

Introduction

Ralph Adam, Minister, Ministry of Health, Seychelles

It is my pleasure to introduce this important symposium on cardiovascular diseases.

Firstly, I would like to welcome you all to this meeting. For those of you who have travelled from Switzerland, I would like to express my feeling of appreciation for the effort you have made to come such a long distance. As I am aware that you are all very busy doctors and scientists, I thank you for accepting our invitation to participate in this meeting.

This symposium represents an important development in our health services and should not be seen as merely a scientific meeting for the benefit of the participants only. In reality, this meeting highlights three vital components of health care, that is, research, education and service.

The symposium results from the cardiovascular diseases research project which was launched in mid 1989. Research is a vital tool in the development of health care. We launched the project because we were not satisfied with the existing knowledge about cardiovascular diseases. We felt that a closer examination of the actual situation of cardiovascular diseases and risk factors was necessary in order to better be able to address the control of the problems.

I am informed that the research project has produced much useful information, and that it has been confirmed that problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes are indeed very common. You will be spending the next three days examining that information.

This information, by itself, is not helpful until it is shared and put to use. This symposium is a wonderful opportunity for health and medical experts to come together to examine the results and information. I know that the organizing committee has, from the beginning, wanted to emphasize the educational nature of this symposium. I note the presence of many health workers who are responsible for patient care and for preventive services. I am confident that you will use this op-

portunity to increase your understanding and knowledge of cardiovascular diseases.

Education of health workers benefit not only the individual worker, but also the patients and the population, as that education is channelled into improving health care services. From this symposium I expect that each health worker will become a better health carer, better equipped in the area of health promotion, cardiovascular diseases prevention and control.

In other words, research is translated into education, which is in turn channelled into service development. There is a dynamic interrelationship between these three components, and every health worker and every unit in the Ministry of Health should see research, education and service as fundamental functions.

This symposium is organized and sponsored by the Ministry of Health, the Republic and Canton du Jura and The World Health Organization. This international and cooperative effort, which is also reflected in the composition of the participants, is another point which I would like to highlight. The nature of health and diseases, whether the issues is cardiovascular diseases or AIDS, is such that international cooperation is vital in research, education and service development and provision of health care. I am pleased to note that both the WHO and the Jura Cooperation have been close and active partners with the Ministry of Health, not only in this symposium, but in many other areas.

I would like to thank all the many persons who have been involved in the preparation of this symposium. I know that the preparation started a long time ago, even as far back as the time the research project was being launched. The project has involved many health workers, in Seychelles and in Switzerland. I would like to thank you all.

I now have the pleasure to declare the symposium officially open and to wish you all a successful meeting.