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ORGANIZATION

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DE LA SANTÉ

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE LA
MÉDITERRANÉE ORIENTALE

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

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Sub-Committee A

MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING

UNESCO House, Beirut
Wednesday, 28 September 1955, at 10 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: Dr. Jamil ANOUTI (Lebanon)

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(continued)
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by the Fourth Session of the
Regional Committee

Secretary of the Regional Committee : Dr. A.T. Shousha
Regional Director

Third Meeting

Wednesday, 28 September 1955, at 10 a.m.

Present :

EGYPT	Dr. M.M. Sidky Dr. M.O. Shoib
ETHIOPIA	Dr. F. Hylander, <u>Vice-Chairman</u> Apto Hapte Mariam Wolde-Kidan
FRANCE	Dr. M. Prévot
IRAQ	Dr. M. Ibrahim
IRAN	Dr. J. Amouzegar Dr. A.T. Diba
JORDAN	Dr. Subhi Amin, <u>Vice-Chairman</u> Miss E. Hilborn Miss S. Ohanian
LEBANON	Dr. Jamil Anouti, <u>Chairman</u> Dr. S. Hayek Dr. E. Wakil Mr. A. Salem
LIBYA	Dr. W. Foellmer Mr. O.A. Kadi
PAKISTAN	Dr. A.N. Khan
SAUDI ARABIA	Dr. Hassan Naseef
SYRIA	Dr. J. Aractingi Dr. D. El-Chatti
UNITED KINGDOM	Sir Eric Pridie Dr. W.A. Glynn
SUDAN (Associate Member)	Dr. Ahmed Zaki Miss El Beseir

Representatives of United Nations and Specialized Agencies

United Nations	Mr. Sandberg
UNICEF	"
UNRWA	Dr. L.F. Findlay Mr. W. Darity
FAO	Miss Mona Doss
TAB	Mr. D. Marsack

Representatives of Inter-Governmental Organizations

International Committee of Military
Medicine and Pharmacy

Médecin-Capitaine Haress Aouad

League of Arab States

Dr. Nassouh Nabulsi

Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations

International Committee of Catholic
Nurses and Medico-Social Workers

Miss M. Ejeil

League of Red Cross Societies

Dr. Elie Baaklini

Secretariat

Representative of the Director-General

Dr. P. Dorolle
Deputy Director-General

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the meeting, welcomed Mr. Marsack of the Technical Assistance Board.

1. REPORT OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR (continued): Item 8 of the Agenda (document RC5/EM/2).

The DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, replying to questions raised earlier in the debate, first offered apologies for the technical inaccuracy of information contained in one of WHO Newsletters, to which the representative of Iran had drawn attention. He explained that the Newsletter was intended for the lay reader and edited by non-technical information officers, any technical data being checked by the relevant units at headquarters. Every endeavour would be made to avoid such errors in the future.

The second important question raised dealt with the difficulties which existed in the establishment of integrated and coherent programmes when dealing with organizations using various budgetary cycles. The regular budget of WHO was planned eighteen months in advance and finally approved in May of a given year for implementation the next year. The TA programme, on the contrary, was approved at the very end of the year preceding the operating year and sometimes later. Again UNICEF had an entirely different cycle. The reason was that organizations working on a regular budget could prepare their programme well in advance because the regular budgets are based on assessments against Member States, and it was known in advance what the contributions would be. On the contrary, as regards TA and UNICEF, the contributions were voluntary and it was only late in the year that it was known what the contributions would be for the coming year. For example, it is only at the end of October or in November that the amount of TA funds for 1956 would be known.

Another question closely related was that some organizations with which we cooperate had two-year budgets.

There is also different philosophy as regards the budgetary procedures. The specialized agencies, such as WHO, established their budget on the basis of the fiscal year and could not approve funds for an entire project as it was suggested by one of the speakers. The TA programme also was a yearly one. On the contrary, UNICEF allocates funds for the entire duration of a project. This problem was an important one and ECOSOC this year had examined the question in its Co-ordinating Committee where it was raised by several delegates. ECOSOC will no doubt discuss it again.

It seems that coordination could only be achieved by instituting long-term programmes, thus reducing the inconvenience of the discrepancy in budgetary cycles which was described.

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, thirdly, directed attention to document RC5/EM/17 on Developments in the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, the first part of which referred to the new country programme procedure and pointed to some of the difficulties encountered. He suggested that the first part of the paper should be discussed forthwith, which was agreed.

Speaking on the question of the general policy of the expanded programme, Dr. Dorolle recalled the objections raised to the complication of the new procedure, and explained that this procedure consisted of two parts, namely first the principles established by a decision of the Governments in the Technical Assistance Committee, and secondly the detailed implementation of this procedure, as established by the Technical Assistance Board.

The final procedure adopted by TAC after two years' study is based on the principle that the right for establishing the Technical Assistance Programme for a given country belongs to the Government itself, within the limits of a "country target figure" which is to be fixed by TAB each year.

