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REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE
ON THE GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK
PART III

WHO's structures in the light of its functions

Resolution WPR/RC31.R4, adopted by the Regional Committee at its thirty-first session, asked the Regional Director to report on progress in the Region in implementing the recommendations of resolution WHA33.17, on WHO's structures in the light of its functions. As one of its terms of reference, the Regional Committee Sub-Committee on the General Programme of Work discussed the progress made with the plan of action at its meeting from 29 June to 3 July 1981. Part III of its report is now presented to the Regional Committee. The attention of the Regional Committee is drawn to the Sub-Committee's comments in relation to operative sub-paragraphs 2(1) and 3(5) (page 6) and to its recommendations in relation to operative sub-paragraph 3(1) (page 8).

Resolution WPR/RC31.R4, adopted by the Regional Committee at its thirty-first session:

"2. RESOLVES to make every endeavour, through its Sub-Committee on the General Programme of Work and its Sub-Committee on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, to intensify its role and continue to take an active part in the work of the Organization;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director to support it to that end, by monitoring the implementation of relevant sections of the plan of action presented to the current session, by drawing up for its consideration further proposed regional plans of action as necessary, and by reporting progress in implementing the plans of action."

One of the tasks of the Sub-Committee on the General Programme of Work, at its meeting from 29 June to 3 July 1981, was to review implementation in the Western Pacific Region of relevant sections of the plan of action for implementation of resolution WHA33.17 presented to the Regional Committee at its thirty-first session in 1980, and to transmit its comments and recommendations to the Regional Committee.

The contents of Annex 1, bringing the plan of action related to the work of WHO in the Western Pacific Region up to date, were endorsed by the Sub-Committee, which expressed reservations with regard to the action proposed to implement operative sub-paragraphs 2(1) and 3(5) and made specific recommendations in respect of operative sub-paragraph 3(1).

ANNEX 1

WHO'S STRUCTURES IN THE LIGHT OF ITS FUNCTIONS

Action related to the work of WHO in the
Western Pacific Region to implement the recommendations
of resolution WHA33.17

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 1: THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Operative sub-paragraphs 1 (1) and 1 (3)

1(1) to concentrate the Organization's activities over the coming decades, as far as is possible in the light of all its constitutional obligations, on support to national, regional and global strategies for attaining health for all by the year 2000;

1(3) to strengthen the roles of the Organization in promoting action for health in addition to indicating how such action might be carried out, and in developing health technologies that are effective, socially acceptable and economically feasible, and ensuring that they are available to Member States;

Action

The Regional Strategy for health for all by the year 2000 was adopted by the Regional Committee at its thirty-first session in September 1980. The Regional Committee will review and update the Regional Strategy in the light of the Global Strategy at its thirty-second session in 1981.

The draft material for the Seventh General Programme of Work, which is based on the Global Strategy for health for all, will also be reviewed by the Regional Committee in 1981.

Operative sub-paragraph 1 (2)

1(2) to focus the Organization's cooperative activities within the United Nations system on joint efforts to support health as part of development, to devise the New International Development Strategy and to establish the New International Economic Order;

Action

A review of the Organization's cooperative activities with other organizations within the United Nations System is under way. The study

will focus on three selected programmes: water and sanitation, nutrition and family planning and will be conducted at country, regional and global levels by a group composed of three members: a former UNDP Resident Representative in the capacity of consultant, a former WHO Programme Coordinator and the former chief of the unit of Coordination at headquarters. Preliminary information from the Western Pacific Region has been obtained through the WHO Programme Coordinators and has been sent to headquarters. After analysis of this information at headquarters, the group will visit selected countries. It expects to finalize its report in November 1981, for presentation to the WHO Global Programme Committee in February 1982.

Operative sub-paragraphs 1 (4) and 4 (3)

1(4) to take all possible measures to maintain the unity of the Organization within its complex structures, to harmonize policy and practice throughout the Organization, and to ensure a proper balance between centralized and decentralized activities;

4(3) to foster the correlation of its work with that of the regional committees and the Health Assembly, among other things by reviewing carefully and drawing conclusions from the policy proposals of the regional committees in matters of worldwide interest, particularly in preparation for the ensuing Health Assembly.

Action

In the Western Pacific Region efforts are continuing to correlate the work of the Regional Committee, the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board. The provisional agenda of the Regional Committee contains items which will be reflected in the draft provisional agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the Executive Board and the Thirty-fifth World Health Assembly and thus the Regional Committee's deliberations will contribute to those of the other two organs.

Operative sub-paragraph 1 (5)

1(5) to ensure that the Organization's directing, coordinating and technical cooperation functions are mutually supportive and that the work of the Organization at all levels is properly interrelated;

Action

During its meeting from 25 to 26 June 1981 the Sub-Committee of the Regional Committee on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries discussed the regional implications of resolution WHA34.24 on the Meaning

of WHO's International Health Work through Coordination and Technical Cooperation. Its recommendations are reported to the Regional Committee in document WPR/RC32/4.

