# AAASNEWSAAASNE

## International Conference on Women in Health

An under-reported international conference of women health workers was hosted by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) in Washington, D.C., on 16-18 June. Dr. Janet Brown, director of the AAAS Office of Opportunities in Science, attended. The participants included nurses, midwives, M.D.'s, medical educators, social workers, and so forth from developed and developing countries. The conference was remarkable for its genuine openness in examination of both the health care experiences of other societies and of a variety of patient-oriented models different from our own. The conference was distinguished also by an address by Françoise Giroud, Secretary of State for the Condition of Women, of the French government. Her speech was marked by a high level of substantive content and an unusually self-critical analysis of French national health policy and practice.

The delegates, mostly women, were invited to discuss the role of women health workers, and there was ample documentation of sexist attitudes and practices in their situations. However, in the words of Dr. Mary C. Howell, it was clear from the moment the conference opened, "that our primary concern was to be the welfare of our patients and the nature of the services we provide for them."

Dr. Howell, an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, recently re-

#### William Carey Gives Testimony on Peer Review System

On 30 July, William D. Carey, Executive Officer of AAAS, gave a testimony before the Subcommittee on Science, Research and Technology of the Committee on Science and Technology, U.S. House of Representatives. The testimony concerned his own views of the peer review process as it has evolved in federal research support programs.

turned to the practice of pediatrics in a small community in Maine after 3 years as associate dean for student affairs at Harvard. She attended the Washington conference and was invited to make a summary presentation in an official capacity. In her summary, she listed the goals enunciated during the proceedings, citing examples drawn from the national experience of the delegates:

"Because we know that those who do not have access to health information are handicapped in their efforts to maintain and promote their own health, we want to share our health-related knowledge with layfolk" [Cameroon].

"Because we acknowledge that the greatest proportion of health care is provided within families—by mothers and daughters and, we hope, by fathers and sons as well—we want to teach our caregiving skills in a manner that will decrease dependency on impersonal professional services."

"Because we believe that it is obscene for anyone to make great personal profit, through earnings or investments, in the suffering of the ill, we want a national policy that prohibits profit-making in health care."

"Because we have seen that costly medical services can destroy families, we want public subsidies that guarantee the access to all services for all citizens."

"Because we women know what it is like to receive health care services from alien and alienating providers, we want citizen groups to have a determining voice in the selection of health care trainees, including physicians, on the basis of demonstrated ability to provide empathetic care" [China].

"Because we know about the harm done to our sisters and others, in the United States as well as in Puerto Rico, as the result of irresponsible experimentation, unsafe medical devices and drugs, and unnecessary surgery, we want regulations that require fully informed subject and patient consent and participation in decisions about personal health."

"Because we have seen that pushing highly credentialed token women into showcase jobs sometimes coopts these women, and sometimes results only in token jobs, we want our cause represented in positions of policy determination by women from our ranks, empowered by our constituency" [Australia].

"Because we know that our training in health care does not prepare workers for primary care oriented toward the prevention of disease and the promotion of well-being, we want to redirect that training" [Philippines].

"Because we have personally shared the discomforts of inappropriate and neglectful health care services for mothers and their children, we especially want to redirect the manner in which that care is provided" [Sweden].

"Because we have learned that large bureaucratic agencies for health care delivery demand that workers respond to administrative demands rather than to patient needs, we want health care work to be done in smaller decentralized units that ensure that providers and recipients of care have direct personal contact with and responsibility to each other" [Colombia].

"Finally, because most direct health care services in the United States are provided by women, we want recognition of that reality in policy determination" [Russia, Finland, and Poland].

Dr. Howell's summation concluded with recommendations to HEW to establish research, programs, and affirmation action measures to achieve these goals.

-Janet Welsh Brown

## Resolutions Invited for 1976 Council Meeting

The AAAS Council will hold its next meeting on 21 February 1976, in Boston, during the Association's 142nd Annual Meeting. Organizations or individuals who wish to present proposals or resolutions for consideration by the Council at that meeting should submit them in writing to the Executive Officer for receipt no later than 24 December, so that they may be reviewed in advance by the Committee on Council Affairs. The committee asks that the following guidelines be observed:

1) All proposals and resolutions should be consistent with the objectives of the Association and deal with matters appropriate for consideration by the council of a scientific organization.

