

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

**Palais des Nations, Geneva
Thursday, 23 May 2019, scheduled at 09:00**

Chairman: Mr H. BARNARD (Netherlands)

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COMMITTEE B

SECOND MEETING

Thursday, 23 May 2019, at 09:15

Chairman: Mr H. BARNARD (Netherlands)

1. FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE B (document A72/71)

The RAPPORTEUR read out the draft first report of Committee B.

The report was adopted.¹

2. AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT MATTERS: Item 16 of the agenda

Report of the External Auditor: Item 16.1 of the agenda (documents A72/39 and A72/67)

The CHAIRMAN noted that document A72/67, the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board on its deliberations of the item the previous week, contained a draft decision recommended for adoption by the Health Assembly.

The representative of ZAMBIA, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, presented the report on the Committee's deliberations of the item. On the basis of external and internal audit findings, the Committee had urged the Secretariat to refocus its efforts and comprehensively address the root causes of areas of weakness. Although efforts had been made, more work was needed in that regard. The Secretariat should closely monitor its work in the most difficult and challenging operating environments. The Committee had stressed to the Secretariat the urgent need to ensure that effective implementation was accompanied by enhanced transparency and accountability.

The representative of the EXTERNAL AUDITOR introduced the report of the External Auditor (contained in document A72/39). The 2018 audit had covered headquarters, the Global Service Centre, one regional office, four country offices and the five entities hosted by the Organization. It had resulted in the issuance of an unmodified audit opinion indicating that the Organization's financial statements for the financial year ended 2018 were fairly presented in all material respects and had concluded that accounting policies were applied on a consistent basis. It had found that the transactions that had come to its notice complied with the Financial Regulations and legislative authority of WHO in all significant respects. He welcomed the transformation plan, to which the audit had been aligned, and noted the establishment of a finance and management council for coordination of the Organization's financial matters. He commended the significant reduction in the delay of direct financial reports, initiatives to improve travel management and measures to strengthen reporting and accounting of fixed assets. The audit had also brought to light opportunities for improvement related to financial reporting, travel management, Global Service Centre processes, resource mobilization, emergency operations, financial

¹ See page [...].

management and the overall management of controls in partnerships, hosted entities and regional and country offices. The External Auditor had accordingly made a series of recommendations to the Secretariat.

The representative of THAILAND welcomed the report and the draft decision, but remained concerned about poor management of donor, direct implementation and direct financial cooperation reports, as well as travel management. Solving those recurring challenges would require leadership and an intensified management control system across all levels of the Organization. She urged the Secretariat to strengthen internal audit mechanisms.

The representative of CHINA expressed the hope that the External Auditor's recommendations would be applied across the three levels of the Organization. In particular, the resource mobilization strategy should include task allocation. Over half of audited travel requests had been erroneously submitted as emergency travel requests; he hoped that enhanced control in that area would bring improvements.

The representative of PANAMA said that WHO should implement the External Auditor's recommendations across all levels of the Organization. She highlighted the need to act on several recommendations in particular. First, WHO should undertake the necessary action to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of management controls in the services delivered by the Global Service Centre and improve compliance with existing policies across the Organization. Secondly, a detailed implementation plan to operationalize the resource mobilization strategy, in line with the operating model under the WHO transformation plan, should be developed. Lastly, all recommendations related to emergency matters should be implemented urgently. She requested that WHO finalize the hosting agreement between the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and WHO.

The representative of the NETHERLANDS, referring to the reports of the External Auditor and Internal Auditor (contained in documents A72/39 and A72/40, respectively), welcomed the work on travel policy standardization and the extensive outline of the improved policy on direct finance controls. She expressed concern regarding the audit results of some country offices, many of which were in a region that faced particular challenges. In the past few years, enabling functions had been underfunded, which weakened risk management and controls. Further, in the light of the recent focus on sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse of power in the development sector, the Organization's results in funding investigation functions should be followed closely. An increase of funding in that area also seemed necessary. The Secretariat should provide further details in future reports on plans to operationalize the resource mobilization strategy, in line with the WHO transformation plan. She underlined the importance of the recommendation made by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit to strengthen the functions of auditors and hoped that the Secretariat would swiftly pursue that and other recommendations.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) said that the reports of the External Auditor and Internal Auditor were valuable contributions to improving the Organization's internal control framework and programme delivery. There had been a significant reduction in the number of donor, direct financial cooperation and direct implementation reports. Systems were being put in place to better manage reports, which would lead to less repeated audit recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations would be carried out across the Organization's three levels, and decisions at headquarters would be made in consultation with regions. Although progress had been made, for example in the internal control environment at the country level, more work remained to be done. In terms of the enabling functions, the Secretariat had increased funding and was considering efficiencies that would cover some of the related costs, including for the investigation functions and internal controls at the country level. With regard to the issuance of emergency travel requests, a meeting

