

# PREFACE

An understanding of the overall development of nations shows that the solution to many of the problems that affect a population's health and, to a large extent, individuals' health cannot rely solely on expanding health care systems. All sectors, interested parties, and disciplines must apply innovative strategies to the solution of people's health—our first and foremost concern—is to be improved in the near term.

The Pan American Health Organization's Regional Oral Health Program has focused on planning and designing oral health strategies and has collaborated with the countries of the Americas to change epidemiological patterns and improve delivery systems for oral health care.

To support those who make or implement national or local oral health policies, we present *Promoting Oral Health: The Use of Salt Fluoridation to Prevent Dental Caries*. This book bears witness to the effectiveness of salt fluoridation for the mass reduction of dental caries in the population. Over time, salt fluoridation has come to be recognized as the most promising—and the most egalitarian—strategy for improving the oral health of millions in the Americas and as the key factor in changing the epidemiological profile of oral health for the Region in a relatively short period of time.

To date, 11 countries in our Region have fluoridated salt programs, and new countries continually strive to launch such programs. We offer this book to all those who are operating salt fluoridation programs or who are considering launching salt fluoridation programs, to those who implement national or local oral health policies, and to the tireless health workers who strive to improve the health of our people.

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