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SYNERGETIC COMMUNICATION FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH:  
A BRIEF APPRAISAL OF THE "IEC" POLICY OF WHO AND UNICEF

LUIS RAMIRO BELTRÁN S.  
UNESCO'S REGIONAL ADVISER FOR COMMUNICATION  
IN LATIN AMERICA

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EVERYONE IN THIS MEETING WOULD SHARE THE VIEW THAT, ALONG WITH FOOD PROVISION, THE ATTAINMENT FOR HEALTH IS THE SINE-QUA-NON CONDITION NOT ONLY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS BUT FOR THE VERY SURVIVAL OF MANKIND. IT WAS SUCH CONVICTION WHAT PRODUCED IN 1978 THE WORLD-WIDE ALMA-ATA RECOGNITION OF HEALTH AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT. SADLY, HOWEVER, HEALTH REMAINS THE PRIVILEGE OF FEW. NAMELY, TEN YEARS AFTER THAT VALID STATEMENT OF FAITH WAS MADE, ONE MILLION CHILDREN DIE EVERY MONTH FROM MALNUTRITION AND INFECTION IN THE SO CALLED DEVELOPING WORLD. AND THIS APPALLING TRAGEDY OCCURS IN SPITE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGHLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES FOR FOOD PRODUCTION AND HEALTH CARE AS WELL AS IN THE PRESENCE OF MOST EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGIES TO COMMUNICATE THESE BENEFITIAL ADVANCEMENTS TO EVERYONE ON EARTH.

THIS REGRETTABLE PARADOX HAS NOT REMAINED UNCHALLENGED SINCE TODAY IT HAS BECOME POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME THE SITUATION. INDEED, SUBSTANTIVE IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED ALONG THE PRESENT DECADE UNDER THE TIRELESS CAMPAIGNING OF UNICEF. FOR INSTANCE, MASSIVE VACCINATION IS KNOWN TO SAVE NOW THE LIVES OF CLOSE TO 1,4 MILLION CHILDREN PER YEAR. GAINS AS THIS ONE HAVE LEAD THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO NOTE THAT A TRUE REVOLUTION IN FAVOR OF CHILDREN SURVIVAL HAS STARTED TO SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD. THEREFORE, IT WAS CERTAINLY NOT UTOPIAN FOR THE 34TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY TO PROCLAIM IN 1981 THE "GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR HEALTH FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2000". THERE IS NO MORE PRESSING IDEAL THAN THIS ONE FOR, EVIDENTLY, WITHOUT

HEALTH THE WHOLE REST OF MAN'S AIMS IN LIFE--HIS WANTS AND DREAMS, HIS SACRED ENTITLEMENT TO A FUTURE--BECOMES UNATTAINABLE.

WHO AND UNICEF ARE CERTAINLY WELL AWARE OF THEIR ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY IN LEADING TOWARDS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE GLOBAL HEALTH STRATEGY. THEY KNOW IT IS EQUIVALENT TO GENERATING DEEP AND MASSIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES ACROSS A VAST AND MULTICULTURAL TERRITORY IN A VERY SHORT TIME, AND THEY LUCIDLY REALIZE THAT SUCH A FEAT--WORLD-WIDE, OVERALL AND PARTICIPATORY MOBILIZATION FOR HEALTH WITHIN TWO DECADES-- IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH MOST EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION. THIS LED THEM IN 1987 TO AGREE TO A JOINT POLICY FOR INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC), A PIONEER STEP AMONG INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES. SUCH UNUSUAL MOVE FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE DECISIVE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THEIR PROGRAMS' GOALS. INDEED, THE POLICY SAID: "THERE IS UNPRECEDENTED NEED FOR ACCELERATED PROGRESS IN IEC FOR HEALTH. THERE ARE DEADLINES EXPLICIT IN HFA 2000 AND IMPLICIT IN CSD THAT LOOM VERY CLOSE. SUCH ACCELERATION IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT USING IEC ACTIVELY TO MOBILIZE FAVOURABLE POLITICAL WILL, SOCIETAL INVOLVEMENT AND POPULAR COMMITMENT AT INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEVELS--SOCIAL MOBILIZATION FOR HEALTH." CLEARLY PRESENT IN THIS STATEMENT IS THE WILL TO RATIONALIZE THE USE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE SERVICE OF GENERALIZED HEALTH SO THAT ITS IMPACT CAN BE HEIGHTENED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MAGNITUDE OF THE ASSIGNMENT.

