

**WORLD HEALTH
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**Regional Office
for the Eastern Mediterranean**



مُنظمة الصحة العالمية
المكتب الإقليمي
لشرق البحر الأبيض المتوسط

MESSAGE FROM DR HUSSEIN A. GEZAIRY
DIRECTOR
WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION
TO THE
OPENING OF THE INTERCOUNTRY CONSULTATION
ON APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY IN MATERNAL
AND CHILD HEALTH
Lahore, Pakistan, 12 - 15 December 1983

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to express the appreciation and thanks of WHO to the Government of Pakistan for hosting this Intercountry Consultation on Appropriate Technology in Maternal and Child Health. This meeting is the first of its kind on this important subject in this Region, and is one in a series of planned activities of the World Health Organization in its collaborative effort with Member countries with the specific objective of improving MCH services.

I am hopeful that in this meeting a thorough examination would be made of the needs in the priority areas of MCH and suitable evaluation will be made of existing methodologies and instruments in the delivery of these services especially at the level of primary care.

The major objective is to develop or adapt suitable technologies for the care of the pregnant female, in the management of labour, low birth weight, in resuscitation of the newborn and in perinatal health, especially in the home and at immediate referral level, within the health system infrastructure and with community participation.

In the pursuit of Health for All by the Year 2000, WHO would continue to collaborate in providing technical and methodological support to strengthen the maternal and child health components of primary health care. In this context, increased emphasis would have to be placed on the development and field testing of less sophisticated instruments, based on the advanced technologies available in the industrialized world. Such technologies, in these circumstances would have to be accurate, reliable and able to be standardized. These should be easy to learn, use and interpret, be of low cost both in terms of equipment and personnel, and above all be portable and durable and culturally relevant.

The technologies used should be matched as closely as possible to the needs of the programme and the outcome desired. In this connection, the concept of risk approach has also to be examined and promoted.

In the context of public health, risk approach has been defined as the probability of being affected by death, disease, disability or any other unfavourable event. Such probability is not the same for all members of a given population and is increased by the presence of some characteristics and circumstances. Risk factor is then an ascertainable characteristic or circumstance of a person or group of persons associated with an increased probability of being affected by a specific morbid event. Depending on the nature and the extent of the association between specific risk factors as a well defined outcome, it is possible to identify individuals or groups at "High Risk". Therefore, the predictive value of one or several risk factors provides the possibility of identifying those individuals at risk, (either before occurrence or in an early stage of a given individual outcome) and to offer them selective care on a preventive basis. Such interventions would facilitate the most efficient use of scarce resources and constitutes the essence of the so-called Risk Approach. As a managerial planning tool, it is aimed at providing better services for all but focussing

on those who need them most. Methodologies for application of Risk Approach in maternal and child health have been developed and are in the process of being reviewed and modified. The use of appropriate simplified technologies in the screening and referral processes in a primary health care system would be pivotal in any health care programme based on PHC.

I hope that with your existing and practical collective experiences in health system research, in which the risk approach and the use of technology which is indeed appropriate, you will be able to conduct a critical analysis of available information on materials and methodologies in this consultation.

You may wish to recommend additional areas of special interest in MCH care and the identification and development of specially suited tools with the ultimate objective of the reduction of morbimortality in the vulnerable section of our communities.

If you do so successfully, this meeting will be a real milestone in the achievement of the health goals of the Member States of WHO in our Region.

I thank you for your presence and participation and wish you success in your efforts.