- 2) Resolutions should be written in the traditional format, beginning with one or more "Whereas" statement-of-fact clauses and concluding with a "Therefore be it resolved" paragraph which presents a position that follows logically from the stated premises.
- 3) Proposals and resolutions that deal with technical matters must be accompanied by substantive supporting data and references. The Committee on Council Affairs will seek the advice of appropriate referees on proposals that require special-
- ized knowledge for their consideration.
- 4) Any proposal involving substantial expenditure of AAAS funds—such as a recommendation for the establishment of a study or investigative committee—should be presented in the form of a research proposal, with budget included, so that the financial implications of positive action are clearly stated.
- 5) All proposals and resolutions adopted by the Council at its forthcoming meeting will be published in the Proceedings Issue of *Science*. Proponents who wish the

AAAS to undertake any wider distribution are requested to submit with their proposals or resolutions the names and addresses of individuals, organizations, or publications to which they would like to have copies sent.

Open hearings will be held by the Committee on Council Affairs at 2 p.m. on 18 February in the Sheraton-Boston Hotel to give interested persons an opportunity to speak for or against resolutions or proposals that have been duly submitted to the Executive Officer.

### Scientific Freedoms and Responsibilities

On 17 June, Dr. Roger Revelle, chairman of the Board of Directors of AAAS, testified before the House Science and Technology Committee. Those hearings were part of that committee's continuing investigations into science policy, White House science advice, and coordination of federal research and development. The June hearings were held primarily to receive comments on HR 4461, titled "The National Science Policy and Organization Act of 1975," and a less ambitious Administration bill which would create a White House science advisory capability. Dr. Revelle's testimony is available on request from the Office of Science and Society at AAAS.

Following his testimony, Dr. Revelle answered a series of questions from members of the House Committee. One exchange, with Representative George E. Brown, Jr. (D-Calif.), seemed especially interesting to scientists and laymen alike. An unofficial edited excerpt from the transcript of that exchange follows.—RICHARD A. SCRIBNER, Office of Science and Society Programs

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MR. BROWN: ... [Dr. Revelle,] you suggest that engineers and scientists should be guaranteed freedom to express their ideas about the probable consequences for society of their discoveries. ... Is that right?

DR. REVELLE: Yes, sir.

MR. BROWN: What is it that you think inhibits their freedom to express their ideas? How could we give a guarantee other than [that] contained in the Constitution already?

DR. REVELLE: ... One example of this, Mr. Brown, is the concern that many atomic scientists developed over the past two decades concerning the effects of atomic radiation. I think, particularly, [of] some scientists in Berkeley [who] were more concerned about these questions than they thought that the Atomic Energy Commission was. They had a hard time getting their views made public without losing their jobs. There are many examples of this kind where the scientists are concerned that what is being done may be dangerous or disadvantageous to the public interest. However, because of the organization constraints that they are under, they might not be able to state [their concerns].

MR. BROWN: That is a very sticky problem. What you are saying is that because many scientists get their support from government, or government-funded private institutions, they are reluctant to speak out in support of policies that would be contrary to the policies being followed by the people providing

them with money. I recall a recent [book review] in *Science*. [The book] criticized the National Academy for the nature of some of its own studies over the past several years, including studies on the nuclear problem and the supersonic transport and so on, as being a little less than unbiased. That is because of the problem that you are referring to here.

Now, if this problem is created by the fact that scientists are getting their money from government, it seems to me that the government is not the proper agency to solve this. Maybe the scientist ought to provide his own money for the funding of some of these critical analyses of technologies. Maybe they should make their own reports that are free of any bias.

DR. REVELLE: As to the National Academy of Sciences, I am a member of [its] Council. We spend a great deal of effort to be sure that our committees are operating in public, operating properly, that . . . the private interests of the members are known to everybody. We try to get committees that represent a variety of points of view. The charge that the Academy suppresses points of view or ideas, well, I don't think [that] can be sustained in view of the very serious and continuing effort to make the reports as broadly based and representative as they can possibly be.

As to your other statement, it is clearly true that multiple sources of support for scientific research are highly desirable. The difficulty is that in the long run, sir, the buck stops with the federal government....

MR. BROWN: My point was not to be critical of the Academy.... Rather, I have always been impressed with the degree that the medical profession, for example, has assessed itself such huge sums of money to influence public policy. Certainly they do this to retain their own independence from what they consider too much government control over their activities.

I am wondering why the AAAS, representing many people, or the National Academy, which is composed of some of the most prestigious scientists in the country, cannot develop a greater independence from the reliance on public funding?

I think it is important that we have a society in which there are several different sources of knowledge and of policy advice which are relatively free from too many interconnections. I am looking for ways in which this can be developed. I suggest that the scientists have the responsibility to accomplish this themselves. We probably won't do it with a Science Policy Act. It will probably have to be done in some other fashion....

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