BOTH THE WILL AND THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT BRING REJOICEMENT FOR THOSE OF US WHO FOR MANY YEARS HAVE BEEN STUBBORNLY ADVOCATING FOR THE RECOGNITION OF COMMUNICATION AS CRUCIAL TO DEVELOPMENT. THEY ALSO BRING CONCERN, HOWEVER, SINCE THE TASK AHEAD OF US IS A HIGHLY DEMANDING ONE. COMMUNICATION SPECIALISTS WILL HAVE TO RAPIDLY AND EFFECTIVELY MOVE FROM BELIEF TO PRODUCT DELIVERY IN MEETING WHAT PROBABLY AMOUNTS TO THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE THEIR PROFESSION HAS EVER BEEN CONFRONTED WITH. THUS, IT MAKES FULL SENSE FOR WHO AND UNICEF TO HAVE DRAFTED SUCH A POLICY FOR OPTIMIZING INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION.

THE IEC POLICY APPEARS TO STEM CONSIDERABLY MORE FROM PRACTICE THAN FROM THEORIZAION. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THIS PRAGMATIC ORIGIN IT IS NOT BASED UPON ELABORATED CONCEPTUAL FORMULATIONS ON EACH OF ITS THREE COMPONENT STRATEGIES. IT RATHER CHOOSES "TO ENCOURAGE A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF TERMS IN AN OPERATIONAL SENSE--INSTEAD OF LIMITING 'DEFINITIONS' TO THE CONCEPTUAL PLANE." IT SIMPLY EQUATES "INFORMATION" WITH THE USE OF MASS MEDIA FOR KNOWLEDGE DIFUSSION AND ADVOCACY WHILE PERCEIVING "COMMUNICATION" AS PROGRAM-SUPPORT THROUGH MASS MEDIA AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION, STRESSING THIS LATTER AS FUNDAMENTAL TO SECURE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES. THE POLICY DOES NOT ACTUALLY GET TO DISCUSSING THE "EDUCATION" STRATEGY IN THE IEC POLICY. IN SPITE OF THEIR BRIEFNESS, THE DEFINITIONS IT MAKES FOR "I" AND "C" DO DENOTE ACCURATELY THE TWO MAIN MANNERS IN WHICH WHO AND UNICEF USE COMMUNICATION RESOURCES.

IN FACT, FOR INSTANCE, IN TERMS OF "INFORMATION" UNICEF APPEALS TO PRESS, TELEVISION, AND RADIO TO FOSTER ATTITUDES OF RESPECT AND SUPPORT TO THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, TO PERSUADE NATIONAL DECISION-MAKERS OF PROVIDING ADEQUATE FUNDS TO PROTECT CHILDREN'S HEALTH, AND TO EXPLAIN THE PUBLIC WHAT THE AGENCY ITSELF DOES. IN TERMS OF "COMMUNICATION", WHO AND UNICEF RECOURSE TO MASS MEDIA AS WELL AS TO FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION IN ORDER TO GENERATE DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND CONVINCED PEOPLE OF ADOPTING BEHAVIORS CONVENIENT TO THEIR HEALTH. IN BOTH INSTANCES, THOUGH IN DIVERSE MANNERS AND TO DIFFERENT EXTENTS, THE MESSAGES PURPORT CONTENTS OF "EDUCATION" IF BY THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS OF GAINING KNOWLEDGE, FORMING ATTITUDES, AND PERFORMING BEHAVIORS.

ACADEMIC RIGOR WOULD PROBABLY CLAIM THAT VALID AND RELIABLE OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS ARE HARDLY POSSIBLE IN THE ABSENCE OF CONCEPTUALIZATIONS GIVING THEM FRAMEWORK AND ROOTS; THAT IS, CONSTRUCT BUILDING SHOULD PRESIDE OVER REALITY DESCRIPTIONS IF THESE ARE TO BE TRULY USEFUL IN PRACTICE. THE IEC POLICY, HOWEVER, SUBSTITUTES SUCH APPROACH FOR A CRITICAL AND SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANT COMMUNICATION OPERATIONS OF THE TWO AGENCIES. AFTER FRANKLY DISCUSSING PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED--NOTING PROBLEMS AND STRESSING OPPORTUNITIES--IT DRAWS A SET OF POLICY DIRECTIONS AS WELL AS GUIDELINES FOR ACTION. THE FORMER ARE OF A BROAD NATURE, MORE AT THE NORMATIVE POLICY LEVEL OF THINKING THAN AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL OF PRESCRIPTION FOR DIVERSE SPECIFIC

CIRCUMSTANCES. THE LATTER APPLY SPECIFICALLY TO DESIRABLE JOINT COMMUNICATION ACTIONS BY THE TWO AGENCIES. PARTICULARLY, THE STATEMENTS ON POLICY DIRECTIONS EXHIBIT SYNTHESIZING ABILITY, SHARPNESS TO ASSESS SHORTCOMINGS, CREATIVITY IN PROPOSING IMPROVEMENTS AND A REMARKABLE PERCEPTIVENESS OF THE LIMITS OF COMMUNICATION AS WELL AS OF THE EVOLUTION OF IT IN BOTH THE DEVELOPED AND THE DEVELOPING WORLDS. IN SUMMARY, A WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOUR THAT SETS THE STAGE FOR FURTHER PROGRESS.

