



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-SIXTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Provisional agenda item 2

A56/2
27 February 2003

Reports of the Executive Board on its 110th and 111th sessions

1. The Executive Board held its 110th session on 20 and 21 May 2002, and its 111th session from 20 to 28 January 2003. A report of the main outcomes follows.

110th SESSION (20 and 21 May 2002)

2. In the debate on the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** members of the Board urged WHO to strengthen its role in the Fund, in particular in providing countries with technical support for submission of proposals and in evaluating the impact of the Fund's activities. Equitable geographical representation on the Board of the Fund should be maintained but liaison between that Board and Member States should be improved.

3. Members of the Board endorsed the principle of WHO representation on the Board of the **WHO Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring**.

4. Although the process of revising the procedures for selecting **International Nonproprietary Names** for specific pharmaceutical substances was welcomed, some issues needed clarification and members agreed to defer consideration of the matter.

5. The findings of the Scientific Peer Review Group set up by the Director-General to examine the methods used in **assessing health systems' performance** were presented to the Board. Members agreed that more time was needed to study the full report and, deferring further consideration to the next session, requested a further report on the issues raised by the review (see paragraph 15 below).

6. Members noted the progress of the **Ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental working group to review the working methods of the Executive Board** and agreed a proposed plan of work leading up to the Board's 111th session (see paragraph 28 below).

7. In reviewing **WHO programmes for the biennium 2000-2001** members noted and appreciated the progress towards results-based budgeting. The analysis of constraining factors and lessons learned was also much valued. To provide further opportunity for review, members agreed to include the item on the agenda of the 111th session (see paragraph 24 below).

111th SESSION (20-28 January 2003)

8. The session was attended by all 32 members and representatives of 62 other Member States. The **Director-General**, in her **report**, reviewed the evolution of WHO during her tenure. She covered organizational issues including reform and building partnerships, and a range of technical and health matters such as WHO's contribution to attaining the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, eradication of poliomyelitis, women's health and gender inequity, the WHO framework convention on tobacco control, risks to health, violence as a public health problem, mental health, ageing, improving health systems, and the proposed programme budget.

9. The Executive Board nominated Dr Jong-Wook Lee for the post of **Director-General of WHO** and submitted this nomination (resolution EB111.R15), with a draft contract (resolution EB111.R16), to the Health Assembly. Members also recommended to the Health Assembly that Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland should be declared Director-General Emeritus of WHO as from the date of her retirement (resolution EB111.R17).

10. The Executive Board appointed Dr Mirta Roses Periago as **Regional Director for the Americas** as from 1 February 2003, and expressed its appreciation to the retiring Regional Director, Dr George Alleyne (resolutions EB111.R1 and EB111.R2, respectively).

11. Consideration of the **Proposed programme budget for 2004-2005** was spread over three meetings, following joint review by the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee and the Programme Development Committee. Board members discussed the strategic orientations by area of work. They recommended a resolution to the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly on the Real Estate Fund (resolution EB111.R3) and requested the Director-General to take account of their comments and views on the proposed programme budget overall and refinement of indicators in any revision of the budget that she presented to the Health Assembly. They also requested that the budget submitted to the Health Assembly should be accompanied with further comparative and explanatory data.

Technical and health matters

12. Members commended **WHO's contribution to the achievement of the health-related development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration**, in particular the country-level focus and the consultative process, although in noting the report they recognized that some indicators could be refined or improved.

13. The Board welcomed the draft **global health-sector strategy on HIV/AIDS**, a finalized version of which would be submitted to the Health Assembly, as part of WHO's contribution to the follow-up of the United Nations General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS. Members adopted resolution EB111.R4 which recommended to the Health Assembly a resolution in which it took note of the strategy. As in the previous session, members urged further cooperation between WHO and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

14. The Board noted the report on **smallpox eradication and the destruction of stocks of *Variola virus***, with its recommendation from the WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research that research into the virus should continue.

15. The Board examined the **assessment of health systems' performance** in the light of the requested report on the issues raised by the final report of the Scientific Peer Review Group (see paragraph 5 above), and endorsed the objective of the initiative. Board members took note of the

report by the Secretariat and requested the Director-General to continue the work on the subject, with the Board's comments and concerns about rankings and indicators being taken into account.

16. In response to resolution WHA55.19, a **strategy for child and adolescent health and development** has been drawn up; the strategic directions were summarized in a report submitted to the Board. Members strongly supported the strategy and, after a constructive debate, adopted an amended resolution (EB111.R11) recommending to the Health Assembly the adoption of a resolution on, *inter alia*, WHO's contribution to the implementation of the strategy. At the same time, concern about the need to reduce mortality due to **measles** had led eight Member States to submit a draft resolution. The Board adopted resolution EB111.R5 which contained a recommended resolution to the Health Assembly, urging *inter alia* full implementation of the WHO-UNICEF strategic plan to reduce measles mortality and the strengthening of partnerships to fund that work.