Operative sub-paragraphs 1 (6) and 3 (6)

1(6) to influence the channelling of all available health resources, including those of other relevant sectors and nongovernmental organizations, into support for national, regional and global strategies for health for all;

3(6) (with reference to Regional Committees) to foster the channelling of external funds for health into priority activities in the strategies for health for all of the countries most in need;

Action

A resources mobilization committee, consisting of members of the secretariat programme committee and staff involved in external relations activities and information support, has been established at the Regional Office. This Committee reviews the overall programme in the Region with a view to identifying the needs for extrabudgetary resources and initiating approaches to funding agencies. Coordination and contact with possible donor agencies has been strengthened through various means, including visits by the Regional Director to Member States and to other agencies.

Operative sub-paragraphs 1 (7) and 3 (8)

1(7) to maintain to the full the Health Assembly's constitutional authority as the supreme organ for determining WHO's policies as well as the other powers vested in it and to increase its monitoring and control functions with respect to the work of the Organization, including the follow-up and review of the implementation of resolutions adopted by it;

3(8) (with reference to Regional Committees) to increase their monitoring, control and evaluation functions so as to ensure the proper reflection of national, regional and global health policies in regional programmes and the proper implementation of these programmes, and to include in their programmes of work the review of WHO's action in individual Member States within the regions;

Action

Review of WHO's collaboration with Member States in the Region is being undertaken by the Sub-Committee of the Regional Committee on the

General Programme of Work. This will continue as part of the regular functions of the Sub-Committee. In late March/early April 1981, members of the Sub-Committee visited selected Member States of the Region to review indicators developed at national level for the implementation of strategies for achieving "health for all". This is part of the monitoring, control and evaluation function of the Regional Committee.

Operative sub-paragraph 1 (8)

1(8) to improve further the Health Assembly's work methods and in particular to consider carefully the practicability of resolutions and other policies before adopting them, and to promote greater initiative by the regional committees in proposing resolutions to the Health Assembly;

Action

The Regional Committee has already started to take initiative in proposing resolutions to the World Health Assembly. At its thirtieth session in 1979, it adopted resolution WPR/RC30.R10 on the cost of travel of representatives to the Regional Committee. As a result of this initiative, the Thirty-fourth World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA34.4, decided that "the actual cost of travel, excluding per diem, of one representative to sessions of regional committees may be financed by the Organization upon request of those Members and Associate Members whose contributions to the WHO regular budget are at the minimum rate in the scale of assessments".

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 2: MEMBER STATES

Operative sub-paragraphs 2 (1) and 3 (5)

2(1) to review the role of their ministries of health, strengthening them as necessary so that they can fully assume the function of directing and coordinating authority on national health work, and to establish or strengthen multisectoral national health councils;

3(5) (with reference to Regional Committees) to provide support for the establishment or strengthening of multisectoral national health councils to Member States who so desire;

Action

It had been proposed, under the global plan of action for implementing these operative sub-paragraphs, that the role of ministries of health as

directing and coordinating authorities on national health work and of related multisectoral national health councils would be considered for inclusion in the agenda of the regional committees.

Comments of the Sub-Committee

After reconsideration of its recommendation to the thirty-first session of the Regional Committee that the subject should be included in the agenda of the Regional Committee, the Sub-Committee felt that this subject might more appropriately first be considered, not by the Regional Committee, but by another forum such as the sub-committee itself.

Operative sub-paragraph 2 (4)

2(4) to ensure that WHO's action in their countries reflects adequately resolution WHA31.27 concerning the conclusions and recommendations of the Executive Board's organizational study on "WHO's role at the country level, particularly the role of WHO representatives", and in particular the shift from technical assistance to technical cooperation;

Action

In addition to the Sub-Committee on the General Programme of Work's review of WHO's collaboration at country level, dialogue between Member States and WHO has been strengthened through visits by the Regional Director and Regional Office staff and through the creation of posts of Country Liaison Officer in Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, in addition to that of the Country Liaison Officer, Samoa.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 3: REGIONAL COMMITTEES

Operative sub-paragraph 3 (1)

3(1) to take a more active part in the work of the Organization and to submit to the Executive Board their recommendations and concrete proposals on matters of regional and global interest;

Action

Action towards more active participation by the Regional Committee in the work of the Organization in the Western Pacific Region has started and will continue through its two Sub-Committees. At its thirty-first session, the Regional Committee discussed the need to increase the number of Member States from the Western Pacific Region entitled to designate a member of the Executive Board.

Recommendations of the Sub-Committee

- (1) While realizing that the present criteria for electing a Member entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board related to an equitable geographical distribution, the Sub-Committee now wished to make a specific recommendation that, because of the emphasis placed by the principle of "health for all" on the health of the people and the fact that the Western Pacific Region had the highest population of any WHO Region, consideration should be given by the Regional Committee to adopting a resolution regarding an increased number of Members from the Western Pacific Region entitled to designate a member of the Board.
- (2) The Sub-Committee also recommended that, in view of its future heavy responsibilities, as illustrated in the regional plan of action for implementing the strategy for health for all,¹ its membership should be increased from seven to eight. Membership should be as geographically representative as possible, though it was realized that, because of the number of Member States of the Region, some might have to be represented on both the Sub-Committee on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and the Sub-Committee on the General Programme of Work at the same time.