would be held with administrative services officers across the Organization to discuss implementation of the travel audit recommendations.

The CHEF DE CABINET said that major progress had been made on the hosting agreement between the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and WHO, and it was expected that arrangements would be finalized in the coming weeks.

The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (External Relations and Governance) welcomed the External Auditor's recommendations, including on resource mobilization. The Secretariat would continue to act on those recommendations, and would submit a high-level strategic information note on resource mobilization to the Executive Board for consideration at its 146th session.

The Committee noted the report contained in document A72/39.

The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee agreed to approve the draft decision contained in document A72/67.

The draft decision was approved.¹

Report of the Internal Auditor: Item 16.2 of the agenda (documents A72/40 and A72/67)

The CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT OVERSIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE said that, following a request from the Director-General at the 144th session of the Executive Board, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee had reviewed the investigations being undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and was satisfied that, in that instance, the investigation process had been consistent with accepted standards for investigations. An in-depth review of the Office had been part of the Committee's workplan and had been carried out in the context of WHO transformation. Given the foreseeable increase in the number and complexity of cases to be handled by the Office, the Committee fully supported the development of a best-in-class, fit-for-purpose investigation function and had reviewed the terms of reference for external assistance as part of that endeavour. The Committee supported and regularly reviewed initiatives under way, such as the WHO Impact Framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, the transformation process and the polio transition process, the success of which relied on effective implementation, a culture of compliance and accountability, and an agile Organization.

The representative of ESWATINI, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, noted with satisfaction that the report of the Internal Auditor (contained in document A72/40) complied with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing adopted for use throughout the United Nations system. The report was an indication of good management practice within WHO and should be encouraged as a means of improving accountability. He applauded the improvement in ratings of "satisfactory" or "partially satisfactory". The report highlighted good practices, including the development by Member States of legislation on gender, youth and immunization, and the effective coordination of emergency response operations across the three levels of WHO. However, it also identified high and moderate levels of residual risk at the country level, including poor or lack of resource mobilization strategies and poor management of donor grants. The report also highlighted inadequate controls and unsatisfactory processes for governance in the Regional Office for Africa and the Regional Office for South-East Asia. He expressed concern at the information and communication risks posed by a significant number of computers not being part of the WHO

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as decision WHA72(15).

Synergy environment and called on the Secretariat to expedite relevant remedial actions. Investigations of cases of misconduct should continue unabated so that the related issues could be resolved conclusively.

The representative of THAILAND expressed concern that further wrongdoing could occur in the almost five years required to complete open complaint cases. Moreover, since the number of reported cases of fraud, failure to comply with professional standards, sexual harassment and abuse had increased significantly from the previous year, she urged the Secretariat to ensure sufficient staff and effective management for handling cases and to create an appropriate working culture. As many country offices were unable to respond to Member States' needs owing to limited resources and ineffective management, their capacity should be increased to enable them to support country operations.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND commended WHO on the progress made in reducing overdue direct financial cooperation reports and in stabilizing the overall operating effectiveness of internal controls in the Organization. However, she was concerned by the sharp decline in operating effectiveness of internal controls in country offices, particularly those in challenging operating environments, and welcomed the Internal Auditor's call for more focused efforts to strengthen internal controls at that level. She asked the Secretariat why the decline had occurred and how it planned to further strengthen operational support to countries, particularly in the context of emergency and fragile operations. She also asked why there had been a significant increase in fraud cases in 2018, over half of which were procurement-related, and what would be done to address them.

