

Report of the Executive Board on its 118th, 119th and 120th sessions

1. The Executive Board held its 118th session from 29 to 31 May 2006, its 119th session from 6 to 8 November 2006 and its 120th session from 22 to 29 January 2007. A report of the main outcomes follows.

118TH SESSION (29–31 MAY 2006)

2. Following the tragic death of Dr Lee and the convening of the special session of the Executive Board during the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, the Board considered ways of **accelerating the procedure for electing the next Director-General** of the Organization and adopted resolution EB118.R2 which decided certain procedural steps including the convening of the First special session of the Health Assembly. It also requested a review of matters concerning the post of Deputy Director-General and the possibility of ensuring the rotation of the post of Director-General among regions.

3. Members of the Board welcomed the report on **control of leishmaniasis** and adopted resolution EB118.R3, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly for adoption.

4. The discussion on **thalassaemia and other haemoglobinopathies** enabled an exchange of experience and reflected the technical nature of the Organization's work. The Board adopted resolution EB118.R1, which also recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly for adoption.

5. Members underlined the importance of **health information systems in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals** and adopted resolution EB118.R4, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly for adoption.

6. After considerable discussion, the Board adopted resolution EB118.R5, confirming **amendments to the Staff Rules**, subject to endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly of the general framework recommended by the International Civil Service Commission (see paragraph 29 below).

7. After extensive discussion, the Board agreed to defer further consideration of **progress in implementing the WHO medicines strategy with regard to the rational use of medicines** until its session in January 2007 (see paragraph 20 below). Members agreed on similar action for the complex matter of **essential health technologies** with the draft resolution that had been submitted, and requested a revised and expanded report for further consideration (see paragraph 21 below).

8. The Board endorsed the contents of the report on **strategic resource allocation**, and noted other reports on **arsenic mitigation for safe groundwater, standardized terminology in eHealth,**

progress in implementing resolution WHA58.23 on disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation, and expert committees and study groups.

119TH SESSION (6–8 NOVEMBER 2006)

9. The Board had been convened solely in order to consider the **nomination of a person to the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization**. Meeting in open session under Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, members first decided on a short-list of five candidates and then, after a process of interview and a vote by secret ballot, the Board announced the nomination of Dr Margaret Chan. The Board adopted resolution EB119.R1, submitting the nomination to the First special session of the World Health Assembly, and resolution EB119.R2, recommending the terms and conditions of the appointment in a resolution recommended to the Health Assembly.

10. It also adopted resolution EB119.R3, recommending a resolution to the Health Assembly that commemorated the late **Dr Lee's contribution to the work of WHO**, and resolution EB119.R4 expressing **appreciation to the Acting Director-General**.

120TH SESSION (22–29 JANUARY 2007)

11. Following an overview of the work during the preceding eight months by the former Acting Director-General, **the Director-General** outlined her priorities for the future. She identified health development and health security as fundamental health needs, strengthening of health systems and use of better evidence in order to shape strategies and measure results as strategic needs, and reliance on implementing partners and improved organizational performance as operational necessities. The relevance and effectiveness of WHO's work would be measured by its impact on people, in particular women and the people of Africa. The Board broadly supported the Director-General's six priorities, highlighting the integrated primary health care approach and the focus on reform.

Technical and health matters

12. Members evinced sustained commitment to the **eradication of poliomyelitis**, and the Secretariat's determination was exemplified in the interregional cooperation demonstrated by the Regional Directors. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R1 which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly inter alia urging intensified activities on eradication and the import and international spread of wild polioviruses.

13. After discussion of **malaria, including a proposal for the establishment of World Malaria Day** over several meetings, the Board adopted resolution EB120.R16 which contained a resolution with alternative texts for an operative paragraph, on which agreement could not be reached; that resolution is being submitted to the Health Assembly for consideration.

14. Great concern was expressed about the overlap of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS and the spread of drug-resistant strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R3 on **progress and long-term planning for tuberculosis control** which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly, inter alia urging Member States to declare, where appropriate, tuberculosis as an emergency and requesting the Director-General urgently to strengthen support to countries affected by extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis.

15. Many members reported progress in preparing for a pandemic of H5N1 influenza and implementing the International Health Regulations (2005). Concerns were raised about medicines, vaccines, inappropriate use of virus materials and even preparedness fatigue being shown by some governments. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R7 on **avian and pandemic influenza** which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly and which included an emphasis on best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data.

16. After an extensive debate, the Board adopted resolution EB120.R17 on **implementing the global strategy for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases**. The resolution it recommended to the Health Assembly included a request to the Director-General to prepare an action plan with priorities, actions, a time frame and performance indicators.

17. Several Member States proposed a draft resolution on the subject of **oral health**. After discussions, the Board adopted a revised version (resolution EB120.R5) which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly inter alia urging Member States to incorporate oral health into policies for integrated prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and requesting the Director-General to raise awareness of the challenges to improving oral health globally and strengthen WHO's technical leadership in the area.

18. After discussing **health systems**, including the need for revitalizing primary health care, the Board adopted resolution EB120.R4 on **emergency-care systems** within health systems. The resolution it recommended to the Health Assembly called for additional efforts to strengthen trauma and emergency care with specific and practical measures urged on Member States and requested of the Director-General.

