



## **Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organization**

### **Report by the Secretariat**

1. At its special session on 23 May 2006, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat “to resolve the issue of Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organization”.<sup>1</sup> This request arose in the context of the Board’s deliberations concerning the appointment of the Deputy Director-General, referred to in document EBSS/2.
2. Several Members of the Board sought clarification from the Secretariat concerning: (i) the history of Deputy Director-General appointments in WHO; (ii) the conditions of employment of Deputy Directors-General; and (iii) the process of appointing a Deputy Director-General. These issues are among those addressed below.

### **HISTORY**

3. According to available records, the position of Deputy Director-General in the World Health Organization has been filled for approximately forty-four years of the fifty-eight years of WHO’s existence, two of which were on an ad interim basis. This does not include the appointment referred to in the Annex to document EBSS/2.
4. Specifically, the position of Deputy Director-General was occupied from 21 August 1950 to 1 August 1992. During this period, the position was filled by three staff members, namely: Dr Pierre Dorolle from 21 August 1950 to 31 October 1973; Dr Thomas Lambo, from 1 November 1973 until 1 July 1988 (with the exception of a short period in 1974, when the position was filled by Dr Dorolle); and from 21 July 1988 to 1 August 1992 by Dr Mohammed Abdelmoumene.
5. In addition, from 1 June 1996 to 21 July 1998, the position of Deputy Director-General was filled by two Assistant Directors-General, who were appointed Deputy Director-General on an ad interim basis from 1 June 1996 to 1 May 1997 and from 1 May 1997 to 21 July 1998, respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision EBSS/3.

## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

6. The conditions of employment of the Deputy Director-General are determined in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of WHO.
7. According to Staff Regulation 3.1, “The salaries for Deputy Director-General, Assistant Directors-General and Regional Directors shall be determined by the World Health Assembly on the recommendation of the Director-General and with the advice of the Executive Board.”
8. The posts of Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Regional Directors and Assistant Directors-General are all ungraded posts. There are three levels in the United Nations common system within this ungraded category. Regional Directors and Assistant Directors-General are at the first level, the Deputy Director-General is at the second level, and the Director-General is at the third level. In setting the salaries of those levels, the Health Assembly has traditionally followed the levels set by the General Assembly for Assistant Secretaries-General (first level), and Under Secretaries-General (second level). The salary of the Director-General has been set by the Health Assembly at a rate equivalent to that of the executive head of other large entities of the United Nations system such as FAO, UNICEF or UNDP.
9. The salary level for the Deputy Director-General was last set in 1998 and needs to be updated, both for the current and any possible future incumbents. An appropriate proposal will be put to the Executive Board at its 119th session and the Sixtieth World Health Assembly.

## PROCESS OF EMPLOYMENT

10. **Article 31** of the WHO’s Constitution states that the Director-General is “the chief technical and administrative officer of the Organization”. **Article 35** of the WHO Constitution states that “the Director-General shall appoint the staff of the Secretariat in accordance with staff regulations established by the Health Assembly.”. **Staff Regulation 4.1** states that “The Director-General shall appoint staff members as required.”.
11. Accordingly, Deputy Directors-General were appointed by the Director-General, in the exercise of his authority under the WHO Constitution and the Staff Regulations.

## CURRENT SITUATION

12. Dr Nordström began exercising his functions as Deputy Director-General on 22 May 2006 following the decision of the Director-General, and became acting Director-General at that time also. The Executive Board reviewed the situation and in exercise of its authority appointed Dr Nordström as Acting Director-General the following day. Both the appointment of Deputy Director-General and of Acting Director-General will terminate upon the assumption of office of the new Director-General. Dr Nordström will at that time return to his position as Assistant Director-General.

**CONCLUSION**

13. It is clear that the decision as to whether or not to appoint a Deputy Director-General has been taken by respective Directors-General based on judgements on how he or she wished to manage the Organization.

14. It is also now clear, however, that there is a need to avoid any appearance of uncertainty in relation to the position.

15. Accordingly, the staffing tables will now show the position of Deputy Director-General whether occupied or not. In addition the Staff Rules will be amended to ensure that any appointment at the ungraded level will be announced publicly immediately.

**ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

16. The Executive Board is invited to note the report.

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