The representative of NORWAY, speaking on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries, noted the importance of internal and external oversight for WHO's accountability and credibility. The progress made in implementing audit recommendations had not yet led to significant, sustained and systematic improvements throughout the Organization; timely follow-up of control measures and implementation of the audit recommendations was required. He urged WHO to proactively address the challenges identified in order to strengthen processes across the Organization in a more targeted way. Member States should be updated on follow-up plans. He echoed the Internal Auditor's call for more focused efforts to enhance internal controls, especially for country offices in challenging operating environments. To ensure accountability, follow-up of internal and external audit recommendations should be linked to the key performance indicators in management performance assessments. It was critical to promote a strong compliance culture throughout the Organization.

The DIRECTOR (Office of Internal Oversight Services) said that 2018 had been the first year in a three-year period when there had been a decline in the overall operating effectiveness of internal controls in country offices, following a period of continuous improvement. The operations examined were those with the highest risk, which could explain the greater challenges in achieving operational compliance. There was, however, a need to address and improve those compliance areas across the board. In each case where unsatisfactory outcomes had been found, negotiations and discussions had been held on additional interim measures to address the issues in a timelier manner. The redesign of 13 business processes under the WHO transformation agenda offered an opportunity for a holistic re-examination of how internal controls could be strengthened across the three levels of the Organization, taking into account the recurring challenges.

Regarding the rise in reports of cases of suspected wrongdoing and misconduct received in 2018, there had also been a significant, systematic increase in the number of reports at other organizations of the United Nations system, which had resulted partly from focused attention from management on awareness and advocacy campaigns to promote appropriate conduct among staff. The mechanism for reporting misconduct, together with the increased trust among staff members that matters would be dealt with, had also contributed to the increase in the number of reports. Acknowledging the adverse impact

that the number of reported cases had on the Office's capacity to handle them in a timely manner, he said that the Office had undertaken initiatives to strengthen its temporary capacity and examine where overall capacity needed to be improved. It had initiated a study, in coordination with the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee and the Office of the Director-General, to establish a best-in-class investigation function. The Office's audit and investigation activities were being conducted in accordance with recommended international standards, and the Office had been considering initiatives to ensure that its activities were consistent with best practices.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) said that mechanisms were in place to address cases of procurement fraud, including detection and whistle-blowing policies, which staff felt comfortable using and which were working well. Furthermore, programmatic and administrative staff were being trained in the area of procurement and how to detect fraud. Key performance indicators were being introduced across the Organization to serve as proxies for the Organization's financial and managerial health. They would be linked to staff performance management and serve as a basis for making staff accountable as part of WHO's compliance culture.

The CHEF DE CABINET said that, given the backlog and the increase in the number of reported cases of suspected misconduct, the Secretariat had, through a tendering process, invited consultants to provide a thorough, forward-looking view of how the investigation function could be structured to allow for timely action to be taken at the highest level.

The Committee noted the report contained in document A72/40.

External and internal audit recommendations: progress on implementation: Item 16.3 of the agenda (documents A72/41 and A72/67)

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA noted with satisfaction the Secretariat's efforts to close outstanding audit recommendations. Changes in travel policy had resulted in increased rates of compliance and some cost savings, and her Government looked forward to further progress to ensure consistency with respect to operating procedures, training of administrative staff and emergency travel. She welcomed the value-for-money initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat and would welcome further information on how value for money would be measured or quantified. She appreciated the allocation of additional resources for the investigation function but was concerned about the growing backlog of cases. Information on the outcome of investigations should continue to be provided in future reports, in line with recommendation 9 of the report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit on the review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations.

The representative of THAILAND called on the Secretariat to monitor closely the implementation of external and internal audit recommendations, noting that the number of cases of fraud had increased from 30 in 2017 to 55 in 2018, and that over half had been related to procurement.

The DIRECTOR (Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring) said that value for money was one of the six dimensions of the new output measurement system. A series of questions that sought to identify how value for money was considered when delivering a particular output had been developed for different areas, including timeliness of operations, human resources actions and procurement. A value-for-money network had been established across the Organization and the questions were being reviewed to assess their applicability. Consideration was also being given to assessing value for money and output elements before approval of workplans. If the roll-out proceeded

as anticipated, questions concerning value for money would be asked at the beginning of the planning phase to validate workplans and again at the reporting stage.

The Committee noted the report contained in document A72/41.

