

The main organs of WHO are: the annual World Health Assembly, which is the Organization's legislative body; the Executive Board, meeting semi-annually, and composed of 18 persons designated by elected member states for their competence in the field of health; and the Secretariat, headed by a Director-General, which implements the Assembly's decisions. As WHO has adopted a policy of decentralization, there are now six regional committees, each concentrating on the health problems in its own geographical area.

WHO's functions fall into two main categories—advisory services and general international health services. Advisory services are provided to help countries strengthen their own health facilities. Experts are trained, knowledge disseminated and demonstration teams are provided, to help governments deal with such health problems as nutrition, sanitation, maternal and child care, tuberculosis and malaria. WHO's general international health services cover a wide range of activities including special international research projects on a number of parasitic and virus diseases, standardization of pharmaceutical drugs and the publication of a large variety of scientific works.

In an attempt to achieve world-wide eradication of malaria the Organization has, in recent years, intensified its campaign against the disease and now assists malaria eradication programmes in more than 20 countries. WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund are united in a campaign against yaws and related diseases and since 1948, when the project began, more than 16 million people have been treated. The Organization is providing the technical direction for vaccination against tuberculosis in many countries and is helping with cholera control and with problems of environmental sanitation.

In recent years, the resources of WHO have been utilized not so much towards the temporary alleviation of health problems as towards the strengthening of the permanent foundation of national health administrations. Thus education and training of health workers is one of its major concerns and a large percentage of the Organization's projects are related to the training of a public health staff.

The Ninth World Health Assembly met in Geneva in May 1956, with representatives from 70 states attending. Dr. G. D. W. Cameron, Deputy Minister of National Health was head of the Canadian Delegation. This Assembly was a notable one. It agreed to grant full membership to the newly independent states of Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia; in addition Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone were admitted as associate members. There are now 88 states which are full members of WHO and eight which are associate members. The Assembly approved terms under which nine communist countries which had become inactive or had given notice of withdrawal would be able to resume active membership in the Organization once again. The Assembly adopted a formula covering their arrears and contributions, and since the 1956 Assembly, Albania, Bulgaria and Poland have agreed to return on the basis of the formula.

The Assembly noted with concern that rheumatic, hyper-sensitive and coronary groups of heart diseases were an important and continually increasing cause of death, especially in the highly industrialized areas of the world,