

a key part of Dr Lee's legacy, and I will be working hard to build on it through the 5-year strategic plan approved by the World Health Assembly. Recently I met representatives of the Brazilian, Chilean, French and Norwegian Governments to see how a new initiative for funds raised by an airline tax can increase support for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Translating the five-year strategic plan for HIV towards universal access into practice is now a top priority. We have resources

in WHO country offices which will be key to taking that strategy forward. We must also continue the advocacy work started by JW Lee on HIV prevention, treatment and care.

Q: How are the management reforms progressing at the moment?

A: Our priorities in this area are to build on WHO's role and position within the broader context of UN reform. Last month the High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence consulted

with the Geneva-based UN agencies. We explained to them the nature of a specialized agency, which has independent functions but is still able to implement work at country level in a more integrated and coordinated way. We will now consult broadly throughout the Organization, especially with WHO Representatives and country offices to see how WHO can be more effective in the UN system. A paper will be developed for discussion by the Executive Board at its session in January 2007. ■

Recent news from WHO

- Up to 24% of global disease is caused by **preventable environmental hazards**, according to a WHO report released on 16 June: *Preventing disease through healthy environments - towards an estimate of the environmental burden of disease*. http://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/preventingdisease.pdf
- WHO proposed on 12 June the creation of an interim, urgent, funding mechanism to prevent disruption of basic services and bridge gaps in health service delivery in the **occupied Palestinian territory**.
- The Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly was overshadowed by the **death of Dr Lee Jong-wook**, Director-General of WHO. He died on Monday 22 May after a brief illness, at the age of 61. Delegates observed a two-minute silence in his memory. That week, more than 1000 people attended his funeral service at the Basilique Notre-Dame in Geneva.
- WHO's Executive Board decided on 30 May to speed up the usual process for electing a new Director-General, following Dr Lee's sudden death on 22 May. At a special meeting 6–8 November in Geneva, the Board will short-list candidates, interview them, vote on them and nominate one. On 9 November, a one-day special session of the World Health Assembly will consider the nomination and appoint a new Director-General. The Board will also decide when a contract for the new Director-General would take effect. The deadline for Member States to propose candidates is 5 September. Details of all the candidates will be sent to Member States for consideration by 5 October.
- More than 2200 people from WHO's 192 Member States, nongovernmental organizations and other observers attended the World Health Assembly, which took place in Geneva, 22–27 May. A number of key decisions were made at the **World Health Assembly**:
 - The Assembly agreed to voluntarily implement parts of the **International Health Regulations (IHR)** immediately, in particular those which relate to avian influenza and to a potential pandemic of human influenza. The IHR were formally adopted at the 2005 Assembly and come into effect in 2007.
 - The Assembly adopted a resolution calling for measures to complete the **eradication of polio**, and two resolutions on **HIV/AIDS**.
 - A resolution was passed calling for renewed commitment to policies and programmes related to implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and to revitalize the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.
 - The Assembly adopted a draft strategy for the prevention and control of **sexually transmitted infections**.
 - Another resolution called for a global strategy to address the need for people in developing countries to access necessary medicines, vaccines and diagnostics, following publication of the report by the **Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health**.
 - In a resolution on **International Trade and Health**, the Assembly urged Member States to work at national level to coordinate trade and health policies among the ministries of finance, health, and trade.
 - The Assembly adopted a resolution on the rapid scaling up of **health workforces**.
 - To address concerns that emergency preparedness in many countries is weak, and may not be able to cope with large-scale disasters, the Assembly passed a resolution urging countries to further strengthen national emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery programmes.

For more about these and other WHO news items please see: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2006/en/index.html>