

INTRODUCTION: THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

Brigadier General Dr. Gizaw Tsehai
Minister of Health, Ethiopia

It is my pleasure to write a brief introductory note for this first issue of the Ethiopian Journal of Health Development. It is necessary for the health development policy of a nation to be thoughtfully planned, with well-defined objectives and properly outlined priorities; also, such a policy must be supported by a well-organized system of health research and evaluation. Of course, health research should be based on the community's needs and must emphasize critical analysis of the strategies and implementation of national health policy. The *Ethiopian Journal of Health Development* intends to promote precisely this type of research, and it should therefore be commended, encouraged and supported in its task.

Let me briefly highlight the position of the Ministry of Health with relation to Health for All by the Year 2000 through the Primary Health Care (PHC) approach. What has been accomplished this far leaves much to be desired, due partly to a lack of proper understanding of the concept by a various health workers who have the difficult task of coordinating and implementing PHC at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Another major difficulty is that the structural organization of the Ministry of Health has been inadequate for its role of directing and controlling PHC activities. The complete isolation from national health policy of institutions providing higher education for health workers, and the alienation of their teachers and trainers from the concept of PHC has significantly and adversely affected implementation of this approach. In consequence, the reorientation of these institutions and their integration with national health policy is an urgent matter. The teaching curricula should be revised in line with the PHC approach, and manpower development should reflect the needs of the nation rather than the individual desires of the students.

In summary, the Ministry of Health is in the process of recognizing and restructuring itself to better fulfill its role of leader, coordinator, controller and supporter of Health for All by the Year 2000 through the Primary Health Care approach. We believe that the Ethiopian Journal of Health Development will be a strong ally in achieving our objectives and wish success to all the members of the Editorial Board. We hope and expect that the Journal will become a source of inspiration and an intellectual forum for both Ethiopia and other African countries.