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SPECIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

Progress Report on the WHO Preparatory Mission

The Regional Director has the honour to transmit to the Regional Committee the attached report on the progress made on the Special Assistance Programme for the Socialist Republic of Viet-Nam since the adoption by the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly of resolution WHA29.24.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
FOR THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

Progress Report on the WHO Preparatory Mission

The Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA29.24 (Special Assistance to Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Republic of South Viet-Nam), requested the Director-General:

"to intensify his efforts and provide all forms of assistance in the most expeditious and flexible way; to implement without delay the plans of assistance prepared with the governments concerned; to consult Member States as to the voluntary contributions they are in a position to provide for this operation."

In the light of this resolution, the Director-General convened an informal consultation with potential contributors, in Geneva on 21 June 1976, to focus attention on the needs of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the Republic of South Viet-Nam in the field of health.

A Programme Note sent by the Director-General, on 14 June 1976, to representatives in Geneva of some 30 governments presented in detail the immediate and medium-term assistance needed by the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the Republic of South Viet-Nam. This had been drawn up by the Vietnamese health authorities and WHO within a realistic framework, showing the range and urgency of the help sought by the two countries. The same details were contained in the two documents prepared in February 1976 which formed the background information to the meeting in Manila on 30 and 31 March (see Annex 1, document WPR/RC27/5).

During the informal consultation, the Director-General described the immense needs of the two countries, about to be united into one, in the field of health. He recalled the mandate he had received by virtue of resolution WHA29.24 and stressed the moral obligation before the world to mount a broad international effort of assistance for the two countries whose needs were greater than those of any other country. He pointed out that little had been done so far on the international level.

All governments represented at the informal consultation expressed sympathetic support for the Special Assistance Programme for Viet-Nam and most of them expressed willingness to respond to the urgent call for assistance in order to meet the basic health needs.

With a view to accelerating implementation of the Special Programme, the Director-General, in consultation with the Regional Director, constituted the WHO Preparatory Mission and assigned to it the task of visiting certain countries in Europe to provide on the spot information regarding the situation in Viet-Nam and to pave the way for securing contributions.

The Mission visited Belgium, Denmark, France, the German Democratic Republic, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Yugoslavia.¹ It also held discussions with the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme, visiting Europe at the time, and, on 25 June 1976 in Geneva, participated in a meeting on United Nations assistance to Viet-Nam of representatives of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations with the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

There was evident satisfaction at the rapidity of WHO's action following resolution WHA29.24. All governments agreed with the Director-General on the importance attached to the intensification of efforts to provide assistance to Viet-Nam in as short a time as possible.

From the report of the Mission, it is obvious that many of the countries visited will provide assistance to the various projects presented in the Programme Note. However, because of the administrative procedures involved, their final decisions will only be known in the months to come.

At present, it is known that The Netherlands-Viet-Nam Medical Committee, with the full support of the Government of the Netherlands, has agreed to cover a major part of the needs of the national tuberculosis control project for the entire country.

The Government of the Netherlands has expressed interest in providing assistance for the completion of phases II and III of the construction and equipment of the National Institute of Hygiene, Ho Chi Minh Ville to the amount of US\$ 2.8 million. Preparatory work on the project document is being undertaken at present.

The Government of Denmark has expressed the wish to provide assistance to the tuberculosis control programme in the southern part of the country to the amount of US\$ 1 500 000 for the first year of assistance. However, the Ministry of Health of the Socialist Republic of Viet-Nam later requested WHO to suggest to the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) that the funds intended for tuberculosis control might be utilized instead for the control of sexually transmitted diseases in the southern part of Viet-Nam, considered to have urgent priority by the Government.

The Government of Switzerland has indicated its interest in assisting the leprosy control project in the northern part of Viet-Nam to the amount of about US\$ 156 608 for the first year of assistance and in providing drugs for the malaria control project in the southern part of Viet-Nam to the amount of US\$ 250 000.

It is hoped that other Member States visited by the Mission, will follow suit and provide voluntary contributions for the various projects under the special assistance programme.

Following the encouraging results achieved by the Preparatory Mission WHO intends to intensify its efforts and to consult other Member States and other potential contributors.

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On 2 July 1976, coinciding with the visit of the Mission to some of the countries in Europe in connexion with the Special Programme, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the Republic of South Viet-Nam were formally reunited to constitute the Socialist Republic of Viet-Nam, with Hanoi as its Capital.