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## **WHO publication policy**

### **Clearance procedures in headquarters**

#### **Report by the Secretariat**

1. The current publication-clearance procedures in headquarters were introduced in November 2005. They were designed to further tighten policy coordination and quality control of health-information products and to ensure a coherent approval process for such products across the Organization. They apply to all health-information products, except governing bodies documentation and communication products, which are cleared through other well-defined mechanisms.
2. The clearance procedures include prior approval of all proposed products before work begins and final approval of those products and actions with policy implications for the Organization, with, in all cases, approval being given by the relevant Assistant Director-General. Assistant Directors-General have the responsibility to approve any product or action that has policy implications for the Organization and determine whether final clearance is needed from the Director-General. Responsibility and authority for the accurate representation of WHO's policies thereby rests with the appropriate senior staff.
3. Additionally, before printing, all WHO's information products are checked centrally to ensure that they have been cleared by the relevant Assistant Director-General, that they are complete, and that the cover and preliminary pages conform to WHO's specifications (concerning use of the WHO logo, International Standard Book Number or internal reference number, bar code, copyright notice and appropriate disclaimers).
4. As of 26 December 2006, 545 requests for final approval of products with policy implications for the Organization had been submitted to the Assistant Directors-General or the Director-General since the establishment of the new scheme.
5. Products that are submitted by an Assistant Director-General are generally cleared by the Director-General within a time frame of two to five days, except where consultation is needed with relevant offices in the Organization, such as the Office of Legal Counsel or Measurement and Health Information Systems.
6. An electronic database is in place that allows tracking of the clearance forms by relevant staff in the Organization and that keeps a record of important policy decisions.

**NEXT STEPS**

7. The dissemination of health information and the sharing of knowledge are foremost among WHO's core functions. The Organization's information products contribute significantly to the performance of those core functions.

8. The Director-General has identified evidence for health as a key component of her vision for WHO and is therefore proposing that the Secretariat should prepare an overview of WHO's publication policy (with appropriate revisions) for future consideration by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

**ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

9. The Committee is invited to note the report.

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