

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/87
29 December 1949

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION
AND THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Third session

ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION IN THE
FIELD OF PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND
PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Note: The Secretary-General has received the following
statement from the World Health Organization
of the United Nations:

1. "The World Health Organization has not undertaken to deal specifically with the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities, inasmuch as by its Constitution it has no authority to distinguish between peoples. Instead, the World Health Organization, adhering to the principles of its Constitution, has sought to aid all peoples in so far as possible. In this connexion your attention is directed to the Preamble of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, which states in part that:

'The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

'The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States.'

2. "Similarly, while it is another principle set forth in the Preamble that 'Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures', the World Health Organization has among its specific functions the duties:

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'To act as the directing and co-ordinating authority on international health work;
'to furnish appropriate technical assistance and, in emergencies, necessary aid upon the request or acceptance of governments;

'to provide

'to provide or assist in providing, upon the request of the United Nations, health services and facilities to special groups, such as the peoples of trust territories;

'to foster activities in the field of mental health, especially those affecting the harmony of human relations;

'to assist in developing an informed public opinion among all peoples on matters of health.'

3. "In this connexion the World Health Organization has taken great interest in the development of the International Bill of Human Rights and the Convention outlawing genocide. However, it must be noted that both in this regard and in the case of the work done by the World Health Organization in co-operation with the IRO and through the UNRFR, the work has not been limited specifically to the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities. The World Health Organization has sought in its regular as well as its more expanded programmes to benefit all peoples regardless of their circumstances. Accordingly, the Organization now stands ready to assist the Sub-Commission, and will be pleased to learn how, in the view of the Sub-Commission, it can be of more direct assistance in helping to meet the problems falling within the jurisdiction of the Sub-Commission."
