



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



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30th ANNIVERSARY OF SMALLPOX ERADICATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAHO REVOLVING FUND FOR VACCINE PROCUREMENT

Background

1. The year 1959 marked the start of a regional program for smallpox eradication in the Americas, pursuant to Resolution CSP13.R19 of the 13th Pan American Sanitary Conference.
2. That same year, the World Health Assembly recommended that the countries where smallpox was endemic launch special programs for global eradication of this disease.
3. In 1967, the year in which the Intensified Smallpox Eradication Program began, South America had the best prospects in the world for eradicating the disease. That year, a single country, Brazil, reported most of the cases in the Americas.
4. The last case of smallpox in the Region of the Americas was reported in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1971. The last case of smallpox at the global level was reported on 26 October 1977 in Merca, Somalia.
5. On 9 December 1979, the members of the Global Commission for Certification of Smallpox Eradication signed a parchment declaring the world free of smallpox. This represents the first global and regional eradication of a human pathogen through public health actions, among them vaccination.

6. The Final Report of the Global Commission, *The Global Eradication of Smallpox*, was published in the six official languages of the World Health Organization (WHO), and its conclusions and recommendations were adopted by the Thirty-third World Health Assembly on 8 May 1980 (WHA 33.3).

7. PAHO's Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement was established by the Directing Council in 1977 through Resolution CD25.R27. The Fund formally began operations in 1979 as part of the Expanded Program on Immunization. For the past 30 years, the Revolving Fund has been the cooperation mechanism created by the Member States of PAHO to maintain the timely provision of quality vaccines at the lowest possible prices. These efforts have had a positive impact, reducing morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases and, in general, improving public health for the peoples of the Region of the Americas.

8. The Member States have recognized on many occasions and in very different ways the benefits of the Revolving Fund, and they have expressed their support for maintaining its operations under its guiding principles of equity and solidarity.

9. With the appearance of new vaccines, whose cost and sustainability pose enormous challenges to the Member States, the Revolving Fund has played a key role in facilitating equitable access to the vaccines in the countries of the Region.

10. Given the new challenges in the field of immunization, it is appropriate to acknowledge the 30 years' work of the Revolving Fund, which was created with a forward-looking vision that, among other things, has caused immunization to be considered a public good in the Region of the Americas and the health intervention with the greatest social acceptance.

Proposal

11. During the 50th Directing Council of PAHO, PAHO is celebrating and paying tribute to the thousands of health workers and community volunteers who, under the guidance of WHO and the national authorities, labored to achieve the eradication of smallpox, as well as recognizing the significant contribution of the Revolving Fund to the advance of the Expanded Program on Immunization in the Region of the Americas.

12. The objectives of the celebration are:

a) To review the legacy of smallpox eradication in public health programs in the Region, especially in the Expanded Program on Immunization.

- b) To recognize the Revolving Fund's contributions to public health—past, present, and future.
13. The panel for the celebration includes the following presentations:
- (a) Legacy of smallpox eradication in public health programs in the Region.
 - (b) Creation and history of the Revolving Fund.
 - (c) The Revolving Fund as an element in the success of national immunization programs.
 - (d) The Revolving Fund as a mechanism for equity and solidarity among the peoples of the Americas.
 - (e) The Revolving Fund and the elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Action by the Directing Council

14. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this report and offer recommendations to sustain the success achieved.