For practical purposes, TAB establishes "Agencies' sub-totals" which indicate to the Government how the programme could be distributed in the country between the various agencies' activities. But the countries are not bound by these sub-totals which are given only for guidance and as a working hypothesis.

As far as this basic principle is concerned, WHO has no authority to make any change since, Dr. Dorolle repeated, it was a decision of the Economic and Social Council approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Should the Sub-Committee feel that this procedure was unsatisfactory, it could call to that point the attention of the Health Assembly which, if it thought it advisable, could in turn bring the matter to the attention of the ECOSOC.

Dr. Dorolle pointed out that, from his experience of TAC and ECOSOC, he considered unlikely that these bodies would reverse their decision at the present stage. In his opinion, it would be more realistic to attempt to adjust our programming to the principles adopted by ECOSOC rather than to attempt to have the policy changed.

On the contrary, with regard to the second part of the procedure which concerns detailed arrangements and timing, some improvement could and should be obtained. It is essential to allow more time to Governments for the consideration of their country submissions and to the Agencies for the study of these country submissions and their integration.

This year, the timing was unsatisfactory. Due mainly to the uncertainty regarding the contribution of the major contributor, the TAB was not able to decide on the assumed financial availability and therefore to establish the country target figures before the end of March. This delay added to the

unavoidable difficulties for the implementation of a new procedure which was not familiar to the Governments and Agencies and made the programming extremely difficult this year. It is hoped that the pledging conference in which the Governments will announce their contribution for 1956 and in some cases indicate their intentions for future years, will be held earlier this year, and will thus give a clearer picture of what the 1957 financial situation will be.

We are in favour of an earlier action of the TAB in the establishment of country targets and we hope that the Board could establish these targets by the end of this year, thus allowing four more months for the programming next year. This point, together with other possible improvements to the detailed procedure, will be considered by the TAB at its coming session. It would be very useful if the Sub-Committee, on the basis of the experience gained this year, would express its desire for a better timing and a less complicated procedure, as already stated in yesterday's meeting by different speakers.

Mr. MARSACK (Technical Assistance Board), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, fully agreed with the statement of the Deputy Director-General, and said that it would be unwise to reverse the new procedure for country planning as established by ECOSOC. He likewise agreed about the need for a longer period for planning purposes. A period of four months was too short both for Governments and TAB representatives. He mentioned the difficulty of obtaining within this short period information from agencies about existing commitments and plans for study by governments for the coming year. If the period of planning could be extended, then agencies, field representatives, ministries and governments would be able to formulate a much better prepared programme.

Replying to a question raised by Dr. SIDKY (Egypt), the REGIONAL DIRECTOR said that the question of the general policy underlying the TA programme would be further considered in the Programme Committee and any resolution only accepted after an exhaustive discussion.

The DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, at the request of the Chairman, informed the committee about the WHO participation in the recent Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy and general progress in the field. The increasing need of the world for power, he said, which would probably double in fifteen years, made it necessary to use nuclear fission as a source of energy, to fill the gaps between the need and the power available from hydraulic and thermal plants.

It could, therefore, be expected that in coming years atomic industrialization would be greatly extended in most advanced countries. That created a public health problem for which WHO was responsible, because it would undoubtedly result in raising the level of radio-activity in the world due to the liquid or gaseous effluents from the plants and to the highly radio-active wastes which would have to be disposed of.

Man was normally submitted to a certain level of radio-activity from cosmic and other natural sources but little was known how far that level could be raised without harmful effects both to the individual and to the race. Though there is no immediate danger, the problem called for extensive studies of the genetic effects of low level radio-activity on man. WHO's duty was to stimulate and coordinate research in that field.

On the other hand, the expanding use of atomic plants created a problem of industrial hygiene as it related to workers in plants, laboratories and institutes using radio-active material and also a general problem of public health in regard to the protection of communities in the immediate vicinity of the plants. The duty of WHO was to stimulate and coordinate research on measurements of the radiation in and around the plants and also to undertake the training of personnel. The latter applied both to advanced training in radiation protection for the public health officers and plant doctors and in the technical training of specialists in the control of radiation in plants and in scientific institutes. WHO had already started arranging international courses and would apply to the new fields the methods and techniques already successfully used in other fields by means of the exchange of scientific information, research workers, fellowships, training courses and seminars, and technical publications. According to its general policy, WHO would make the largest possible use of existing facilities in natural institutions and international organizations such as the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

Dr. EL CHATFI (Syria) expressed warm thanks to the Deputy Director-General for his statement.

Dr. SHOIB (Egypt) also thanked the Deputy Director-General. While agreeing on the importance of the problem, he directed attention to the cost of establishing atomic energy plants and he wondered whether this matter was of interest to many countries. He felt that WHO should not embark on large expenses on that subject. Research could well be undertaken by universities and laboratories which disposed of adequate facilities.

In reply to a question by Dr. Hayek (Lebanon) as to whether a brief summary of the statement on protection against radiation would be circulated, the DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL said that one of the numbers of the Chronicle issued by the Organization would contain an analysis of the documents submitted by WHO to the Atomic Conference.

It was also envisaged to publish a monograph containing a digest of the discussions on health aspects which took place during the Atomic Conference. He assured the representative of Egypt that WHO did not propose to give undue attention to the problem but emphasized that all countries of the world would be exposed to atomic radiation.

Answering the representative of Egypt, he added that WHO would, as usual, collaborate with existing research laboratories and would merely act in stimulating research, in coordinating activities and in the exchange of scientific information

The CHAIRMAN also thanked the Deputy Director-General for his interesting statement.

The meeting was suspended at 12 noon and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN sought the views of the Sub-Committee on the following draft resolution, which he read :

"The Sub-Committee,

1. NOTES with approval the Annual Report of the Regional Director;
2. EXPRESSES its appreciation of the work of the Regional Office;
3. ENDORSES the continued emphasis on control of communicable diseases;
4. EMPHASIZES the importance of improvement of environmental sanitation and continued health education, and
5. REQUESTS the Regional Director to continue and expand assistance to States Members for development of their public health administrative systems and training of staff."

Decision : The Sub-Committee unanimously adopted the above resolution on the Report of the Regional Director.

2. PLAN OF WORK FOR THE SESSION

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR proposed that the meeting on Thursday morning, 29 September, should be reserved for consideration of Item 17 (Regional Programme - documents RC5/EM/3 and Add.1, and RC5/EM/4), the afternoon's meeting being reserved for the Technical Discussion on Nursing.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN said that before opening the discussion on Item 9, he wished to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Nassouh Nabulsi, representative of the League of Arab States.

- ## 3. ACTION TAKEN ON RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE: Item 9 of the Agenda (documents RC5/EM/8, RC5/EM/9, RC5/EM/11 and RC5/EM/13.

Vaccination against Smallpox (RC5/EM/8)

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR read the resolution adopted at the Sub-Committee's last session and indicated that the results of his investigation of the subject were set out in the document under discussion.

He drew attention to the penultimate paragraph on page 4 concerning international quarantine and reported that a circular letter had been sent in June 1955 to all countries in the region, asking them to give him complete data with regard to availability of smallpox vaccine institutes, nature of the vaccine, smallpox legislation, etc. in order that the appropriate assistance could be given in their campaigns against smallpox.

Dr. AMOUZEGAR (Iran) thanked the Regional Director for his valuable paper on smallpox vaccination. He reported that Iran was launching vast programmes for the eradication of that disease although action was difficult owing to existence of nomadic tribes. Nevertheless, the proposed plan would be carried out in three stages by (1) mass vaccination of all communities located on all main roads connecting the main provinces and cities; (2) mass vaccination of all communities on main roads in a given province; (3) vaccination of nomad tribes by mobile units placed on certain highways. He added that one of the most successful campaigns against smallpox had just been completed in Teheran by the vaccination of some 50,000 persons. A new technique was used and not one single case of secondary infection had occurred. This had been possible by careful planning and supervision. It was hoped to extend the programme throughout the whole country.

The CHAIRMAN sought the views of the Sub-Committee on the following draft resolution :

"The Sub-Committee,

Having considered the document submitted by the Regional Director;

1. NOTES that the Eighth World Health Assembly by its resolution on International Quarantine, referred to the Committee on International Quarantine for further consideration of the question of the progressive loss of immunity following vaccination and the time and degree of development of immunity following re-vaccination;
2. REQUESTS the Regional Director to follow up this question and report to a future Regional Committee."

Decision : The Sub-Committee unanimously adopted the above resolution on vaccination against smallpox.

The Promotion and Implementation of Environmental Sanitation Programmes
(document RC5/EM/9)

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR proposed that discussion of the relevant resolution (adopted at the 1954 session) should be deferred pending consideration of Item 14 of the agenda: "Technical Matters".

It was so agreed.

Nomenclature of Health Personnel (document RC5/EM/11)

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR drew attention to the annex to the document under discussion showing the proposed nomenclature for different categories of health personnel. It was not suggested that each country should necessarily use each category indicated. He pointed to the difficulty of finding a technical term in Arabic for certain categories of physicians. The Iranian nomenclature had, therefore, been included.

Dr. HAYEK (Lebanon) requested the representative of the Arab States to take due note of document RC5/EM/11 and to include the subject on the forthcoming session of the Medical-Sanitary Meeting of the Arab League to be held in 1956. He stressed that nomenclature should be harmonized and proposed to submit a paper to a future session of Sub-Committee A.

Dr. SIDKY (Egypt) proposed that consideration of document RC5/EM/11 be postponed to the Sub-Committee's sixth session, to enable his Government to study the proposals.

Dr. AMUZEGAR (Iran) seconded the proposal.

Decision : The Egyptian proposal for postponement of further discussion until the sixth session was adopted.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.