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS: Item 15 of the agenda

Overview of financial situation: Programme budget 2018–2019: Item 15.1 of the agenda (documents A72/34 and A72/62)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A72/62, the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board on its deliberations on the item.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND said that, although the Programme budget 2018–2019 was comfortably funded, she was concerned about inconsistency of funding and pockets of poverty. She highlighted the importance of increasing flexibility of funding in order to address those issues, noting that her Government, which was one of the largest donors of core voluntary contributions, was taking steps in that regard. Her Government had been encouraged by the discussions on that topic at the 2019 WHO Partners' Forum and reiterated its call on the Secretariat to continue to work with Member States and donors to identify and address the barriers facing donors. Efforts were needed to ensure a more sustainable funding approach for certain programmes, such as the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. She welcomed the development of the Programme Budget Portal and looked forward to receiving further data in that regard as the results framework was finalized.

The representative of CHINA welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to improve the security and predictability of financing for the programme budget, noting that funding for base programmes under the Programme budget 2018–2019 was higher than for the previous biennium. However, financing remained uneven among different categories. Given that health systems strengthening and universal health coverage were priority areas in the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and that the burden of noncommunicable diseases was increasing, his Government encouraged more flexible funds to be channelled into those areas. His Government had recently increased the flexibility of its voluntary contributions to WHO and appealed to other governments to do likewise. He welcomed the new resource mobilization and partnership strategy for 2019–2023, and looked forward to further improvements in financing.

The representative of ALGERIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that although funding for noncommunicable diseases and the WHO Health Emergencies Programme for the biennium 2018–2019 was higher than at the same stage in the previous biennium, it was concerning that those categories would remain the least funded even when all projections had materialized. He noted with satisfaction the increase in implementation levels for the poliomyelitis and special programmes budget segments and encouraged WHO to take steps to strengthen the implementation of the Programme budget 2018–2019 as a whole. He welcomed the resource mobilization and partnership strategy for 2019–2023 and the holding of the 2019 WHO Partners' Forum. WHO should promote a financing dialogue and take advantage of innovative funding mechanisms to avoid dependence on voluntary contributions and increase the flexibility and predictability of funding.

The representative of PANAMA reiterated her Government's concern regarding the low implementation rate and the inequalities that persisted in the allocation of resources by category, in particular with respect to noncommunicable diseases, which were a priority area for Member States. The budget was the lowest approved, yet expenditure was also low, and steps had to be taken to address the situation if the Sustainable Development Goals and universal health coverage were to be achieved. The resource mobilization efforts were welcome, and the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors should be observed at all stages. The inequalities in the resources allocated to the Region of the Americas could not be ignored. She expressed concern about the requests for budget increases for the biennium 2020–2021 in the absence of sustained improvements in the efficient allocation of resources. It was also worrying that, although multilingualism was supposed to be a priority for WHO, documents were not available in the official languages of the Organization owing to insufficient resources for translation.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that her Government was pleased that WHO was prioritizing its new resource mobilization and partnership strategy and welcomed the focus on building and strengthening partnerships with new actors, noting the importance of new and sustained funding sources for the ambitious Thirteenth General Programme of Work. Recalling the importance of food safety in global health, she called on the Secretariat and Member States to promote sustainable funding for scientific advice to support standard setting under the Codex Alimentarius.

The representative of ZAMBIA sought clarification from the Secretariat as to why the implementation rate for the base programme segment of the Programme budget 2018–2019 had been lower than expected at the present stage in the biennium. Member States should be informed of the measures being discussed by senior management to tackle that issue so that they could provide appropriate support to country offices. Noting that noncommunicable diseases and the WHO Health Emergencies Programme would remain the least funded categories even after all projections had materialized, she said that the situation should be addressed in the base programme budget for 2020–2021 and its financing. There was a need for greater flexibility in the use of voluntary contributions. She concluded by welcoming the new resource mobilization and partnership strategy, which would help to mobilize the funds required to finance the Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

The representative of GERMANY expressed concern regarding the low implementation rate for the base programme segment and requested further information on the measures being discussed by senior management to address that issue. Future updates on the programme budget should provide information on the strategic use and availability of flexible resources and should describe lessons to be learned for the future.

