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CONFERENCE SUMMARY STATEMENT

The IPHC was first conceived in Nicaragua in 1991. Now many months later we feel we are giving birth. Here we are in Bethlehem, in Jerusalem, giving birth. I want to use an idea that we have used in popular education. When we talk about structural adjustment or power we are talking about what the elites of the world, wherever they may be, are doing to all of us. Some come from the East and the South, but most come from the North. They are a very close community. They work out their strategies together, they go to conferences every week. In fact, they are in constant communication and making decisions about what is going to happen in the rest of the world.

There are some of us who are a little closer to what these elites are saying without being really involved. The middle classes have tried to be involved in advocacy, and tried to change the policies of their governments and of multinationals through boycotts or different kinds of coalition action. However, most people of the world are far removed from the elites. We speak different languages, we are from different cultures, but we are all concerned about the health of our people. So health has united many of us across the world - which is why we are here today.

We know we are talking about a wider concept of health, one that includes justice, dignity, and equity. We know these are revolutionary words. The elites do not like us to talk in this way. That is why they work against us, they threaten us, and they kill us. Zafrullah is a case in point, and the cases we have heard about in Nicaragua are common throughout the world.

Health is a right of all people. If we are going to achieve this right, we have to have alternatives within our cultures and within our programs so that we can make a real impact on our communities. With our communities, our brothers and our sisters, we can work for health.

Now, the elites create and use the whole idea of the mass media. This tells us what is happening around the world. All we have to do is look at CNN and we can see how much of what is happening in our lives, and around the world, is distorted. And when we come together in this conference we know there is much more that unites us than divides us.

The philosophy of the IPHC is based on the belief that people who have similar struggles in very different places should link themselves together. We must link ourselves together in our own neighborhoods, in our own countries, regions, among our ethnic and language groups, and then we must make links across our continents. We must build these communications links. We must take these recommendations back to our own groups, discuss them, and then move on to the kind of networking that is necessary. The IPHC will find a way of facilitating this. It begins with us, and the commitment that we are prepared to make in order to carry out what we have discussed today. I believe that the spirit of people is such that it will really enable us to do this. I think that one of things that this conference has demonstrated very clearly is the solidarity that exists between groups and people involved in grassroots movements.

We say different things in different languages, someone here talked about the spirit that has been let out of the bottle and cannot be put back in. In Central America we talk about the explosion of a volcano. The spirit is there, even if it gets beaten down. In this room there is a lot of spirit that wishes to work towards the kinds of things we believe in.

The kind of research that is done in the world that is sponsored by donor groups, foundations, and universities, must be informed by those with whom we are working. It should be planned, executed, and disseminated, to give support to marginalized people. What usually happens with research done in the Third World, is that we never see it. How many documents sit in the offices of donor agencies, never having been read because there simply isn't time. Somehow none of this ever gets back to us especially if we have a 'strange' language like one of the 800 languages of India or one of the 23 languages of the Guatemalan Indians. We need

feedback about the research, the people have provided the information, they have a right to know what is being said about them, so they can act upon on it. We also need to create alternative media so that these things are known in the world.

We do believe if there is a thing called partnership, it goes two ways. There is a lot of talk about partnerships, and the strong partner from the North acts as if they are giving money. In fact most development aid is given with the aim of getting more money back into the North. We feel strongly that it is necessary for those working in the needs-based countries to be consulted more about how aid money is spent around the world. We do not want the hollow rhetoric of partnership, we want real partnership. So those of you here today, go back to the donor agencies from the North and create a real dialogue, so that we can present a counterfront. We want not only that accountability be demanded of us, but also that donor agencies be held accountable for what they are doing throughout the world.

We also believe there are lots of agendas. We are expected to change our priorities to meet the donor's agendas. Let us make our own agenda and let them support us in our agenda because we know what is going on in our part of the world.

Antia said something very beautiful; he recognized the role of women. Women are the main carers and health providers, and the majority of health workers in the world. They also suffer the greatest burden of ill health. We all have a responsibility to learn about women's health and problems, their perceptions and their struggles, and to recognize that the struggle for women's health is a major component in the entire struggle for health. We have to build bridges across the traditional barriers that have separated us, bridges between the various struggles of women, minority groups, indigenous people, disabled people, and other exploited and oppressed people in this world. In just a few days [November 1992], one of our compañeras, an indigenous woman from Guatemala, Rigoberto Menchu, will be given the Nobel Prize for Peace in Oslo. This woman is a close friend of many of us and her father was a community health worker.

The Concept of Health Under National Democratic Struggle

He was assassinated. Next year [1993] is the year of indigenous people, of the struggle of the indigenous people. We would like to ask that this movement celebrate the struggle of indigenous people next year.

Finally, we need to share insights and solutions, and we need to share errors. You know some people think that revolutionaries aren't supposed to make mistakes because they are revolutionaries. But we do make mistakes. We need to share our mistakes, across our borders, across our countries and across our continents. We need to respect the sovereignty of each local and national struggle and their ability to fashion a concrete strategy from the experiences that they are living.

The international conference of the IPHC hosted in Jerusalem by the UPMRC, celebrates and shares with pride the recognition given to Zafrullah Chowdhury and his organization. The award of the alternative Nobel Prize - the Right to Livelihood Award - was rightly conferred on him for the exemplary contribution to people-oriented health care and Bangladesh's drug policy. We note with dismay the concerted campaign mounted in Bangladesh by local and international vested interests to discredit Zafrullah and his work. This conference totally condemns these unfounded and orchestrated allegations and attacks. It declares its complete support for and solidarity with Zafrullah and his co-workers and demands that the perpetrators of these untruths and their motivation be exposed and action taken.