THERE EVIDENTLY IS A NATURAL INTERRELATEDNESS BETWEEN "I", "E," AND "C". THERE OFTEN ARE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE WORK OF UNICEF AND WHO IN WHICH SUCH RELATIONSHIP HAS TO BE ORGANIZED TO OCCUR TO A LARGE SCALE. THE OUTSTANDING ILLUSTRATION OF IT ARE MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGNS IN WHICH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION HAVE TO GO HAND IN HAND, BOTH BEARING EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

THE EFFECT SOUGHT IN COMBINING DIFFERENT MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AROUND A GIVEN INSTITUTIONAL GOAL IS SYNERGY: THE MUTUALLY REINFORCING BLENDING OF MESSAGES INTO AN INTEGRATED WHOLE. IN LAUNCHING A MASSIVE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN, FOR INSTANCE, INFORMATION THROUGH RADIO AND TELEVISION USUALLY TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER PRINT MEDIA WHICH COME LATER AS A STRENGTHENING TOOL; THEN IS THE TURN FOR FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION TO INDUCE VACCINATION ACCEPTANCE; AND FINALLY POSTERS AND STICKERS MAY REITERATE IN BRIEF THE BEHAVIOUR WANTED. ANOTHER TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF SYNERGISTIC MEDIA USE IS THE LATIN AMERICAN "RADIO SCHOOL" STRATEGY:

BROADCASTS ADDRESSED AT LISTENING GROUPS THAT DISCUSS THE MESSAGES, SUPPORTED BY BOOKLETS AND GRAPHICS FOR INDIVIDUAL USE. EMPLOYED IN SUCH CONCERTED MANNERS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION WILL COOPERATE TO SECURE THE HEALTH GOALS, EACH SUPPORTING THE OTHER. THIS, OF COURSE, IS NEITHER EASY NOR INEXPENSIVE, AND YET IN HEALTH-PROMOTION WORK IT OFTEN PROVES DESIRABLE. IN SOME CASES, HOWEVER, IT TURNS NOT ATTAINABLE AND THE PAUCITY OF FUNDS IS NOT THE ONLY REASON FOR IT. THE LIMITATIONS OF COMMUNICATORS' COMPETENCE IS ANOTHER. SOME TIMES INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS FAIL TO REALIZE THE COMPLEXITY OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS AND SEEM TO EXPECT FROM A GIVEN KIND OF COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST ALL KINDS OF COMPETENCE IS HIS PROFESSION. THIS IS NOT REALISTIC. JUST AS THE MEDICAL PROFESSION HAS MULTIPLE SPECIALTIES, NO COMMUNICATION EXPERT CAN CLAIM TO PERFORM EQUALLY WELL BEFORE VERY DIFFERENT DEMANDS. SOME ARE BETTER SUITED FOR TASKS WITHIN THE "INFORMATION" BRACKET; THEY TEND TO SHARE THE SKILLS OF JOURNALISTS, ADVERTISERS, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENTS. OTHER CONCENTRATE IN TASKS PERTAINING TO THE "COMMUNICATION" COMPONENT OF THE IEC POLICY; THESE TEND TO HAVE ATTRIBUTES COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF TEACHERS, SOCIAL RESEARCHERS, AND COMMUNITY ANIMATORS. AND IN EACH OF THESE TWO BROAD CATEGORIES THERE ARE OF COURSE SPECIALIZATIONS. SOME USE TELEVISION FAR BETTER THAN THEY HANDLE PRESS ARTICLES AND, WITHIN TELEVISION, A SCRIPT WRITER IS RARELY ALSO A GOOD SOUND-RECORDING MAN. OTHER ARE MORE PROFICIENT IN MOTIVATING ATTITUDINAL CHANGES THAN IN IMPARTING SKILLS

--AND THE LIKE. VERY FEW, IF ANY AT ALL, ARE AS COMPETENT FOR "INFORMATION" AS FOR "COMMUNICATION" AND CAN MANAGE UNIFORMELY WELL ALL MEDIA. THEREFORE, AGENCIES HAVE TO PROPERLY MAN THEIR COMMUNICATION ORGANS, ACKNOWLEDGING SUCH DISTINCTIONS, AT THE ROOTS OF WHICH LIE ALSO DIFFERENCES OF INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSES AND VARIATIONS IN AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS.

