

Report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board

1. The twenty-sixth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board was held in Geneva on 18 and 19 May 2017 under the chairmanship of Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien (Thailand).¹ The Committee adopted its agenda with the deletion of items 2.5 (third bullet only: Proposals for WHO to host formal partnerships), 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7.²

Agenda item 2.1 Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee: annual report (Document EBPBAC26/2)

2. The Chairman of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee introduced the Advisory Committee's annual report, providing observations on financial management (including staff health insurance), external audit, internal oversight, the internal control framework, risk management, health emergency reform, the post-polio transition, and the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

3. The Committee thanked the Advisory Committee for its report, expressed support for the focus it had adopted and welcomed the progress in oversight and in compliance with internal controls. There was also appreciation for the reduction in time required to implement audit recommendations.

4. Nevertheless, the Committee noted its concern in a number of areas, including the current level of financing of the Contingency Fund for Health Emergencies, the long-term liabilities of staff health insurance, and the long-term financing and asset management of the Organization as a whole.

5. The Committee was informed that WHO's staff health insurance currently has an excess of revenue over expenditure. At the same time, it noted the long-term after-service health care liability and the Advisory Committee's recommendation that appropriate actions be taken for long-term financing, given the increasing health care costs. The Committee requested the Secretariat to provide it with a report on the current and longer-term viability of WHO's staff health insurance for its next meeting in January 2018.

6. In response to a question from Member States on the role of the Global Policy Group, the Secretariat confirmed that this is an advisory mechanism to the Director-General.

The Committee noted the report of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee contained in document EBPBAC26/2.

¹ The list of participants is available in document EBPBAC26/DIV./1.

² Document EBPBAC26/1 Rev.1.

Agenda item 2.2 Compliance, risk management and ethics: annual report
(Document EBPBAC26/3)

7. The Secretariat presented its annual report on compliance, risk management and ethics to the Committee.

8. The Committee welcomed the development of accountability compacts between Assistant Directors-General and the Director-General, and the delegations of authority and letters of representation between the Director-General and the Regional Directors, all of which are publicly available on the WHO website. The Committee was informed that several management performance indicators have been included in the delegations of authority to Regional Directors, as a means of ensuring accountability.

9. The Committee noted that the Director-General had signed the first code of ethics in WHO and that this applied to all staff regardless of status or level of remuneration. The Committee requested that future reports on ethics include an analysis of the types of concerns being raised, and the relevant actions being taken by the Secretariat

10. The Committee welcomed innovative work by the Secretariat, including the establishment of an integrity hotline, managed externally, to which any member of staff could report incidents of unethical behaviour, and requested that more detailed analyses of information thus received be provided in future reports.

11. The Committee also welcomed WHO's membership of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, and the efforts under way to further enhance accountability and transparency.

The Committee noted the report of the Secretariat contained in document EBPBAC26/3.

Agenda item 2.3 Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (Document EBPBAC26/4)

12. The Committee considered the report. In relation to the recommendation that the governing bodies should make it possible for the Ombudsman to report to them on systemic issues identified on a regular basis (document JIU/REP/2015/6), the Committee requested the Secretariat to explore ways of including such summary reports under an existing agenda item of the Committee.

13. In response to a request for details of the amount of WHO funding subject to fraud and the sums recovered, the Secretariat suggested that the issue should be taken up under item 3.9 (Report of the Internal Auditor) and agreed that the recommendations in the JIU report were appropriate, confirming that WHO was actively collaborating within the United Nations system to combat fraud and corruption.

The Committee noted the report by the Secretariat contained in document EPBAC26/4.

Agenda item 2.4 Evaluation: annual report (Document EB141/7)

14. The Committee appreciated the annual report but regretted that its late delivery meant that extensive comments would have to be deferred to the 141st session of the Executive Board. The Committee agreed that evaluation was essential for the evolution of the Organization, and emphasized that the results of evaluations needed better and broader dissemination, in particular among staff. It also recognized that conclusions of evaluations need to be acted on and recommendations

implemented. It expressed concern about whether the scale of the evaluation unit was best adapted for the organizational task concerned; as the report had noted, strengthening evaluation and organizational learning were indeed critical components of the WHO reform process.

The Committee recommended that the Executive Board note the annual report on evaluation contained in document EB141/7.

Agenda item 2.5 Hosted partnerships (Documents EB141/8 and EB141/9)

15. The Committee noted with appreciation the valuable contributions made by partnerships, in particular the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. Attention was drawn to the need to avoid duplicating work undertaken by WHO and other agencies, given the extensive resource implications, both human and financial, of such partnerships.

The Committee recommended that the Executive Board note the reports by the Secretariat contained in documents EB141/8 and EB141/9.

**Agenda item 2.6 Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules
(Document EB141/11)**

16. While recognizing that implementation by 1 January 2018 would have implications as had been outlined in the Secretariat's report and further explained by the Director-General, the Committee noted the need to harmonize WHO's implementation of the mandatory age of separation at 65 years with that of other organizations in the United Nations common system. Consequently, the Committee considered that the amendments to Staff Rules 1020.1 and 410, the former concerning the mandatory age of separation of 65 years for staff members recruited before 1 January 2014, and the latter reflecting 65 years (rather than 62) as the normal age limit for recruitment, should come into effect from 1 January 2018. The matter would therefore be taken up by the Executive Board at its 141st session.

The Committee recommended that the Executive Board adopt draft resolution 1 from the Secretariat's report contained in document EB141/11.

Agenda item 4 Adoption of the reports and closure of the meeting

17. The Committee adopted its reports.

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