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There are several reasons why it is appropriate to hold a meeting on vaccines in WHO at this time. The first is that there have been great advances in the relevant scientific disciplines during the last ten years; these include a greater understanding of immunological mechanisms, the advent of recombinant DNA technology and the ability to produce monoclonal antibodies. At the other end of the spectrum, some of our present vaccines are deficient in one or more properties. Another major stimulus has been the trend of events in the UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme. In developing countries the level of socio-economic development clearly affects the health status of the people and vice versa. This pattern is very clearly seen with malaria. It was decided to structure this meeting so that many of the important facets of the subject could be discussed, ranging from the intimate structures of important antigens of viruses to the delivery of vaccines in developing countries.

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