



REGIONAL COMMITTEE

SEA/RC42/19

Forty-second Session

26 July 1989

Provisional Agenda item 18

SCHEDULING OF WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY AND
MEETINGS OF OTHER GOVERNING BODIES -
IMPLICATIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL

REGIONAL COMMITTEE
SCHEDULED DOCUMENT

1. BACKGROUND

At the eighty-fourth session of the Executive Board, held in May 1989, the Director-General of WHO made a proposal to hold the next World Health Assembly - the Forty-third World Health Assembly - in October 1990 instead of in May 1990. There are advantages in the proposed change. The Proposed Programme Budget would reflect more realistic country programmes that would have been prepared nearer the beginning of the budget implementation instead of 15 months ahead, as is the current practice. It would also be based on more realistic and up-to-date exchange rates and inflation. In addition, the Executive Board itself would have more time to examine the budget document than at present. Some members of the Executive Board felt that the proposed rescheduling of the World Health Assembly to October would have implications on the work not only of the World Health Assembly itself and the Executive Board but also on the convenience of Ministers of Health. Prior consultations with ministries of health and governments would have to take place before a final decision is made. The Executive Board was not averse to the principle of holding future World Health Assemblies in October but decided that the views of the regional committees be obtained on the proposed rescheduling. In the meantime, it was decided to hold the Forty-third World Health Assembly in May 1990.

2. CURRENT CYCLE OF MEETINGS OF GOVERNING BODIES

The main work attended to by the governing bodies during their annual meetings is policy guidance on review of WHO's work in the Member States during a particular period and approval of the programme budget for the succeeding biennium. Therefore, meetings of the governing bodies are arranged in such a way that the regional committees meet to develop and endorse the regional programme budget proposals and review activities in the Region, which are reviewed by the Executive Board in January of the following year and approved by the World Health Assembly in May of that year. The process of development of programme budget proposals for any biennium starts almost 30 months before the commencement of the implementation period. The regional committees also consider important items or issues referred to them by the Executive Board and/or the World Health Assembly.

3. SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR REGIONAL COMMITTEE/CCPDM MEETINGS

Assuming that all governing bodies and most governments agree in principle to hold the World Health Assembly in October annually, and that the Forty-third World Health Assembly in May 1990 approves the holding of the Forty-fourth World Health Assembly in October 1991, the implications on the schedules of the Regional Committee, the Consultative Committee for Programme Development and Management (CCPDM) and the Regional Director's annual meeting with the WHO Representatives need to be examined.

In such an event, it is proposed that the Regional Committee session be held in January or February of the same year preceding the World Health Assembly in October.

A factor that has an important bearing on the scheduling of meetings of the governing bodies of the Organization is the programme budgeting process. Since the programme budgeting process starts with the regions, the sessions of the Regional Committee should precede the World Health Assembly. If the World Health Assembly is scheduled for October, then the sessions of the Regional Committee will have to be held earlier in the year.

If this is acceptable to the Regional Committee, the following schedule of meetings of the Regional Committee and CCPDM may be considered by the Committee, taking 1992-1993 as an example:

January or February 1992	Regional Committee session to review the Regional Director's Annual Report for January to December 1991 preceded by: CCPDM meeting to review programme implementation from January to December 1991.
September 1992	CCPDM meeting to review programme implementation for the period January - June 1992 - Regional Programme Committee meetings with country representatives and WHO Representatives to finalize the programme budget for 1994-1995
January or February 1993	Regional Committee session to review Regional Director's Annual Report for January to December 1992 and endorse programme budget for 1994-1995, preceded by: CCPDM meeting to review programme implementation for January to December 1992.
September 1993	CCPDM meeting to review programme implementation for the period January 1992 - June 1993.

The Executive Board may review and endorse the global programme budget for 1994-1995 in May 1993, and the World Health Assembly may approve the same in October 1993.

4. ACTIVITY CYCLE FOR PROGRAMME BUDGET PREPARATIONS

As an in-house activity, the programme budget cycle will have to be changed as follows, in order to fit it into the time-frame of the Regional Committee/CCPDM at the regional level and of the Executive Board/World Health Assembly globally.

Taking the programme budget cycle for 1994-1995 as an example, the sequence will be as follows:

January 1992	DG issues his guidance on programme budgeting for 1994-1995 (to be confirmed by HQ in due course)
February - April 1992	WHO Representatives consult national authorities and, using the WHO/government coordinating mechanism, prepare outline of the programme budget
May 1992	Annual meeting of WHO Representatives with the Regional Director (review of tentative programme budget - Regional Programme Committee meetings)
June-August 1992	Reformulation of the programme budget at the country level (based on the meeting of WHO Representatives in May)
September 1992	Regional Programme Committee meetings to finalize the programme budget in consultation with the country representatives/WHO Representatives.
October-December 1992	Finalization of the programme budget document for submission to the Regional Committee
January or February 1993	Review and endorsement of the programme budget by the Regional Committee

5. ADVANTAGES OF THE NEW SCHEDULE

There are certain advantages in following the schedule suggested above for holding the Regional Committee and CCPDM meetings. First, this will allow formulation of a more realistic regional programme budget as more time will be available than at present to elaborate the programme budget. Secondly, the Regional Committee can review the work of WHO in the Region for a full calendar year rather than for the July-June period. The CCPDM can continue to carry out six-monthly programme implementation review; its meetings in January or February will review 12- and 24-month implementation, while those in September will review 6- and 18-month implementation. The Regional Committee will endorse the regional programme budget for 1994-1995 at its session in January or February 1993.

The Forty-sixth World Health Assembly will be approving the global programme budget for 1994-1995 closer to the implementation period in October 1993, allowing two months for the implementation period to begin.

6. ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD

The regional programme budget for 1992-1993 will be elaborated as follows :

July 1989	Receipt of guidelines from the Director-General for elaboration of the programme budget
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August 1989	Notification of the tentative country allocations to WHO Representatives
August-October 1989	Formulation of the tentative programme budget at the country level
November 1989	Review of the tentative programme budget during the meeting of WHO Representatives with the Regional Director (Regional Programme Committee)
January-March 1990	Review and reformulation of the programme budget at the country level in the light of Regional Office comments
April 1990	Finalization of the programme budget in consultation with country representatives/WHO Representatives during the meeting of the CCPDM (Regional Programme Committee meetings)
May-June 1990	Finalization of the programme budget document for submission to the Regional Committee
July 1990	Distribution of the programme budget document to Member Countries
September 1990	Review and endorsement of the programme budget by the Regional Committee

In other words, the forty-third session of the Regional Committee will be held at the Regional Office in New Delhi in 1990, in accordance with resolution SEA/RC41/1. If the new schedule suggested above is agreed to by the Regional Committee, a decision will have to be taken regarding the forty-fourth session of the Regional Committee in 1991 or 1992. If it is decided to convene this session in January or February 1992, instead of in September 1991, the forty-fourth session will review the Regional Director's Annual Report for the 18-month period from July 1990 to December 1991 and deal with other agenda items. There may be no session in 1991.