the Organization embrace the principle of universality of membership and recognize the universality of need. This is based on the premise that disease

(1) Now the Pan-American Health Organization.