

Adventists say WHO seeks faith partners: Greater collaboration

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church says its health leaders have been asked by the Geneva-based World Health Organization to join its initial consultations as it prepares to renew partnerships with faith-based organizations.

The Adventist News Network reported from Washington, D.C., last month that health officials had said that after avoiding such links for three decades, the WHO, under director-general Margaret Chan, is “actively seeking to reach groups that can more effectively implement global health goals.”

The news agency reported that leaders from the denomination and WHO officials have said the Adventist church was selected for its health message and for its work in urging its local churches to double as community health support centers.

“Seventh-day Adventists are known worldwide for being leaders in health and developers of community health care,” said Ted Karpf, a WHO technical officer, the Adventist news service reported.

One year ago the WHO made public at the National Cathedral in Washington a report stating that efforts are needed to encourage greater collaboration between public health agencies and faith-based organizations. Such efforts would be needed if progress is to be made toward the goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.

The report estimated that between 30 percent and 70 percent of the health infrastructure in Africa was owned by faith-based organizations. It added, however, that there is often little cooperation between these groups and public health programs. The study focused mostly on Zambia and Lesotho. *-Ecumenical News International*