The representative of MEXICO said that the increase in financing for noncommunicable diseases, although welcome, was insufficient to tackle the global challenges they presented. The polio segment of the budget, which also received financing from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, was overfunded. A thorough analysis should be undertaken of the financing for corporate services/enabling functions that received more than twice as much funding as noncommunicable diseases. Efforts should be made to ensure that the budget for the Region of the Americas was funded. He welcomed the progress made in improving financing, including the creation of a strategic external relations approach.

The representative of INDONESIA welcomed WHO's continuing commitment to ensure financing for the Programme budget 2018–2019 and tackle remaining challenges in that connection, particularly at the WHO country office in Indonesia. She also welcomed the flexibilities shown by WHO in programme budget implementation, particularly for emergency health issues. Her Government, which noted the low implementation rate for the base programme segment, continued to require support for a variety of national priority programmes.

The representative of THAILAND said that she would welcome measures to achieve a higher implementation rate for the base programme segment and encouraged the Secretariat and Member States to consistently implement the Programme budget 2018–2019 before the last quarter of the budget year. There should be no conflicts of interest among those involved in the WHO Partners' Forum and their work must not be harmful to human health.

The representative of CANADA expressed concern regarding the lower-than-expected implementation rate for the base programme segment and looked forward to receiving information on measures taken to address that issue. She called on the Director-General to fully fund regional WHO offices, including in the Region of the Americas, as per the agreed budget ceilings. Such action was important for strategic planning, predictability of funding and continuity in programme delivery in all regions. The results framework should include a holistic, lessons-learned approach.

The DIRECTOR (Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring) said that, to speed up implementation of the Programme budget 2018–2019, work had been carried out with the Comptroller to develop key performance indicators to measure the rate of implementation for each budget centre: those indicators were already being discussed in internal management meetings. Given the strong connection between levels of funding, predictability and implementation, the Secretariat was working to increase predictability by consistently gathering information about projected funding and using it in decision-making processes, and by informing budget centres of the flexible funds they could expect to receive in the course of the coming year to enable them to plan implementation. The reduced rate of implementation could be explained by various factors, including the large number of emergencies that had diverted resources from core programmes and the remaining pockets of poverty. Acknowledging the funding disparities between offices, he said that the Secretariat had been working to improve the funding of major offices across the three levels of the Organization and expected to see marked changes in the near future. Regarding funding disparities across categories and programme areas, he underlined that there were insufficient flexible funds to offset underfunding in specific programme areas. The Secretariat hoped to see improvements in the biennium 2020–2021 by moving away from a disease-specific approach in the programme budget. The Secretariat would include more detailed information on the financing for corporate services/enabling functions and on flexible funds in future reports, and would seek to include information on challenges and lessons learned.

The Committee noted the report contained in document A72/34.

WHO programmatic and financial reports for 2018–2019, including audited financial statements for 2018: Item 15.2 of the agenda (documents A72/35, A72/36, A72/62 and A72/INF./5)

The CHAIRMAN recalled that document A72/62, the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board on its deliberations on the item the previous week, contained a draft decision recommended for adoption by the Health Assembly.

The representative of NORWAY, speaking on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries, said that he would have appreciated a fuller deliberation of the results achieved thus far. The reporting of results should be more systematic and less anecdotal, and indicate the progress, challenges and risks involved in achieving the “triple billion” goals. He welcomed the increased level of financial contributions to WHO but noted that increased flexible contributions from a wider group of Member States would be crucial to implementing the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. He called for the strengthening of efforts to improve direct financial cooperation and encouraged a proactive and targeted approach to strengthen administrative capacities at the country level.

The representative of CÔTE D'IVOIRE, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that he was pleased with the maturity of WHO's internal control system and commitment to ensuring transparency of operations. He also appreciated the alignment of operations conducted in 2018 with the Organization's Financial Regulations. Although the increase in flexible voluntary contributions was welcome, further contributions were necessary to enable the Secretariat to allocate optimal funding to programmes. He expressed serious concern about the chronic underfunding of noncommunicable diseases programmes and requested the Secretariat to provide information on the measures being taken to remedy the issue. He encouraged the Secretariat to take the necessary steps to improve the implementation rate of the Programme budget 2018–2019.

