

Human resources: update

Note on the status of PAHO

Legal background

1. In 1946, when the Constitution of the World Health Organization was adopted, several international and regional public health bodies existed such as the Pan American Sanitary Organization¹ and the Pan-Arab Regional Health Bureau (based in Alexandria, Egypt). Article 54 of the WHO Constitution states that the Pan American Sanitary Organization and all other pre-existing inter-governmental regional health organizations “shall in due course be integrated with the Organization” based on mutual consent of the competent authorities expressed through the organizations concerned.

2. The Pan-Arab Regional Health Bureau merged into WHO and became its regional organization for the Eastern Mediterranean. WHO and the Pan American Sanitary Organization concluded an Agreement on 22 April 1949, Article 2 of which reads: “The Pan American Sanitary Conference, through the Directing Council of the Pan American Sanitary Organization and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, shall serve respectively as the Regional Committee and the Regional Office of the World Health Organization for the Western Hemisphere, within the provisions of the Constitution of the World Health Organization. In deference to tradition, both organizations shall retain their respective names, to which shall be added “Regional Committee of the World Health Organization” and “Regional Office of the World Health Organization” respectively.”²

3. PAHO thus remained a separate international organization with its own Constitution, governance, quota system, budget, rules, staff, external auditor and legal counsel. However, it has been serving simultaneously since 1949, on the basis of the aforementioned agreement, as the regional organization of WHO for the Americas, with its Directing Council serving as the Regional Committee and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PAHO’s secretariat) as the Regional Office. PAHO’s Director is elected by the Pan American Sanitary Conference and his/her name is submitted to the Executive Board for appointment as WHO’s Regional Director for the Americas.

Budget

4. Article 6 of the Agreement between the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization provides that “an adequate proportion of the budget of the World Health

¹ Renamed “Pan American Health Organization” by decision of the XV Pan American Sanitary Conference, September-October 1958.

² See Basic Documents, 48th ed. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2014.

Organization shall be allocated for regional work”. On that basis, WHO has allocated to PAHO each biennium a portion of WHO’s budget corresponding to approximately 5% of WHO’s total programme budget and representing approximately 30% of PAHO’s Program and Budget (the “base program” segment). PAHO reports monthly to WHO on implementation of the WHO funds allocated to it, by expenditure category and against the WHO results framework, which is the same as PAHO’s results framework. The budget allocation for the Regional Office for the Americas for the biennium 2014–2015 is US\$ 176 million, of which US\$ 82 million is from assessed contributions. Excluding the Outbreak and crisis response and Polio eradication components, this represents 5.4% of the Programme budget 2014–2015 and 29.3% of PAHO’s Program and Budget 2014–2015. PAHO’s expenditures are certified by its External Auditor as part of its financial audit.

Human resources and implications for global mobility

5. WHO’s human resources policies, which are developed in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, apply to WHO staff members but not to PAHO staff members. However, PAHO’s human resources policies and its Staff Regulations and Staff Rules are regularly updated to align with WHO.

6. The only WHO staff member in PAHO is the Director of PAHO, who at the same time is the Regional Director for the Americas.

7. PAHO staff are governed by the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, and receive PAHO letters of appointment. They are placed under the authority of the Director of PAHO (Staff Regulation 1.2 of the Staff Regulations of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau reads: “All staff members are subject to the authority of the Director and to assignment by him to any of the activities or offices of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. They are responsible to him in the exercise of their functions. In principle, the whole time of the staff, shall be at the disposal of the Director.”).

8. The proposed global mobility policy would therefore not automatically apply to PAHO staff members. Accordingly, WHO and PAHO are considering mechanisms for PAHO’s cooperation with WHO in implementing the global mobility policy, taking into account PAHO’s legal status.

9. In the past two years, 16 staff members have moved between WHO and PAHO, five of whom were for Head of Country Office positions. Currently, 52 candidates from PAHO are on the roster for heads of WHO country offices.

10. When PAHO or WHO offers an appointment to a staff member of the other organization, the move is treated as an inter-agency transfer in accordance with the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances.

11. PAHO management and staff representatives are consulted on WHO’s human resources policies and are members of the Global Staff/Management Council, which is the Organization-wide mechanism for consultations between staff and management on personnel policies and conditions of service. This collaborative mechanism facilitates the alignment of WHO’s and PAHO’s human resources policies.

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