

H health Personnel



Unsolicited foreign medical teams and volunteers arrive unprepared or too late to be of real assistance to the victims of disasters, constituting an unnecessary burden on the relief efforts.

The Participants,

Aware that medical assistance to victims should be provided within a few hours by health personnel familiar with the local situation;

Convinced that health services in Latin America are able to respond to these initial needs with the assistance of civil defense and voluntary organizations;

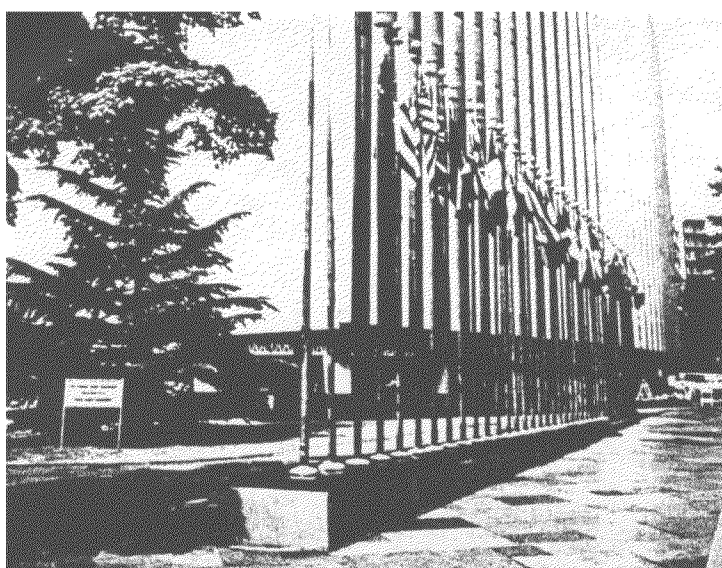
Observing that in past disasters unsolicited foreign medical teams and volunteers arrive unprepared or too late to be of real assistance to the victims and, therefore, constitute an unnecessary burden on the relief efforts, and

Noting with satisfaction that Latin American countries are increasing their training efforts in order to prepare their health personnel to face emergency situations caused by any type of disaster,

Recommend that:

1. Disaster-stricken countries continue to give high priority to the preparation of their own health resources to respond to the emergency needs of the affected population.
2. Countries and nongovernmental organizations willing to assist send medical teams or health personnel only in response to specific request by the National Health Disaster Coordinator or other authorized representative from the Ministry of Health or governmental official, taking advantage of the experience of PAHO/WHO.
3. Other countries educate the public and professional associations that offer assistance on why the affected country's own human resources should provide emergency health care and of the often counterproductive impact of unsolicited foreign health volunteers or medical teams in disaster areas of Latin America
4. Priority be placed on cooperation between neighboring communities and countries whenever additional resources are needed for disaster management.

*R*ole of International Agencies



The Participants,

Taking note of the mandates of UNDRO and PAHO/WHO and the extensive material developed by them, and

Appreciative of the increased coordination which is taking place among agencies before and after disasters in Latin America,

Full use should be made of the clearing-house function of UNDRO and PAHO/WHO to inform donors of pledged contributions and determine genuine outstanding health needs.

Recommend that:

1. The disaster-affected country and the international community, to avoid duplication, make full use of the clearinghouse function of UNDRO and PAHO/WHO in order to inform other donors of pledged contributions and determine genuine outstanding health needs.

2. Agencies provide technical cooperation in joint assessment of needs.

3. PAHO/WHO, in cooperation with other donor agencies and experts in the Region, continue establishing technical guidelines for international health assistance in case of disaster and disseminate them to countries/agencies willing to offer emergency relief