The representative of THAILAND expressed concern at the underfunding of some key programmes, including noncommunicable diseases programmes and the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, as well as the uncertain resource mobilization from voluntary contributions and problems related to earmarked funds. Such issues needed to be resolved to ensure the sustainable financial security of WHO. The Secretariat should not only highlight success stories but also analyse the challenges and possible solutions, including with regard to the funding gap. He expressed support for the draft decision.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to note the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee on the WHO programmatic and financial reports for 2018–2019, including audited financial statements for 2018, contained in document A72/62.

The Committee noted the reports contained in documents A72/35 and A/72/36.

The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee agreed to approve the draft decision contained in document A72/62.

The draft decision was approved.¹

Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution:
Item 15.3 of the agenda (documents A72/37 and A72/66)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A72/66, the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board on its deliberations of the item the previous week, which contained an amended draft resolution in paragraph 7.

The COMPTROLLER said that, since the most recent meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, payments had been received from North Macedonia and Sudan. The names of North Macedonia and Sudan would therefore be deleted from the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of document A72/66.

The representative of THAILAND welcomed the draft resolution, as amended, and the Secretariat's process for the collection of assessed contributions.

The representative of ALGERIA said that his Government had settled its arrears during the biennium 2018–2019, and requested the Secretariat to update its information.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as decision WHA72(16).

The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of document A72/66, as recommended by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, with the names of North Macedonia and Sudan deleted.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Special arrangements for settlement of arrears: Item 15.4 of the agenda (documents A72/60/Rev.1, A72/61 and A72/66)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolutions contained in documents A72/61 and A72/66 on requests for special arrangements for settlement of arrears by the Central African Republic. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of document A72/66, as recommended by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

The draft resolution was approved.²

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution contained in document A72/60/Rev.1.

The COMPTROLLER said that the Secretariat had received a note verbale from the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stating that it undertook to make its first payment of outstanding arrears by 31 December 2019. Based on that undertaking, and with a view to aligning the language and content of the draft resolution contained in document A72/60/Rev.1 with the resolution contained in paragraph 6 of document A72/66, the Secretariat proposed that the schedule of payments should be amended to indicate that the first payment would be made in 2019.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, supported by the representatives of BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, PERU and CANADA, requested the deferral of the discussion to allow Member States more time to consider the proposed amendment to the payment schedule, given the short notice provided.

The representatives of the BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, the SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, the PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA, NICARAGUA, CHINA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, TURKEY and ALGERIA said that the matter in question should be discussed at the current meeting.

The representative of CUBA, rising to a point of order, asked whether the representative of the United States of America had made her request as a point of order.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that she had requested the deferral of the discussion on the grounds that the proposal to amend the schedule of payments had been submitted late and was not accompanied by a recommendation from the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

The CHAIRMAN clarified that the request made by the representative of the United States of America had not been a point of order.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA72.9.

² Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA72.10.

The representative of CHILE said that she supported deferral of the discussion to allow time to consider the amendment in writing. She asked whether the Legal Counsel could provide advice on how to proceed.

The representative of GUATEMALA said that she supported the proposal to defer the discussion since new documents had been made available at short notice. Under Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, relevant documents should be made available to delegations 48 hours prior to the discussion in which they were to be considered. She supported the proposal made by the representative of Chile that the Legal Counsel should advise the Committee on how to proceed.

The representative of CUBA said that it was regrettable that time was being lost in the consideration of the matter at hand. He was prepared to proceed with the discussion at the current meeting. The Secretariat had proposed a simple oral amendment to the draft resolution which did not require lengthy discussion.

The LEGAL COUNSEL said that the request to suspend the discussion fell under Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure, pertaining to the introduction and discussion of proposals and amendments, rather than Rule 15. As he understood it, the Secretariat had proposed a minor amendment to the draft resolution to take into account additional information received. According to Rule 50, while proposals and amendments should normally be circulated to all delegations at least two days in advance, the Chairman may permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, even though they had not been circulated or had only been circulated on the same day.

The CHAIRMAN, following the clarification provided by the Legal Counsel, suggested that the Committee should continue its discussion the following day to allow time for circulation of the proposal in writing.

(For continuation of the discussion and approval of the draft resolution, see the summary records of the fourth meeting, section 3.)

The meeting rose at 12:00.

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