

DECLARATION OF BRAZIL TO THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON MALARIA  
(Amsterdam, 26 and 27 October 1992)

JOÃO CARLOS PINTO DIAS\*

Mr President, Director General of the World Health Organization,

In the name of Dr Jamil Haddad, Minister of State for Health of Brazil, I thank you for the opportunity to address this Assembly.

This year, following its policy of decentralization, the Pan American Health Organization has distinguished my country, by allocating to Brasília a full technical team to support of the control of malaria in Latin America. In consideration of this, I intend to make my presentation in Spanish.

Ministers and Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brazil now reconfirms its willingness to combat malaria, without interruption, considering this a basic challenge to our policy for development. As we near the third millenium, we must pass from discussion to action, in order to offer results to our people.

We consider malaria an affront to human rights, and as a mark of inequality between people, between social groups, and between nations.

The 500,000 or so annual cases of malaria in Brazil represent a state of disease and suffering, but could also be seen to represent political and administrative disorder, or even institutional incompetence. Nevertheless, Brazil has already demonstrated its capability, controlling the disease in the greater part of its territory and placing under effective epidemiological vigilance more than 80% of our population.

At present, 98% of our malaria cases are found in the Amazon region. There we see different epidemiological patterns, associated, for example, with the opencast mining, agricultural settlements, periurban areas, and the indigenous populations such as the Yanomamis – so disgracefully invaded by the whites.

Malaria has passed from being merely a matter for the Ministry of Health, following its state responsibilities as expressed in Brazilian Constitution of 1988. Now all social organizations are being brought into the fight against malaria. Health Ministers Jatene and Haddad have invited all Governors of Amazônia to discuss the problem of malaria and its solutions, including the join administration of around US\$ 200 million wich my country annually devotes to the antimalarial programme.

For us, community participation is now a real possibility, after 20 years of dictatorship and opression which made impossible any real movement towards social organization. In addition, we seek to reinforce our basic health services, in order to provide medical attention to this poor region where 40% of the population have no access to other means of health care. We also stress improved awareness of the disease as an essential element for prompt and decisive action against malaria.

In the same way, we wish to revitalize the scientific base which has always been the pride of Brazil, training malariologists to lead the national programme, in partnership with other social action, as a way to look at the future and promote the changes that will be necessary.

Finally, my country understands that malaria is an universal problem, a challenge to the solidarity and social development of all countries. And in particular, we believe that the fight against this disease may become an important element in the dream of Latin America unity.

Brazil declares itself open, without reserve, to scientific collaboration and mutual support with all nations here represented.

I have the honour and the privilege to ratify the document presented to us at this meeting, as a symbol of the new ethic, a new logic and a new social worth.

Original speech in Spanish.

\*Delegate of Brazil. President of the National Health Foundation, Ministry of Health, Brazil.