



# WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY  
Provisional agenda item 2

A59/2  
11 May 2006

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## Report of the Executive Board on its 116th and 117th sessions

1. The Executive Board held its 116th session on 26 and 27 May 2005 and its 117th session from 23 to 27 January 2006. A report of the main outcomes follows.

### 116TH SESSION (26 AND 27 MAY 2005)

2. The Board took up the subject of **international trade and health**, consideration of which had been postponed at the 115th session. After an extensive debate and the submission of a draft resolution from the floor agreed to defer further consideration to the 117th session (see paragraph 16 below).

3. Taking note of the report on **nutrition and HIV/AIDS**, the Board agreed that a draft resolution on the subject should be submitted for consideration at its 117th session (see paragraph 10 below).

4. After discussing the **guiding principles for strategic resource allocations**, members concluded that the Board was not yet ready to endorse the **validation mechanism** and welcomed the continuation of the consultative process. They agreed to consider the matter further at the 117th session (see paragraph 21 below).

5. The Board's discussions also included consideration of reports on the following subjects: **control of genetic diseases, WHO country offices and country focus, the implementation of resolution WHA55.16 on global public health response to natural occurrence, accidental release or deliberate use of biological and chemical agents or radionuclear material that affect health**, and progress in drafting the report of the **WHO Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health** (see paragraph 17 below). These reports were noted by the Board.

### 117TH SESSION (23-27 JANUARY 2006)

6. The **Director-General** in his report described recent responses to the spread of avian influenza, including the secondment of a senior member of staff to be the Senior United Nations System Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza, and the continued provision of support for revitalizing health services in communities in Asia affected by earthquakes and tsunamis. He underlined progress made in various technical programmes and the value of partnerships in WHO's work, noting that voluntary funding had increased by some 40% since the biennium 2002-2003.

## Technical and health matters

7. The Board paid close attention to the response to **recent disasters**. Members broadly supported a draft resolution proposed by Pakistan on emergency preparedness and response and agreed to consider the proposed amendments by means of an electronic consultation after the session with the aim of submitting an agreed draft resolution to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly.

8. The Board also extensively discussed the threat of **avian influenza**, and adopted resolution EB117.R7 on application of the International Health Regulations (2005), which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly for adoption, that called on Member States to comply immediately, on a voluntary basis, with the relevant provisions of the Regulations. The Board also noted a report on the use of information technology and geographical information systems in strengthening health and surveillance systems as part of the preparedness and response to pandemic influenza.

9. Members expressed concern that insufficient attention was being paid to countries in which **poliomyelitis** was endemic and those where the disease had been imported, but commended the progress that had been made in 2005. They adopted resolution EB117.R1, containing a resolution for consideration by the Health Assembly, that urged Member States to foster their commitment to interrupting transmission and to respond rapidly to detection of wild-type poliovirus; it also requested the Director-General, inter alia, to continue to provide support to Member States.

10. The Board noted the process proposed to build global commitment towards attaining the goal of universal access to **HIV/AIDS** prevention, care and treatment and the lessons learnt in expanding national HIV/AIDS programmes. It further adopted two resolutions, each containing a resolution for consideration by the Health Assembly, one (resolution EB117.R2) on nutrition and HIV/AIDS and the other (resolution EB117.R8) on implementation by WHO of the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors.

11. Members expressed disappointment at the delay in producing the **draft global strategy on prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections**, and agreed to an electronic consultation. The text would be revised in the light of comments received from Member States during that consultation and those made at the session for submission to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly for consideration.

12. After a broad-ranging discussion on the subject of **destruction of variola virus stocks**, members agreed to the convening of an open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider a draft resolution that the Secretariat would prepare. The resulting text would be submitted to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly for consideration.

13. The Board considered the report on **sickle-cell anaemia**, one of the most common genetic diseases in the world, and adopted resolution EB117.R3, which had been proposed by several Member States. It recommended the Health Assembly to adopt a resolution that expressed deep concern about the lack of official recognition of the disease as a public health priority and, inter alia, urged Member States to implement national programmes for prevention and management.

14. It adopted resolution EB117.R4 on **prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment**, for consideration by the Health Assembly, urging, inter alia, reinforced efforts and support for national Vision 2020 plans, as called for in resolution WHA56.26.

15. Members expressed concern about progress towards attaining the health-related Millennium Development Goals; at the present rate, some might not be achieved. They noted the reports on the **update after the high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly** in September 2005 and **WHO's contribution to implementation of the strategy for child and adolescent health and development** in the context of the Goals.

16. Taking up the issue of **international trade and health** from the 116th session, the Board adopted resolution EB117.R5, for consideration by the Health Assembly, which reflected amendments proposed by several Member States. Inter alia, it called for greater understanding of and response to the interplay between international trade and health and for work towards policy coherence between the trade and health sectors.

17. After an extensive debate and informal consultations under the agenda item on **intellectual property rights, innovation and public health**, the Board agreed to adopt resolution EB117.R13. Despite positive discussions, agreement could not be reached on all proposed amendments and the text of the resolution ([Global framework on] essential health research and development) recommended to the Health Assembly for consideration contained wording in square brackets that was open to discussion. It was agreed that a committee with two members from each Region would hold a meeting in Geneva, to which all Member States would be invited, to review the report of the WHO Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health that would be issued in April 2006.

18. The Board adopted resolution EB117.R6 on **WHO's role and responsibilities in health research**, for consideration by the Health Assembly, welcoming its call for greater efforts by both Member States and the Director-General and for more resources to be devoted to the subject. In response to a request for review of the proposed position paper, an electronic consultation for Member States would be facilitated. Under the item "Matters for information", the Board noted the report of the Advisory Committee on Health Research.

19. The Board adopted resolution EB117.R9 on **health promotion in a globalized world**, which it recommended to the Health Assembly for adoption. Members welcomed, inter alia, the calls for consideration of the need to increase investment and for mechanisms for involving government as a whole in tackling social determinants of health as well as for optimal use of existing forums to encourage health promotion.

### **Programme and budget matters**

20. The Board considered the report and comments of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee on the **Eleventh General Programme of Work, 2006-2015**. Members raised various concerns, including the need for redrafting of the text. The Board endorsed a proposed procedure whereby comments from members and those arising from informal consultations would be incorporated into a revised text for consideration at an extraordinary meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (following agreement to amend its terms of reference). The Board delegated authority to the Committee to decide whether the revised text was acceptable and, if so, to consider a draft resolution for submission, with the revised draft, to the Health Assembly.

21. Members considered the **guiding principles for strategic resource allocations**, including a proposed **validation mechanism**, which had also been the subject of detailed discussion by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. Members agreed to refer the matter to the

Committee's fourth meeting, preceding the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, for subsequent further consideration by the Board at its 118th session.

### **Staffing matters**

22. By adopting resolutions EB117.R10 and EB117.R11, respectively, the Board confirmed **amendments to the Staff Rules**, including remuneration of staff and benefits relating to education and other grants, and recommended to the Health Assembly the adoption of a resolution regarding **salaries of staff in ungraded posts and of the Director-General**.

### **Other management matters**

23. The Board adopted resolution EB117.R12, deciding to change the status of **official relations with WHO** of certain **nongovernmental organizations**. Noting the report of its Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations on the review of a third of such bodies in official relations, it agreed a series of actions set out in decision EB117(3).

24. In decision EB117(8), members adopted an amended **provisional agenda for the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly**, and, by decision EB117(9) agreed that the **118th session of the Executive Board** would be held from 29 May to 1 June 2006 at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

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