



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**

Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization

## **MEETING FOR THE PRIORITY COUNTRIES OF THE REGION OF THE AMERICAS**

**Wednesday, 19 May 2004, Palais des nations, Geneva, Switzerland**

**12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. – Salle XXII**

### **BACKGROUND**

During the 26th Pan American Sanitary Conference, 54th Session of the Regional Committee for the Americas of the World Health Organization held 23-27 September 2002, the Member States approved the Strategic Plan 2003-2007 for the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (Document CSP26/10). The Strategic Plan identifies five countries designated as deserving priority technical cooperation attention due to the intolerable nature of their health situation, poverty levels and indebtedness. Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras, Guyana and Nicaragua share common characteristics that place them in disadvantaged positions among other countries in the Region in attaining acceptable socioeconomic and health development levels.

PAHO/WHO translates the Member States mandate into an intensified effort to support the Priority Countries. The overall strategy considers a broad public health framework based on the National Health Development concept (i.e. integrated strategic public policy approach), while the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will contribute to galvanize and orient actions and support monitoring progress. Our own organizational values of equity and solidarity underpin this initiative. Unless we make a special effort and use our resources to strive for fairness and justice by eliminating differences that are unnecessary and avoidable, these gaps between the priority countries and the rest of the Americas will remain or deepen.

Moreover, solidarity calls for promoting shared interests and responsibilities and collective efforts to achieve common goals, which defines the nature of this meeting. Therefore, PAHO/WHO calls on the partners and donors to join in support of these five Priority Countries with renewed interest and sustained integrated approaches. The countries themselves are encouraged to share their strengths and weaknesses with the participants and to seek reciprocal support. The Organization is committed to identifying and supporting opportunities for horizontal learning.

The Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly represents a unique opportunity to share information and concerns about the common challenges that Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras, Guyana and Nicaragua face, and assume or ratify our commitment to support an intensified and urgent effort.



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## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Consensus on the meaning and implications of the Priority Country Initiative in the Region of the Americas for the period 2003-2007.
- Will, commitment and sustainable support from the World Health Organization (Head Quarters and other Regional Offices) for the technical cooperation needs in the Priority Countries of the Region of the Americas.
- Partners and donors become familiar with PAHO's Priority Country Initiative, and consider it as an input when allocating resources with a program approach.