Operative sub-paragraph 3 (2)

3(2) to intensify their efforts to develop regional health policies and programmes in support of national, regional and global strategies for health for all, and to consider establishing or strengthening appropriate subcommittees to this end;

Action

The Regional Committee has adopted the Regional Strategy for health for all and has consistently involved itself in developing and modifying policies and programmes in the Region, through its two Sub-Committees.

¹See document WPR/RC32/6 Add.2.

Operative sub-paragraph 3 (3)

3(3) to promote greater interaction in the regions between the activities of WHO and those of all other bodies concerned, including bodies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, in order to stimulate common efforts for attaining health for all by the year 2000;

Action

Coordination of programmes with other organizations in the United Nations system has improved. Informal discussions have taken place with UNICEF on the implementation of strategies for "health for all". Joint activities with other intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies in the Region have intensified. The Regional Office Resources Mobilization Committee has started to prepare an inventory of programmes for possible funding from extrabudgetary sources, with a view to identifying further collaborative activities with external agencies to implement strategies for "health for all".

Operative sub-paragraph 3 (4)

3(4) to support technical cooperation among all Member States, particularly for attaining health for all;

Action

The Sub-Committee on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries is expected to continue to play its part in facilitating the development of technical cooperation among Member States. In this Region, an example of TCDC/ECDC is the proposed South Pacific Pharmaceutical Service.

Operative sub-paragraph 3 (7)

3(7) to extend and deepen their analysis of the interregional, regional and national implications of Health Assembly and Board resolutions, and to provide such analyses to Member States;

Action

An analysis of the regional implications of World Health Assembly and Executive Board resolutions will be presented to the Regional Committee.¹

¹See document WPR/RC32/11.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 4: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Operative sub-paragraph 4 (4)

4(4) to monitor on behalf of the Health Assembly the way the regional committees reflect the Assembly's policies in their work, and the manner in which the Secretariat provides support to Member States individually, as well as collectively in the regional committees, Executive Board and Health Assembly;

Action

The report of the Regional Director to the sixty-ninth session of the Executive Board in January 1982 on matters arising at the thirty-second session of the Regional Committee requiring the particular attention of the Board will show how the Regional Committee reflects the Health Assembly's policies in its work.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 5: THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

5. REQUESTS the Director-General and Regional Directors to act on behalf of the collectivity of Member States in responding favourably to government requests only if these are in conformity with the Organization's policies;

Action

In developing the details of the 1982-83 programme budget, every effort has been made to encourage Member States to base their requests for cooperation from WHO on activities in support of national strategies and the Regional Strategy for the achievement of health/2000.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 6: THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Operative sub-paragraph 6 (3)

6(3) to expand the engagement of national staff of the country concerned in the execution of collaborative projects, to review the engagement of international WHO field staff, and to take any measures required so that such WHO staff become fully involved with the collaborative national programmes;

Action

There has been a trend among countries to ask WHO to implement its programme of cooperation through consultants, particularly experts from

within the Region, rather than through permanently assigned staff, which means that national staff are becoming less dependent on WHO for the operational aspects of their programmes and more and more involved in the execution of collaborative projects.

Operative sub-paragraph 6 (4)

6(4) to redefine the functions of the regional offices and of headquarters in such a way as to ensure that they provide adequate and consistent support to Member States in their cooperation with WHO and among themselves, and to adapt accordingly the organizational structures and staffing of the regional offices and of headquarters, reporting to the regional committees, the Executive Board and the Health Assembly as appropriate on his projects and plans in conformity with the constitutional functions of these bodies;

Action

(a) Staffing of the Regional Offices and of Headquarters

In the light of WHO's mission to achieve health/2000, which calls for more active support to Member States from Regional Office resources, there has been a reorientation of a number of technical posts at the Regional Office and a realignment of the responsibilities of programme directors, in accordance with the framework proposed for the Seventh General Programme of Work. With more emphasis being given to human resources development and to research promotion and development, two posts of Chief were created: one to be in charge of human resources development and the other of research promotion and development, with increased responsibilities. Three Country Liaison Officer posts were established, in Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, in addition to that already established in Samoa. The functions of a number of posts of regional adviser were reoriented to those of intercountry staff to lighten their burden of administrative work and enable the staff involved to spend more time at country level.

(b) Reports to Regional Committees, the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly

The requirement for reporting to the Regional Committee mentioned in operative paragraph 6(4) is fulfilled by the present report of the Sub-Committee on the General Programme of Work to the Regional Committee on WHO's Structures in the Light of its Functions.