AS IMPORTANT AS MANNING IS PLANNING. POLICIES ARE SETS OF BEHAVIORAL NORMS AND STRATEGIES CAN BE SEEN AS OPERATIONAL PRESCRIPTIONS DERIVED FROM THOSE NORMS. BUT CONCRETE OPERATIONAL PLANS MUST COME RIGHT NEXT TO IT IF ACTIONS ARE GOING TO HELP ATTAIN THE GOALS SOUGHT. IF COMMUNICATION SPECIALISTS ARE EXCLUDED FROM SUBJECT-MATTER PLANNING FOR ACTIONS OR ARE CALLED IN LATE TO MERELY "INSTRUMENT" THESE ACTIONS, EFFICIENT COMMUNICATIONS CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO OCCUR. LIKEWISE, CONSTANT ACTION MONITORING AND FREQUENT EVALUATION OF COMPLIANCE AND IMPACT ARE INDISPENSABLE TO SECURE GOAL ATTAINMENT. POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND PLANS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION, ON THE OTHER, PERFORM THE PROGRAMMING ROLE OF "NAVIGATOR" FOR THE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS. AS VITAL AS THEY ARE TO THEM THEY ARE NO LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE ORGANIC STRUCTURE THROUGH WHICH THE FUNCTIONS COME TO BE PERFORMED, AND COHERENCE BETWEEN PROGRAMMING AND EXECUTION ARE INDISPENSABLE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS. AN AGENCY CAN HAVE EXCELLENT POLICIES AND PLANS BUT MAY FALL SHORT OF BUILDING THE COMMUNICATION ORGANS ADEQUATE TO THEM. TOO OFTEN,



UNFORTUNATELY, COMMUNICATION UNITS ARE POORLY FINANCED, LOWLY PLACED IN THE INSTITUTIONAL HIERARCHY AND IMPROPERLY MANNED. HOW CAN THEY MEET WELL THEIR DUTIES UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES? CONSISTENCY BETWEEN BLUEPRINTS AND ORGANIZATION IS INDISPENSABLE SINCE THE FINEST ARCHITECTURE CAN BE RENDERED USELESS BY FAULTY ENGINEERING. THE WHO-UNICEF POLICY ITSELF UNDERLINES THIS PROBLEM IN ADMITTING THAT "... CURRENT APPLICATIONS OF IEC FOR HEALTH SEEM TO BE FAR FROM MAKING THE MOST OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES, STEMMING IN PART FROM INADEQUATE PRACTICES AND IDEAS." THIS SUGGESTS IT WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR WHO AND UNICEF TO CAPITALIZE ON THEIR POLICY DRAFTING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH REFINEMENTS IN STRATEGY-FORMULATION AND IN PLANNING-MONITORING-EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATIONS, AS WELL AS BY MEANS OF COHERENCE-IMPROVING ADJUSTMENTS IN STAFFING, ORGANIZATION, STATUS AND FUNDING IN THIS AREA. THEY CAN THEN PASS ON SUCH INTEGRATED OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO NATIONAL HEALTH AGENCIES.

LET US AT LEAST BRIEFLY TOUCH ON STRATEGY FORMULATION BY CONSIDERING DIRECT ACTION AND INTERPOSED ACTION AS COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR THE WHO AND UNICEF MESSAGES. BOTH ARE NECESSARY, OF COURSE. HOWEVER, NO EXTERNAL INPUT CAN BY ITSELF AFFORD TO FULLY SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF HUNDREDS OF NATIONS AND MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. THEREFORE, INTERPOSED ACTION IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING THE APPROACH PREFERRED: THAT IS, WORKING THROUGH LOCAL AGENCIES AND GROUPINGS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, AND CERTAINLY NOT ONLY THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES. THIS

