



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD
105th Session
Provisional agenda item 7.6

EB105/39
1 December 1999

Executive Board matters

Report by the Chairman

1. This report provides a summary of matters discussed at the retreat for members of the Executive Board in Lyons (France) from 20 to 22 October 1999 and, in connection with those discussions, proposes changes to the terms of reference of the Programme Development Committee (PDC) and the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee (ABFC) of the Executive Board.

SUMMARY OF MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE RETREAT FOR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

2. The retreat was made possible by the generous support of the Government of France, the city of Lyons, and the Agency for Economic Development of the Lyons Region. The Director-General's renewal fund covered the travel costs of members of the Board.

3. Presentations were made on the following matters, which also feature on the provisional agenda for the Board:

- towards a strategic agenda for the WHO Secretariat
- programme budget priorities for 2002-2003
- working in and with countries.

4. During the discussions, Board members underlined the need for the strategic agenda (also referred to as the corporate strategy) and the programme budget to be linked. Questions were raised on whether the corporate strategy would enable policy-makers to "sell" WHO better at home. The need to involve countries and regions was stressed.

5. Board members were provided with updates on four technical and health matters that had been dealt with by the Executive Board and the Health Assembly in 1999:

- eradication of poliomyelitis
- framework convention on tobacco control

- revised drug strategy
- smallpox eradication (destruction of variola virus stocks).

6. Poliomyelitis, the framework convention on tobacco control, and the revised drug strategy are included on the provisional agenda for the 105th session of the Executive Board. The information conveyed at the retreat is contained in the respective Executive Board documents. With respect to smallpox, the members of the Board were informed that the WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research, established in response to resolution WHA52.10, would meet for the first time from 6 to 9 December 1999.

7. A visit to IARC and presentations on several technical activities of the Agency were much appreciated, especially by the members of the Board who had not previously been to the Agency.

8. A discussion took place on methods of work of the Board, focusing on the election of the Chairman (see document EB105/31) and the committees of the Board (see document EB105/32 and the section below). The Board members concluded that the retreats serve a useful function and should be continued, if resources were available.

CHANGES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE PROPOSED BY THE CHAIRMAN

9. PDC and ABFC were established in 1994 by resolution EB93.R13 that defined the functions of the committees. The frequency of meetings for ABFC is also defined in the resolution. Decision EB94(3) further elaborated the methods and plans of work of the two committees. In view of recent changes in WHO and the establishment of a new Audit Committee, the terms of reference for PDC and ABFC merit review.

10. During discussions at the retreat, concern was expressed that members of committees of the Board should be particularly qualified to perform the functions assigned to a specific committee. (In fact, the resolution establishing ABFC states that the members, with their alternates or advisers, should whenever possible have experience of administration, finance or of WHO's procedures in such matters.) A view was expressed that PDC and ABFC could be combined and the question was raised of whether a meeting of PDC was necessary in nonbudget years.

11. Taking these considerations into account, the Chairman requested the Secretariat to prepare options for revised terms of reference for PDC and ABFC. The terms of reference concern functions, periodicity of meetings and membership and are contained in an addendum to this document.

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