

Report of the Executive Board on its 135th and 136th sessions, and on its special session on Ebola

1. The Executive Board held its 135th session on 26 May 2014 and its 136th session from 26 January to 3 February 2015. In response to the Ebola virus disease outbreak, the Director-General convened a special session of the Executive Board on 25 January 2015. This report summarizes the main outcomes of the three sessions.

135TH SESSION (26 MAY 2014)

2. The Board discussed extensively **strengthening emergency and essential surgical care and anaesthesia as a component of universal health coverage**, noting the report, a revised version of which it agreed would be submitted to the Board at its subsequent session (see paragraph 22). After a similarly extensive discussion, it agreed to continue its consideration of **the health impact of air pollution** by including the topic on the provisional agenda of the 136th session (see paragraph 16).

3. It noted the report of the twentieth meeting of the **Programme, Budget and Administration Committee**, and decided, on an exceptional basis, to maintain the current **membership of the Working Group on Strategic Budget Space Allocation**. Urging enhanced audit capacity and accelerated action, the Board noted the annual report on **evaluation** and approved the work plan. It also noted the report on meetings of two **expert committees**, and confirmed **amendments to the Staff Rules** concerning assignment grant; appointment policies; determination of recognized place of residence; leave without pay; sick leave under insurance cover; and travel of spouse and children. The Board noted both the **statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations** and the report of the **Programme, Budget and Administration Committee**.

SPECIAL SESSION ON EBOLA (25 JANUARY 2015)

4. The Board discussed the Ebola emergency, covering the current context and challenges, stopping the epidemic, **preparedness** in non-affected countries and regions, and ensuring WHO's capacity to prepare for and respond to future large-scale and sustained outbreaks and emergencies. It adopted an extensive resolution, with 57 operative paragraphs dealing with, inter alia, leadership and coordination, health systems, medical assistance, information and communication, preparedness, therapeutic medicines and vaccines, WHO's structure and capacity, research and development, resources and evaluation, and agreed in principle to the establishment of a contingency fund. In addition, the resolution called on Member States, inter alia, to strengthen capacities to recruit, develop, train, and retain the health workforce in developing countries, particularly in the most affected and highly at-risk countries; it also requested the Director-General, inter alia, to commission an interim assessment by a panel of outside independent experts, on all aspects of WHO's response, from the onset of the current outbreak of Ebola virus disease, including within the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, in implementing the WHO's Emergency Response Framework, and in

coordination, including resource mobilization, and functioning at the three levels of the Organization, to be presented to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly.

5. Member States reviewed the current state of the response to the **2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak** and had made recommendations on further steps to stop the epidemic. Discussions focused on strengthening the capacity of WHO to prepare for and respond to future large-scale and sustained outbreaks and emergencies.

136TH SESSION (26 JANUARY–3 FEBRUARY 2015)

6. The Board adopted an **agenda** with 46 items and deferred the proposal for the consideration of WHO guidelines development and governance to the 137th session, and agreed to further consultations on the title and content of a proposed agenda item.¹

7. The Board noted the report of the **regional committees**. The Director-General welcomed the reported practices of retiring resolutions and harmonizing health information systems as useful examples of governance reform.

WHO reform

8. After extensive discussions of the draft **framework of engagement with non-State actors** in the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, formal meetings of the Board and an informal working group, the Board identified numerous issues that needed more work and decided that the draft framework needed further elaboration and revision through an open-ended intergovernmental meeting. Based on the outcome of that meeting, a revised version of the framework would be submitted to the Health Assembly through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

9. Following a lengthy discussion on the report on **method of work of the governing bodies**, in which the Secretariat was encouraged to take steps towards promoting more manageable agendas, establishing a website for statements and improving the management of side events, the Board noted the report.

10. Many Member States contributed to the discussion in formal meetings and a drafting group of the **overview of reform implementation**, emphasizing the need to focus on lessons learnt from the outbreak of Ebola virus disease, based on an examination of the governance of the regional offices and their connection to headquarters. The Board decided to establish an inclusive consultative process for Member States on governance reform, which would include a working group, two meetings open to all Member States to provide recommendations to the 138th session of the Executive Board, and requested the Director-General to facilitate that process, including through the creation of an online platform.

¹ Decision EB133(1).

Technical and health matters

Noncommunicable diseases

11. The Board adopted a decision on the **outcome of the Second International Conference on Nutrition**, in which it noted the commitments of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the recommendations for the Framework for Action. In addition, it decided to request the Director-General to undertake several actions, including to contribute to joint United Nations mechanisms and to facilitate and enhance intersectoral coordination; and to recommend to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly that it consider endorsing the Rome Declaration.

12. The **update on the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity** was noted by the Board. The Board also noted the report on **maternal, infant and young child nutrition: development of the core set of indicators**, at which time it agreed that further consultations be held to discuss and provide a clear definition of the proposed additional indicators for the core and extended sets with regard to maternal, infant and young child nutrition.

13. After deliberations on the **follow-up to the 2014 high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases**, the Board decided to request the Director-General to publish a technical note in the coming months on how the Director-General will report in 2017 to the United Nations General Assembly on the national commitments included in the 2014 outcome document¹ and 2011 Political Declaration,² using existing survey tools and taking into account existing indicators at the global and regional levels.

14. The Board noted the **global status report on violence and health** and agreed to the proposed timeline for development of a draft global action plan on violence and health.

15. Following extensive discussions and input from an informal drafting group, the Board recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly on the **global burden of epilepsy and the need for coordinated action at the country level to address its health, social and public knowledge implications**.

