

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ

EXECUTIVE BOARD

EB7/AF/Min/1 Rev. 1  
31 March 1951

Seventh Session

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH  
RESTRICTED

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING

Palais des Nations, Geneva

Monday, 8 January 1951, at 10 a.m.

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First Meeting

Monday, 8 January 1951, at 10 a.m.

Present:

Designating Country:

Acting Chairman: Dr. Brock CHISHOLM, Director-General

Dr. C. van den BERG (Alternate to Professor M. De Laet)	Netherlands
Dr. L. BERNARD (Alternate to Professor J. Parisot)	France
M. J. FOESSEL, Adviser	France
M. B. TOUSSAINT, Adviser	France
Dr. F.J. BRADY (Alternate to Dr. H. Hyde)	United States of America
Mr. A. ROSEMAN, Adviser	United States of America
Dr. Melville MACKENZIE	United Kingdom
Mr. T. LINDSAY, Alternate	United Kingdom
Dr. A.M.W. RAE, Alternate	United Kingdom
Mr. F.A. MELLIS, Adviser	United Kingdom
Dr. A. STAMPAR	Yugoslavia

Secretariat:

Dr. P. DOROLLE, Deputy Director-General

Secretary: Mr. Milton P. SIEGEL,  
Assistant Director-General,  
Department of Administration  
and Finance

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION AND APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHAIRMAN

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL in welcoming the members and their alternates and advisers, expressed regret that, because of illness, the Chairman, Sir Arcot Mudaliar, would not be able to attend the session. As the Vice-Chairman, Dr. de Leon, had not yet arrived, it fell to the Director-General to open the meeting.

It was agreed that a message of sympathy should be sent to the Chairman and to Professor Parisot, who was not able to be present because of a recent accident.

On the proposal of Dr. van den BERG, seconded by Dr. MACKENZIE, it was agreed that the Director-General should be Chairman for the first meeting.

2. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, speaking as Director-General, said the work of the World Health Organization was increasing very greatly both in amount and in complexity.

During the last three or four years there had been an extensive change in the environment in which the World Health Organization worked. Whereas formerly its policies had had to be determined almost entirely from headquarters, the continuance of decentralization and the setting-up of regional organizations was resulting in many programmes being decided in the regions, within the framework of the general programme of work approved by the Health Assembly.

For instance, the programme and budget for 1952 in the volume before the committee (document EB7/18) had been produced almost entirely in the regional offices, some parts having been approved in detail by the regional committees. Thus the first major step had been taken in the decentralization of programme planning.

He hoped that this aspect of denentralization would be completed within the next two or three years, during which period details of the programme might well be made up in the countries concerned, with the assistance of the staff of the regional offices.

One implication of this was that details of programmes could no longer be decided from headquarters by either the Health Assembly or by the Executive Board, although the Assembly might still veto any particular types of projects or lines of programme development.

One of the most significant results of the changed environment in which the Organization was now working, was exemplified by the attempts being made to help each country in the progressive and balanced development of its health services.

A further alteration in this environment had been brought about by the changed roles of other international bodies working in the health field. UNICEF for instance, which had started as a supply organization, had developed into a large-scale health agency and now had received a three-year mandate under a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. UNICEF had expressed its intention of continuing to use the technical services of the World Health Organization. The bilateral and other agencies concerned with technical assistance for economic development, such as those of the USA and the British Commonwealth, now disposed of huge sums which they could deploy in all fields,

and not a small percentage of these funds were for health purposes. These new developments placed a heavy responsibility on the World Health Organization; the demands on the Organization for technical advice and the supply of experts to ensure that programmes were soundly implemented had become very great indeed.

Discussing the growing importance of technical assistance for economic development, both internationally and bilaterally, the Director-General emphasized that through this development the co-ordinating role of the Organization had become much more onerous. The terms of reference of the various organizations varied widely and programmes were determined by different motives and judged by different criteria. He suggested however that the basic concern of the World Health Organization should be with the development of the health services of governments, so that they could ensure a wise and balanced sense of proportion in the developments made possible in their health programmes through the increased funds they could receive. The services of the World Health Organization were particularly important along these lines, as the Organization was almost alone in its concern for this aspect of the work.

He made reference to the emphasis laid by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the need for co-ordination of the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and spoke of the resolution on this matter adopted by the Council<sup>1</sup> and the criteria it had laid down. The agencies of bilateral technical assistance were being extremely co-operative and a close system of liaison was being worked out to ensure that technical assistance for economic development should not become a subject of competition as between agencies. Arrangements had been made for reciprocal exchange of all requests from governments for such assistance with a view to the avoidance of overlapping.

