



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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Note for the Press WHA.56/2
19 May 2003

56TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY 19-28 MAY 2003 MEDIA BRIEFINGS

Accredited journalists are invited to attend the following WHO media briefings during the World Health Assembly. The briefings will all take place at the Palais des Nations. See specific briefings for the room number.

Monday, 19 May: Press Room III

11:30-12:30 "Setting the stage for managing new, infectious diseases of the 21st century"

WHO technical experts will discuss the emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the operation to contain it, and lessons learnt from SARS for managing future emerging disease outbreaks.

Speakers:

Dr David Heymann, Executive Director, Communicable Diseases, WHO

Dr Mike Ryan, Coordinator, Global Alert and Response, WHO

Dr Guenaël Rodier, Director, Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response, WHO

Tuesday, 20 May: Press Room I

12:00-13:00 "Iraq: the post-conflict health challenges"

Dr David Nabarro, Executive Director of WHO's Department of Emergency and Humanitarian Action, will discuss the latest health situation in Iraq, the ongoing problem of security, disease outbreaks, and what WHO is doing to help ensure the health system in Iraq is able to function during the recovery and reconstruction phases.

Wednesday, 21 May:

12:00-13:00 "Tobacco Control: WHO's first global treaty" Press Room 1

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is a landmark event in public health. It is the first global health treaty negotiated under WHO auspices, aimed at stemming the tobacco epidemic which, if left unabated, will kill ten million people a year by 2020.

Speaker: Dr Derek Yach, Executive Director, Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health, WHO

16:00-16:30 WHO Press Room III Director-General Election

Speaker: Dr Jong-Wook Lee, Director-General Elect

* **NB.** The time is subject to change pending schedule for adoption of the Framework Convention on the WHA agenda

Thursday, 22 May:

12:00-12:30 Press Room 1

"Preventing 750,000 Measles Deaths"

750,000 deaths a year from measles could be prevented with one of the world's least expensive vaccines. From mid-2003 through to 2005, WHO, UNICEF and partners will need approximately US\$ 200 million to implement activities in 45 countries which account for about 95% of annual measles deaths. The resolution put to the WHA on 24 May 2003 asks that member states fully implement these vaccination strategies and provide financial support to stop one of the major killers of children under five.

Speakers:

Dr Daniel Tarantola, Director, Vaccines and Biologicals (VAB), WHO
Dr Brad Hersh, Medical Officer, VAB

12:30-13:30 Press Room 1

Launch of new TDR*/Gates Foundation Diagnostics Initiative

The Foundation for Innovative New Disease Diagnostics (FIND), created with a US\$30 million grant from the Gates Foundation, will work in partnership with WHO/TDR, the diagnostics industry and other organizations to apply the latest biotechnology innovations to develop affordable diagnostic tests for some of the world's most deadly diseases.

Speakers:

Dr Carlos Morel, Director, TDR, WHO
Dr Giorgio Roscigno, Executive Director, Foundation for Innovative New Disease Diagnostics
Dr Mark Perkins, Scientific Director, FIND

Friday, 23 May: Press Room 1

12:00-13:00 "The Global Council for Mental Health"

WHO's new "Global Council for Mental Health" is the first all-inclusive global partnership of mental health-related constituencies. The forum brings together key partners to promote and support WHO in its work to reduce the huge numbers of people world-wide whose lives are affected by mental and substance abuse problems.

Speakers:

Dr Benedetto Saraceno, Director, Mental Health and Substance Dependence, WHO
Dr Shekhar Saxena, Coordinator, Mental Health: Evidence and Research, WHO

Tuesday, 27 May: Press Room 1

12:00-13:00 "Violence: WHO scales up its response"

Each year more than 1.6 million people die as a result of murder, suicide and armed conflict. To date there has been a common perception that violence is an inevitable part of the human condition. WHO's *World report on violence and health* challenges this perception, and clearly identifies a role for public health in preventing violence. The report and the related Global Campaign for Violence Prevention also challenge the secrecy, taboos and feeling of inevitability that surround violent behaviour. At this year's WHA, Member States will vote on a resolution recognizing that urgent action by governments is needed to prevent all forms of violence.

Speakers:

Dr Derek Yach, Executive Director, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, WHO
Dr Etienne Krug, Director, Injuries and Violence Prevention, WHO

All WHO Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Features as well as other information on this subject can be obtained on Internet on the WHO home page: <http://www.who.int>

* UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases