

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

1. The twenty-eighth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee was held in Geneva on 17 and 18 May 2018 under the chairmanship of Dr Stewart Jessamine (New Zealand).¹ The Committee adopted its agenda with the deletion of the following agenda items: 2.6 Amendments to Staff Regulations and Staff Rules; 3.4 Special arrangements for settlement of arrears; 3.5 Assessment of new Members and Associate Members; and 3.6 Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules.² It agreed to expand its discussion of item 3.1 to include the financial estimate of the draft thirteenth general programme of work.³

Agenda item 2.1 Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee: annual report (Document EBPBAC28/2)

2. The Programme, Budget and Administration Committee welcomed the report presented by the Chair of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee.

3. The Committee also welcomed the information related to the unmodified audit opinion on the WHO financial statements as certified by the External Auditor. Questions focused on long-term unfunded liability and cost containment related to the Staff Health Insurance Fund, which remains a concern for Member States, as well as the appropriate allocation of resources to the Office of Internal Oversight Services. In addition, enquiries were made regarding measures being taken in respect of information technology and cybersecurity, outstanding direct financial cooperation reports, polio transition, the challenges facing the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, and implementation of WHO's Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

4. The Committee suggested that the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, given its independent role, take a broader look in its future meetings at options for appropriate funding of the enabling functions covered by category 6 of the Programme budget 2018–2019.

5. At the same time, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee undertook to look in further detail at the ongoing work of the transformation agenda and will provide an update on this subject at the next meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee in January 2019.

¹ The list of participants is available in document EBPBAC28/DIV./1.

² Document EBPBAC28/1.

³ Document EBPBAC28/5.

6. It was noted that other items discussed by the Committee as raised by the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee would be reported on under the respective substantive items.

The Committee noted the report.

Agenda item 2.2 Compliance, risk management and ethics: annual report
(Document EBPBAC28/3)

7. The Committee considered the annual report on compliance, risk management and ethics.

8. Welcoming the report, the Committee recognized the progress made by the Secretariat to enhance accountability. It commended the Secretariat for its work on ethics, the integrity hotline and the introduction of mandatory training in a short time frame. A joint statement was delivered in line with the views expressed by executive boards of other organizations. It underlined the importance of: a culture of accountability and processes for protecting whistle-blowers from retaliation; addressing effectively sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of power within the organizations, and sexual exploitation and abuse beyond them; and supporting victims adequately. The Committee expressed support for a United Nations system-wide approach to dealing with such matters and sought further information on follow up of reports of misconduct. It emphasized the importance of continuing to raise staff awareness of the WHO code of ethics and professional conduct in order to ensure adherence. The Committee also welcomed the introduction of the risk committee, the external review of the risk management function, and ongoing regional initiatives. It highlighted the need to ensure adequate resourcing, including human resources, to support the function of compliance, risk management and ethics in line with the findings of the external review.

The Committee noted the report.

Agenda item 2.3 Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (Document EBPBAC28/4)

9. The Committee welcomed the report presented by the representative of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

10. The Committee discussed implementation of previous JIU recommendations relevant to WHO and the rates of acceptance and implementation of the JIU's recommendations. It welcomed the recommendations for support to small island developing States; for strengthening capacity of Member States to generate, analyse and use health data to plan and monitor universal health coverage; and for sharing of donor assessment reports with all Member States. It sought clarification on WHO's support to small island developing States. In response, the Secretariat indicated that work was under way to explore the needs of small island developing States as part of the climate change and health agenda, with recognition that the needs of small island developing States are wider than climate change and health. The Committee asked that the outcome of this work be reported back to the appropriate governing body.

The Committee noted the report.

Agenda item 2.4 Evaluation: annual report (Document EB143/6)

11. Following an introduction to the annual report on evaluation, the Committee acknowledged the quality of the work of the Evaluation Office, including its contribution to the evaluation of internal policies and other organizational priorities.

12. The Committee welcomed the fact that lessons learned had been applied across the Organization, and noted the progress that had been made.

13. The Committee highlighted the value of the independence and impartiality of the Evaluation Office and discussed the sufficiency of its funding, including options to secure the full amount of its approved budget. It also considered the need to guarantee the independence and quality of evaluations, and the Office's links with the United Nations Evaluation Group and the harmonization of the Office's policy with United Nations requirements. The Committee recognized that evaluations were an integral part of WHO's transformation agenda and were a crucial contribution to setting institutional priorities and to organizational learning. The Committee noted the need for further discussion in the governing bodies on the impact of United Nations reform and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review on the Organization's operations.

14. The Committee generally supported the proposed draft decision regarding approval of the evaluation policy (2018) but considered that a few proposed amendments to the draft policy, to better reflect the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards and to increase the level of independence of the Evaluation Office, could be discussed by the Executive Board.

The Committee recommended that the Executive Board note the report and consider the draft decision contained in paragraph 43 of document EB143/6, with additional amendments to be provided.

Agenda item 2.5 Hosted partnerships:
Report on hosted partnerships (Document EB143/7)
Review of hosted partnerships (Document EB143/8)

15. The Committee, expressed its appreciation for the benefits of the WHO hosted partnerships and encouraged WHO to learn from their innovative approaches to governance and partnership with non-State actors, and to consider the replication of such partnerships at the regional level. It stressed the need for a stronger focus to be placed on implementation, in addition to advocacy. It was suggested that future reports on the issue should explore the consistency of governance approaches across different partnerships and the extent to which programmatic synergies were being harnessed in addition to the administrative aspects of hosting partnerships.

16. With reference to Unitaid, the Committee welcomed the contribution of the partnership and appreciated the clarification provided on its contribution to the work of WHO, on its cost-recovery measures and on the synergies of being located in the Health Campus with other organizations close to WHO.

The Committee recommended that the Executive Board note the reports.

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

17. The Committee adopted its report.

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