<sup>1</sup> ECOSOC resolution 324 (Xl)B: See document EB7/31.

Despite the increase in the work every attempt had been made to keep down the staff of the Organization, particularly at headquarters; however, there had been an inevitable increase in the staffs of the regional offices. Demands on the regional staffs were far beyond their capacities. In some countries technical assistance committees had already been set up, comprising representatives of government departments, the local representatives of the United Nations and representatives of the specialized agencies, of bilateral technical assistance bodies from the USA and from the British Commonwealth, of the UNICEF, ECA, etc. In a reference to recent developments within the Organization the Director-General spoke of the regular meetings of directors now being held, which enabled the Organization to utilize a considerable weight of training and experience. A second group, consisting of the Director-General, his Deputy and the Assistant Directors-General, considered in terms of top policy the recommendations of the directors and of regional directors and the directions and suggestions of the Health Assembly and the Executive Board. Both bodies took into account developments in relation to other agencies.

In conclusion, he expressed the satisfaction of the Organization in having secured as Deputy Director-General Dr. Pierre Dorolle, without whose assistance the developments in decentralization during the last six months would have been virtually impossible.

On the proposal of Dr. RAE, alternate to Dr. Mackenzie, it was agreed that owing to the importance of the foregoing statement by the Director-General it should be issued in the form of a document<sup>2</sup>.

Dr. MACKENZIE and Dr. van den BERG expressed warm satisfaction at the appointment of Dr. Dorolle.

<sup>2</sup> Document EB7/52

Dr. van den BERG agreed with the Director-General on the importance of the role to be played by WHO in the technical assistance programme, and wondered whether administrative arrangements so far made were adequate to deal with the new problems involved.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL, replying to a question by Dr. Stampar about the new mandate given to UNICEF, said that that body had expressed its intention of continuing to use the services of WHO in connexion with its supply programmes as in the past.

Dr. BRADY said that, in the United States of America, WHO was widely recognized as the body which should play the leading role in the international health field. In point of fact, the prestige of WHO was quite out of proportion to its budget. He hoped that all technical assistance programmes would be maintained side by side and WHO kept fully informed of all projects.

Dr. BERNARD said a problem of major importance at the present time in the efficient working of WHO was that of co-ordination - between headquarters and the regional offices on the one hand, and with the specialized agencies, the Technical Assistance Board and the bilateral agencies on the other. The development of the regional offices - the result of effective decentralization - made such co-ordination increasingly necessary. Nevertheless, if the task of WHO was to maintain the uniformity indispensable to its worldwide character, headquarters must continue to inspire and control the activities of the regional offices.

Dr. MACKENZIE congratulated the Director-General on his lucid description of the work of the Organization. Any liaison work involved should be carried

out at headquarters and adequate machinery established to make possible prompt action in rapidly changing circumstances.

### 3. DISCUSSION ON THE AGENDA

The ACTING CHAIRMAN called on Mr. Siegel, Secretary, to make a general comment on the business before the committee.

Mr. SIEGEL, Secretary, suggested that in order to expedite the handling of the very large volume of work with which it was faced, the committee might wish to consider setting up small working parties to undertake preliminary discussion of certain agenda items which might be grouped. If the committee approved that procedure, items 1, 8 and 9 of the revised agenda (document EB7/AF/3, Rev.1) might at once be referred to a working party on personnel matters and items 3, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 to a working party on financial matters.

It was decided to postpone nomination of working parties until the next meeting.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, speaking as Director-General, said that the Secretariat regretted that there had been delays in producing and making available to the members certain of the documents. He felt that every possible endeavour had been made by the small staff available and mentioned as one example that the Budget Section had done over 660 hours overtime, on some occasions working all through the night and the following day. Although the Budget Section had borne the brunt of the work in recent weeks, that situation had not been confined to one section. The Secretariat had endeavoured

to meet the wishes and instructions of the Board and of the committee, and he felt that the time was coming when the committee would have to consider the volume of work in relation to the staff available and to the enormously increased amount of liaison, co-ordination and outside work that had to be carried out.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

PROVISIONAL MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING

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Note: Corrections to these provisional minutes should be submitted in writing to Mr. Richards, Room A.213, within 48 hours of their distribution or as soon as possible thereafter.

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For instance, the programme and budget in the volume before the Committee (Proposed Programme and Budget Estimates for 1952) had been produced almost entirely in the regional offices, some parts having been approved in detail by the regional committees. Thus the first major step had been taken in the decentralization of programme planning.

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