17. After discussion, a draft resolution on **traditional medicine** was adopted. Resolution EB111.R12 recommended to the Health Assembly a resolution that took note of WHO's strategy for traditional medicine and, *inter alia*, urged Member States to apply that strategy as the basis for national programmes or work plans, with WHO facilitating efforts to draft national policies.

18. Members recognized the threat of an impending pandemic of **influenza** and the need for national and international preparedness. They noted with satisfaction WHO's work in that regard and its intention to draw up a model plan. The Board adopted a draft resolution (EB111.R6) that contained the text of a resolution, recommended to the Health Assembly for adoption, on the prevention and control of pandemics and annual epidemics of influenza which included the call for support for research into new antiviral agents.

19. Members welcomed the *World report on violence and health*, published last year, and encouraged Member States to consider adopting the nine recommendations for **prevention of violence** set out in that report. In resolution EB111.R7 they recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly to this effect.

20. The Board welcomed and supported the **country focus initiative**, taking note of its six components and process for implementation.

21. Current events and threats were seen to add cogency to the **revision of the International Health Regulations**, which, members agreed, needed to be completed in an open, transparent, efficient and timely manner. The Board adopted a resolution (EB111.R13) recommending to the Health Assembly a resolution expressing satisfaction with the proposed plan for completing the revision process and establishing an intergovernmental working group, open to all Member States and to regional economic integration organizations, in order to review and recommend a revision of the Regulations. That group would be convened at the appropriate time and on the agreement of the Board at its 113th session in January 2004.

22. The progress report on the **WHO medicines strategy** prompted discussion of issues such as intellectual property rights and access to medicines. The Board noted the progress report, and also requested the Director-General to write to the Director-General of WTO on the lack of progress in implementing part of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement¹ and Public Health.

¹ Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

23. The Board noted the summary report of the joint FAO/WHO **evaluation of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission** and agreed that any recommendation to the Health Assembly should await the outcome of imminent meetings of the Commission.

Programme matters

24. In their continued review of **WHO programmes 2000-2001**, members commented that more quantitative data and concrete examples would better support the lessons learned and that the format could be improved by being based on budgetary indicators and results.

25. Members welcomed the information on the **Meeting of Interested Parties, 2002** and the outlined improvements proposed for the 2003 meeting.

Other management matters

26. Noting the report on the **streamlining of procedures for proposed resolutions**, the Board agreed that the Programme Development Committee would keep the matter before it. The Board also noted the report of that Committee with its options for improving the **reporting on the implementation of resolutions** to both the Board and the Health Assembly. The work of the committees of the Board was commended and their various other reports were noted.

27. The new format for presenting information about implementing the recommendations of the **Joint Inspection Unit** was singled out as a model of best practice for other organizations, and the Board expressed satisfaction with the progress in implementing the recommendations that had been made on the management and administration of WHO. The report on other recent reports of the Unit was noted.

28. Taking up from the 110th session consideration of the progress of the **Ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental working group to review the working methods of the Executive Board**, members of the Board agreed that the group needed more time to complete its work and agreed to the convening of a sixth meeting of the group in March 2003 (decision EB111(5)).

29. After an extensive debate on the proposed new policy for **relations between WHO and nongovernmental organizations**, the Board agreed that the policy should be revised to take account of members' comments before its submission to the forthcoming Health Assembly. In addition, it adopted resolution EB111.R14 which recommended to the Health Assembly a resolution that would endorse the revised policy and decide on specified transitional measures. Resolution EB111.R18 and decision EB111(6) endorse changes in official relations with nongovernmental organizations and record the views of the Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations.

30. Decisions EB111(7)-(12) record the laureates selected to receive **awards**. Members approved in principle the establishment of an award by the State of Kuwait for research in the area of health promotion, with a request for statutes to be drafted and submitted to the Board.

Staffing matters

31. The Board noted the annual report on **human resources**, the report of the **International Civil Service Commission**, and the **statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations**.

32. In adopting resolutions EB111.R8-R10, the Board confirmed **amendments to the Staff Rules** affecting matters such as standards of conduct, employment of relatives, paternity leave and salaries.

33. The report on **representation of developing countries in the Secretariat**, submitted to the Board in response to resolution WHA55.24, generated an extensive discussion. Members noted the report and requested that their comments be taken into account in the preparation of relevant documentation when the item is submitted to the Health Assembly.

Financial matters

34. In noting the report on the **status of collection** of Member States, the Board noted that the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee would receive an update in May 2003 in time to make recommendations to the Health Assembly. Members discussed **assessed contributions** for both financial periods 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 and reached agreement on two decisions. The first, decision EB111(3), specifically concerned assessments for 2002-2003 for Afghanistan, Argentina and Timor-Leste. In the second decision, EB111(4), the Board decided to send the item on assessments for 2004-2005 to the next Health Assembly for review and decision.

Other

35. In decision EB111(1), members adopted an amended **provisional agenda for the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly**. In decision EB111(2), members agreed that the **112th session** of the Board would be held on 29 and 30 May 2003 at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

36. Full texts of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Board at both sessions are contained in documents EB110/2002/REC/1 and EB111/2003/REC/1.

= = =