19. In resolution EB120.R6 the Board recommended that the Health Assembly should note with appreciation the **draft strategy for integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO**. The Director-General indicated that priorities for action on issues of gender, women and health would be presented to the Health Assembly.

20. Under the agenda item on **progress in the rational use of medicines, including better medicines for children**, members considered two draft resolutions separately. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R12 on rational use of medicines, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly and which subsumed aspects such as essential medicines and antimicrobial resistance. In addition, it adopted resolution EB120.R13 on better medicines for children, which also recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly, inter alia requesting the Director-General to promote the development of standards for clinical trials for paediatric medicines and the quality and safety of formulations of medicines for children.

21. The Board considered a series of **draft resolutions deferred from the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly and its own 118th session**. After protracted discussion, it adopted resolution EB120.R21, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly inter alia requesting the Director-General to provide guidance, tools and other technical support for developing, conducting needs assessments for, and implementing policies regarding **health technologies**. With regard to **smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks**, the Board adopted resolution EB120.R8 which submitted a resolution to the Health Assembly for its consideration containing text on timing and dates on which members were unable to agree. It also adopted resolution EB120.R14 on **health promotion in a globalized world** which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly inter alia urging Member States to invest more in that area, including the framing of sound policies; the text also emphasized a multisectoral approach. Resolution EB120.R15 on **WHO's roles and responsibilities in health research**, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly, defined a

comprehensive list of priority actions for Member States, the Director-General, the health-research community and all stakeholders.

22. The Board considered a progress report on the **Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property**. Broad consultations and an Internet-based public hearing would be conducted before the second session of the Working Group in November 2007.

23. The Board noted the report on **standardized terminology in eHealth** and WHO's participation in the harmonization board of the new International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization. It noted also the report on **coca leaf** in the context of **the contribution of traditional medicine to public health**, deferring further discussion until the results of planned research on this issue were available, and the report on the **Commission on Social Determinants of Health**. The Board took note of a proposed draft resolution on a **plan of action for workers' health** on the understanding that the Secretariat would further consult with Member States before submitting a revised document and draft resolution to the present Health Assembly.

Matters for information

24. The Board took note of the report on **expert committees and study groups**. It also noted **the reports requested by earlier resolutions**, covering progress made in the following areas: **strengthening active and healthy ageing, public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, emergency preparedness and response, implementation by WHO of the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among the Multilateral Institutions and International Donors, World report on violence and health: implementation of recommendations, the Health Metrics Network, cancer prevention and control: cervical cancer, and reducing measles mortality.**

Programme and budget matters

25. Members of the Board broadly supported the approach laid out in the **draft medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013**. Their comments and points raised on specific strategic objectives would be taken into consideration in the revision of the document to be submitted to the Health Assembly. The Board also considered the **Proposed programme budget 2008–2009**, on which the Director-General would hold further consultations with Member States before submitting the document to the Health Assembly and which would include proposals for implementing the **capital master plan**.

Financial matters

26. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R18 on the **scale of assessments 2008–2009**, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly, observing that it was derived from the latest scale adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006. It also noted the report on **status of collection of assessed contributions**.

27. In resolution EB120.R9, the Board confirmed **amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules** and recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly that endorsed the introduction of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Staffing and management matters

28. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R2, reappointing Dr Hussein A. Gezairy as **Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region**.

29. In resolution EB120.R10, the Board confirmed **amendments to the Staff Rules** concerning staff remuneration, the education grant, various forms of leave and other matters. It also adopted resolution EB120.R11, recommending to the Health Assembly a draft resolution concerning the salaries of the Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Regional Directors and Assistant Directors-General. By decision EB120(1) it confirmed the amendments to the Staff Rules approved by the Board at its 118th session in light of the confirmation by the United Nations General Assembly of the International Civil Service Commission's general framework (see paragraph 6 above). It also took note of the **annual report on human resources** and the **report of the International Civil Service Commission**.

30. The Board adopted resolution EB120.R19 on the **Director-General and Deputy Director-General: review of matters arising from the special and 118th sessions of the Executive Board**, agreeing with certain clarifications regarding the procedure by which the Board assesses candidatures for the post of Director-General and the posting of information about candidates on the WHO web site. The Board requested the submission of reports at its next session on the geographical rotation of the post of Director-General and the requirement to appoint a Deputy Director-General.

31. Members affirmed the need for **reform of the United Nations system** and noted the relevant report. Progress made in pilot projects and lessons learnt would be reported regularly to the Board.

32. Having considered the report of its Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations, the Board adopted resolution EB120.R20, concerning the status of **official relations with WHO** of 10 **nongovernmental organizations**, and, after review of a third of all such bodies in official relations, it agreed a series of actions set out in decision EB120(2). It also decided, in decision EB120(3), measures to be taken for facilitating the participation of nongovernmental organizations in the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property.

33. In decision EB120(10), members adopted an amended **provisional agenda for the Sixtieth World Health Assembly**, and, by decision EB120(11), agreed that the **121st session of the Executive Board** would be held from 24 to 26 May 2007 at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

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