

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Seventh Session
Manila
7-13 September 1956

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR
THE WESTERN PACIFIC

WP/RC7/24
14 September 1956

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

The attached report of the Technical Discussions was presented to the Regional Committee on Thursday, 13 September 1956 for their consideration.

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Seventh Session
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TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

WP/RC7/TD8
12 September 1956

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

I have the honour to submit to the Chairman of the Seventh Regional Committee Meeting the attached summary report on the Technical Discussions, held for three half-day sessions on 8, 10 and 11 September 1956, on the subject of "The Care of the Child from 1-6".

During the final plenary session, document WP/RC7/18, "Review of Technical Discussions at Meetings of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific", was considered and the following recommendations are made:

1. The time allotted for future Technical Discussions may depend on the subject selected, but should not exceed three half-day sessions.
2. The method of conducting the Technical Discussions should allow as much time as possible for group discussions. It is suggested that at least one and a half sessions be allocated for the purpose.
3. In selecting topics for future Technical Discussions, consideration should be given to matters of Regional interest which are particularly appropriate to the place of the Regional Committee Meeting.
4. It is recommended that the topic for 1957 Technical Discussions should be "Leprosy Control" and the Technical Discussions should be held following a field visit to observe a leprosy control programme.

For 1958, the topic of "Methods and Approaches in the Improvement of Vital and Health Statistics Services in Rural Areas" is tentatively proposed subject to review in 1957.

Dr. Trinidad Gomez
Chairman

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Trinidad Gomez was nominated as Chairman of the 1956 Technical Discussions, and Dr. Bain, Dr. Quyen, Dr. Regala and Dr. Yen were appointed leaders of the four discussion groups in which a total of thirty-five representatives and observers participated.

The first plenary session opened with a dramatic presentation by a group of Philippine health workers. This focussed attention to some of the needs, problems and possible approaches to the care of young children in a hypothetical situation typical of many areas in the Western Pacific Region. After an interval for discussion in small groups, the audience was invited to comment on points made or omitted from the dramatization. This was followed by a short presentation of a flip chart on the dynamics of discussion groups.

The second session was spent in group discussion. At the final plenary session, two members from each group formed a discussion panel with Dr. Bain as moderator, when a brief summary of the findings of each group was reported verbally and commented upon by other panel members and the participants.

The latter part of the last session was spent in review and discussion of WP/RC7/18 and in completing the evaluation questionnaire.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

It was recognized by all the participants that the topic covered a wide and complex range of problems which extend into many fields other than those of health. The discussions were mainly centred around health problems, although it was stressed that many of these could not be solved unless the underlying social and economic factors affecting health were also tackled. In many areas of the Region, poor environmental conditions, overcrowding, poverty and ignorance contribute to the high mortality and morbidity rate in this age group.

Two of the discussion groups considered general health problems and approaches to improve the care of the child from 1-6, the other two groups decided to discuss the subjects of malnutrition and gastro-enteritis, respectively, since they considered these to be the most serious hazards to child health in the Region. From the nutritional viewpoint, younger children in this age group are particularly vulnerable at the weaning period. Other problems are the susceptibility to respiratory and acute infectious diseases; in countries where these diseases have been reduced, the problem may be to find and provide for children with special needs, such as physical, mental and emotional handicaps, or to concentrate on reducing accidents to young children.

It was unanimously agreed that any attempt to improve the care of the child from 1-6 should be directed first towards helping the mother, and thus reaching the child through her, next in importance was to educate the other members of the family, and those intimately associated with the child, other approaches not to be neglected were through organized health and hospital services.

In the community there was a need to educate health workers, community and religious leaders, voluntary associations and the general public to a better understanding of the young child's needs and problems, and to gain their support for whatever type of assistance was required.