WHA42.25 International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade

The Forty-second World Health Assembly,

Noting that, despite the significant progress to date in expanding service coverage during the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade both in absolute and relative terms, there still remain, mostly in rural areas, over 1100 million inhabitants of the developing countries without access to an adequate and safe water supply, and approximately 1800 million without appropriate facilities for excreta disposal;

Recognizing that, in view of rapid population growth, particularly the continued urban expansion, service coverage will begin to decline if programme implementation is not accelerated;

Emphasizing the key role of adequate and safe water supply and appropriate sanitation in the prevention of disease and promotion of health;

1. WELCOMES the advocacy and leadership role taken by WHO during the Decade, and calls for a sustained effort during the 1990s to enable activities initiated during the Decade to be extended and intensified;

2. URGES those Member States which are not likely to meet the targets of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade:

   (1) to review the status of their water supply and sanitation services and accordingly develop strategies and plans to accelerate the implementation of national programmes as integral components of national health policies;

   (2) to expand development of this sector during the 1990s, with emphasis on the rural underserved and the urban poor;

   (3) to adopt innovative approaches to the promotion and financing of water supply and sanitation systems, including economic incentives, cost-sharing procedures and devices such
as revolving funds geared towards the achievement of maximum coverage of needs;

3. URGES external support agencies:

   (1) to increase funding for this sector, with special attention to the least developed countries;

   (2) to improve information exchange, coordination and cooperation, particularly at country level, in order to increase the effectiveness of their support to national programmes;

4. INVITES the regional committees to review regional policies and strategies for the provision of safe water supply and adequate sanitation and accordingly reaffirm the priority accorded to these programmes as essential to the maintenance of community health;

5. REQUESTS the Director-General:

   (1) to ensure the continuation of WHO's advocacy and leadership role in this sector, consistent with primary health care principles and with emphasis on the development of national institutions, human resources, information exchange, appropriate technology, water quality, community participation (including an enhanced role for women), health education, operation and maintenance, and on the mobilization of internal and external resources;

   (2) to promote the development and implementation of innovative approaches to the provision and financing of water supply and sanitation systems;

   (3) to play an active role in coordination and collaboration within the global collaborative framework established in 1988 with the consensus of external support agencies to assist the governments of developing countries in achieving the widest possible provision of water supply and sanitation services in the years ahead;

   (4) to submit to the Forty-fifth World Health Assembly in 1992 a report on the situation at the end of the Decade, as requested by the Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly in its resolution WHA39.20, including a critical evaluation of the progress and results of the Decade, and, on that basis, WHO's updated strategy for water supply and sanitation within the framework of the health-for-all strategy;
(5) to explore with partners in the United Nations system the desirability of extending the formal framework of the Decade until the year 2000.