
Financing of the Programme budget 2018–2019

Report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Seventy-first World Health Assembly

1. At the request of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, the financial estimate for the draft thirteenth general programme of work, 2019–2023¹ was considered under this agenda item together with the report on financing of the Programme budget 2018–2019.²
2. In presenting the latter, the Secretariat highlighted the encouraging financial situation of the Base budget segment, which is currently at 86% (including projections) compared with 79% at the same stage of the previous biennium. This trend is also confirmed in traditionally underfunded programme areas, like the WHO Health Emergency Programme and the Health and environment programme. At the same time, the total level of flexible funding is expected to be less in the biennium 2018–2019 than in 2016–2017, mostly due to a decline in core voluntary contributions and despite the 3% increase in assessed contributions approved by the Health Assembly in 2017.³
3. The Committee welcomed the positive elements in the report and took note of the information contained in the financial estimates paper for the draft thirteenth general programme of work, including the indication of efficiency savings targets. At the same time, it expressed concerns about the chronic underfunding of noncommunicable diseases programmes and encouraged the Secretariat to further explore the reasons for this circumstance. In addition, the Committee asked the Secretariat to continue engaging Member States and donors in a strategic dialogue on funding.
4. Answering a question from a Committee member, the Secretariat highlighted future directions to increase the flexibility of the funds raised, including proposals to Member States and donors to specify funding at a very high level (i.e. by region, by billion target or by outcome) and by learning from other United Nations agencies.
5. Some Member States called upon others to increase the amount of untied voluntary contributions.

¹ Document EBPBAC28/5.

² Document A71/30.

³ Resolution WHA70.5 (2017).

6. The Committee expressed caution about investing in country offices without a careful assessment of their performance. The significant issue of the polio transition and its impact on funding and staffing was a further cause for concern. The question of the financial and organizational impact of United Nations reform on the financing of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work was also raised.

7. The Committee noted the report of the Director-General contained in document EBPBAC28/5.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

8. The Committee, on behalf of the Executive Board, recommended that the Health Assembly note the report contained in document A71/30.

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