MAKES SENSE, BUT STILL IT ONLY MEANS RECOURING TO THOSE INSTITUTIONS AS INTERMEDIARIES FOR THE EXTERNAL AGENCIES, NOT AS PROTAGONISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE "GREAT ALLIANCE". THE ULTIMATE STRATEGY HAS TO BE THAT OF MOTIVATING AND HELPING THOSE LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO UNDERTAKE THE JOB BY THEMSELVES AND MOSTLY WITH THEIR OWN RESOURCES. ONLY THEN WOULD EMERGE AND DEVELOP AN AUTONOMOUS SERVICE CAPACITY AND THE SELF-WINDING WILL TO KEEP ON TACKLING THE CHALLENGE ON A PERMANENT BASIS. THE IEC POLICY CLEARLY EMBRACES THIS CONVICTION WHEN IT SAYS "THE WHO-UNICEF GOAL IS NOT SO MUCH TO RUN PROGRAMMES IN THE SHORT-TERM, HOWEVER SUCCESSFULLY, BUT TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL CAPABILITY IN IEC FOR HEALTH..." AND HERE WE MAY HAVE A TELLING ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROBLEM OF INSUFFICIENT HARMONY BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE. APPARENTLY THESE AGENCIES ARE PRESENTLY APPLYING THE STRATEGIES OF DIRECT AND INTERPOSED ACTION BUT NOT YET THE DEFINITIVE ONE: INSTITUTION-BUILDING IN COMMUNICATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL. HOW CAN SUCH DISPARITY BE OVERCOME? ONE WAY WOULD BE TO TRANSFER A SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF RESOURCES AND ENERGIES FROM DIRECT AND MEDIATED OPERATIONS TO THE STRENGTHENING OF APPROPRIATE PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OR ASSOCIATIONS. THIS WOULD IMPLY FOR WHO-UNICEF COMMUNICATORS CHANGING THEIR ROLES FROM DOERS AND ACTIVATORS TO MENTORS AND TEACHERS. THE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER APPROACH SHOULD BE ABLE TO IMPROVE THE PROFESSIONAL BASE AT LOCAL LEVELS SO AS TO ATTAIN INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING. OF THE MANY INSTITUTIONS POSSIBLE OF CONSIDERATION FOR THIS KIND OF

SUPPORT, WHICH MAY THE KEY ONES BE? AT LEAST IN LATIN AMERICA THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE THE SCHOOLS OF COMMUNICATION AND THE TEACHERS COLLEGES FOR THEY CAN MULTIPLY THE EXTERNAL IMPACT BETTER THAN ANY OTHER AND ASSIST GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES.

LATIN AMERICA HAS FOR SOME THIRTY YEARS DEVELOPED LARGE AND PRODUCTIVE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS. ECUADOR HOSTS MOST OF THEM: CIESPAL, A REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH CENTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, THE LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION THROUGH RADIO, AND THE THREE REGIONAL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATIONS OF THE PROFESSION FOR PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION, AND MOTION PICTURES. VENEZUELA IS HEADQUARTERS FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS, CLAIMING A 30,000 MEMBERSHIP. AND COLOMBIA IS THE SEAT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCHERS AND OF THE LATIN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF COMMUNICATION SCHOOLS, WHICH ARE NOW MORE THAN 250. BECAUSE OF THE PROXIMITY OF ITS REGIONAL OFFICE TO THESE COUNTRIES, UNICEF COULD MORE EASILY PROFIT FROM WORKING THROUGH SUCH INFLUENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS VINCULATED TO HUNDREDS OF MEDIA AND THOUSANDS OF COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS IN MORE THAN 15 COUNTRIES. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE CHIEF BENEFITIARIES OF SUCH MULTIPLYING ARRAY OUGHT TO BE THE HEALTH EDUCATORS AND OTHER PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS RELATED TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONS. DOES THIS NOT INVOLVE A SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR IEC AND THUS FOR HFA 2000?.

COMMUNICATION IS CERTAINLY NO MAGICAL TOOL OR UNIVERSAL PANACEA. AS HAS APTLY BEEN PERCEIVED BY WHO AND UNICEF, THE HEALTH-PROMOTING DRIVE IS "... OFTEN CIRCUMSCRIBED BY POVERTY, DIMMED BY LACK OF EDUCATION, FRUSTRATED BY THE UNEQUAL STATUS OF WOMEN, MUDDIED BY COMMERCIAL VESTED INTERESTS, AND LIMITED BY THE AVAILABILITY OF SUCH BASIC PHYSICAL PRE-REQUISITES AS ADEQUATE HOUSING, CLEAN WATER, AND SAFE SANITATION." NEVERTHELESS, IF WISELY EMPLOYED, COMMUNICATION CAN BE DEFINITELY A MOST POWERFUL DEVICE FOR SERVING MANKIND.

IN TODAY'S WORLD THERE CAN HARDLY BE A MORE NOBLE AND URGENT MISSION FOR COMMUNICATION THAN THAT OF HELPING SECURE UNIVERSAL HEALTH. ALLOW ME PLEASE TO EXPRESS, IN CLOSING, MY CERTAINTY THAT COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS WILL FACE UP TO THIS HISTORICAL CHALLENGE.

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