Promoting health through the life course

16. The Board noted the reports on **adolescent health**, on **women and health**, and on **monitoring of the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals**. Further, the Board noted the ongoing discussions on the draft resolution on the health impact of air pollution, and adopted the decision on **addressing the health impact of air pollution**. It encouraged Member States to finalize that work, in order for the draft resolution to be duly considered by the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly.

¹ See document EB136/11, Annex 1.

² The Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 66/2 (2011).

17. After noting the report on **climate and health: outcome of the WHO Conference on Health and Climate** the Board approved a work plan, provided that it took into account comments by Board members.

Preparedness, surveillance and response

18. Numerous Member States contributed to discussions on the draft **global action plan on antimicrobial resistance**. The Board welcomed the work on and progress made in preparing the draft global action plan on antimicrobial resistance, noting the steps to be taken for its revision before submission to the Health Assembly. The Board also noted the report on **poliomyelitis**. The Secretariat would draft a resolution, taking into account the draft decision it had considered and comments made during the discussions, and arrange for informal consultations on the text before its submission to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly.

19. In extensive discussions on the **implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)**, numerous comments linked the Ebola virus disease outbreak with the need to enhance implementation of the Regulations. The Board took note of the reports and adopted both a proposed resolution on yellow fever risk mapping and recommended vaccination for travellers, and a resolution on the recommendations of the IHR Review Committee.

Communicable diseases

20. The Board adopted a draft resolution on the draft **global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030**, recommending its adoption by the Health Assembly. It noted reports on **prevention and control of dengue**, the worsening situation of which was mentioned by several speakers. The Board also noted the report on the **Global Vaccine Action Plan**. Several Member States contributed to the discussion on vaccination coverage and the need for Member States to redouble efforts; vaccine availability and affordability were also discussed. WHO fully supported the view of immunization as an integral part of primary health care and the need to step up cooperation to improve service delivery.

21. The Board took note of the report on **2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak** and referred to the resolution on the Ebola outbreak adopted by the special session.

Health systems

22. Following discussions on **strengthening emergency and essential surgical care and anaesthesia as a component of universal health coverage**, the Board adopted a draft resolution, recommending its adoption by the Health Assembly. The report would be updated for submission to the Health Assembly in light of members' comments.

23. The Board noted the report on the **WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel**. It recognized that an expert advisory group would review the Code's relevance and effectiveness and would report to the Health Assembly and that consultations were under way to produce a draft comprehensive health workforce strategy.

24. Having considered the report of the third meeting of the Member State Mechanism on **substandard/spurious/falsely-labelled/falsified/counterfeit medical products**, the Board decided to agree to the proposal that the Health Assembly be requested to postpone the review of the mechanism by one year, to 2017.

25. The Board noted the report on the follow-up of the report of the **Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination**.

26. Regarding the **evaluation of the global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property**, the Board decided to recommend that the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly extend the deadline of the overall programme review to 2018 and the time frame of the plan of action to 2022. It requested the Director-General, after consultations with Member States, to provide a report to the Health Assembly in May 2015 on options for the conduct of the evaluation and programme review, on its achievements, inter alia, with the goal of completing this exercise by 2018.

27. The Board adopted a decision on **principles for global consensus on the donation and management of blood and other medical products of human origin**.

Programme and budget matters

28. The Board noted the report on the **update of the implementation and financing of the Programme budget 2014–2015**. The Secretariat would take into account the Board's comments in finalizing the **Proposed programme budget 2016–2017**. After a summary by the Director-General on the process of **strategic budget space allocation**, the Board adopted a decision on strategic budget space allocation, inter alia, endorsing the recommended guiding principles and agreeing to expand the membership of the Working Group to two Member States per region. The Working Group was requested to report back to the Executive Board at its 137th session in May 2015.

Financial matters

29. The Board adopted the **scale of assessments for 2016–2017**. It also noted the report on the **draft financial strategy for WHO**, urging further consultation with Member States in its finalization.

Management and governance matters

30. The Board noted the reports on **evaluation** and **real estate: update on the Geneva buildings renovation strategy**, both of which had been considered by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. The Secretariat would present to Member States in 2016 a full financing plan on the buildings renovation and a project proposal that included a risk analysis.

Reports of committees of the Executive Board

31. The Board adopted a resolution on **relations with nongovernmental organizations**, deciding to maintain in official relations with WHO several nongovernmental organizations.

Foundations and awards

32. The Board approved the revision of the present Statutes of the State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation, and noted the dissolution of the Jacques Parisot Foundation.

Staffing matters

33. The Board appointed Dr Matshidiso Rebecca Moeti as **Regional Director for Africa**, expressing its gratitude and appreciation to Dr Luis Gomes Sambo for his contribution to the work of WHO. It reappointed Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab as **Regional Director for Europe**.

34. The Board confirmed **amendments to the Staff Rules** concerning the remuneration of staff in the professional and higher grades, recruitment and mobility policies, and several other aspects of the purpose and functioning of the Rules. It recommended that the Health Assembly establish the **salaries of staff in ungraded posts and of the Director-General**, and adopt proposed **amendments to the Staff Regulations** concerning the appointment, transfer, reassignment, promotion and separation from service of staff members. It noted the **statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations** and the **report of the International Civil Service Commission**. With regard to **human resources**, members noted the potential value of the mobility policy and the need for a skills inventory.

Matters for information

35. The Board noted the report on **expert committees and study groups**.

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