

Programme budget 2022–2023: revision

Extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025

Report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly

1. The Secretariat presented the Programme budget 2022–2023: revision,¹ the overall theme of which was to strengthen the primary health care, health system resilience and pandemic preparedness nexus and to increase delivery capacity at country level. The revision was built on the approved Programme budget 2022–2023 and resolution WHA74.3 (2021) and reflected the findings of the various independent reviews as well as the rapidly changing global health situation as a result of the pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In line with Member State requests, the report contained a more detailed costing of the proposed Programme budget revision by strategic deliverables and by major office and the additional investments designed to strengthen strategic priorities 1 (one billion more people benefitting from universal health coverage) and 3 (one billion more people enjoying better health and well-being) and pillar 4 (more effective and efficient WHO providing better support to countries). The Secretariat further highlighted that 59% of the budget increase would go to the country level. The proposed increase would raise the share of the country level to 46% within the total base budget.
2. Noting the late submission of the report, the Committee expressed support for the proposed Programme budget revision and its appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to improve transparency and adopt a consultative process in preparing the report. It further acknowledged the work carried out by the Secretariat to include lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as recommendations by independent panels.
3. The Committee agreed with the proposed areas for increased funding described in the report, while stressing the need for further prioritization in the future.
4. To support the achievement of the triple billion targets, the Committee underscored the need for a more equitable budget allocation across the three levels of the Organization, focusing in particular on those countries most in need. It also recognized the importance of all Member States increasing their level of contributions wherever possible, including through the greater use of flexible and sustainable funding.
5. In the interest of achieving greater transparency and a better understanding of budgetary trends, some Committee members underscored the necessity of being provided with background data broken

¹ Document A75/6.

down by key items of expenditure (such as staff costs, consultants, experts, contractual services and travel) when the Secretariat was submitting programme budget revisions.

6. The Secretariat pointed out that many of the requests by Member States about improving the presentation of the programme budget and providing the right level of detail would be the focus of the agile Member States task group to be set up shortly, following the recommendation made by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing. It further noted that WHO's programme budgets would continue to be based on results-based budgeting principles, although the Secretariat noted the interest of the Committee in receiving further breakdowns by key expenditure categories.

7. In response to questions raised about the US\$ 50 million budget allocated to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, the Secretariat confirmed that a large proportion of that amount had been assigned at the country level, as this was where it was needed the most.

8. The Director-General concluded by thanking Member States for their support of the proposed revision on the Programme budget 2022–2023 and encouraged their continued engagement in sustainably financing it.

Extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025

9. The Secretariat presented the report on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025,¹ an earlier version of which had been considered by the thirty-fifth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administrative Committee and by the Executive Board at its 150th session.² The report had been rearranged to take account of the comments and suggestions made during those discussions, but also to provide impetus to WHO's work towards the triple billion targets and the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, the report now fell into two parts, the first of which explained the rationale behind the proposed extension, and the second of which contained five proposed focus areas. Those areas included the triple billion targets as previously, arranged in a different order, together with two areas of enabling functions: science, research innovation, data and digital technologies; and strengthening WHO as the leading and directing global health authority. The world had been off track in its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals even before the COVID-19 pandemic, but progress had been still further disrupted by the pandemic. The proposed two-year extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work would make an acceleration of action possible; and would enable the Organization to base perceived needs on solid data to guide investment in public health, to close major gaps and inequalities and apply lessons learned. The two-year extension would also enable WHO to align its strategic planning cycle with that of the United Nations.

10. The Committee supported the move to align WHO's action with other reporting frameworks, but wished to know whether WHO was in fact hoping to re-set the triple billion targets. If any changes were to be made, that should be done in close consultation with Member States. It also wished to know how the Organization would assess its performance in the enlarged five areas of focus, and whether new methodologies would be applied. It expressed concern at the idea of changing metrics that had been internationally approved under the Sustainable Development Goals. It noted the fifth area of focus aiming at placing WHO at the centre of the global health architecture, and asked for clarification as to how that might be carried out at regional and country levels. The report indicated that there was a need to improve the measurement of Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and that WHO should pilot

¹ Document A75/8.

² Document EB150/29.

test the updated measurement of service coverage. The Committee wished to know when the pilot tests would be initiated and what might be their timelines. No additional indicators should be included without consultation. The Committee placed great importance on the reliability and regional applicability of the data collected by the Organization under the fourth area of focus (Harness the power of science, research innovation, data and digital technologies as critical enablers).

11. The Committee likened the General Programme of Work to a binding contract between the Secretariat and its Member States. While noting that the report was an updated version of a document examined previously, the Committee observed that it had nonetheless changed considerably. Moreover, it had been made available to Member States too late to allow consultations with other Member States or even discussion within delegations. It therefore proposed that discussion of the report and the outcome of consultations should be deferred until the 152nd session of the Executive Board in January 2023 and that the draft resolution recommended by the Executive Board in resolution EB150.R4 (2022) be amended accordingly.

12. The Secretariat explained that such a postponement would create uncertainty with regard to the preparation of the draft Proposed programme budget 2024–2025, which had to be finalized by June 2022, to be ready to go through the regional committees, starting in August 2022 with the seventy-second session of the Regional Committee for Africa. It was therefore necessary to know that the programme budget was based on the extended Thirteenth General Programme of Work. With regard to the pilot test on effective service coverage, as recommended by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the measuring of effective service coverage and financial protection, and of other relevant indicators of public health importance would be subject to consultation with Member States. No change would be made to the results framework or output measurements without consultations. WHO coordinated the Health Data Collaborative, a platform of over 80 partner entities regarding data collection and delivery to tackle data gaps in countries, using assessment undertaken in 2020 of the SCORE for health data technical package. The Secretariat is working to drive a measurable impact in countries through delivery stocktakes which will accelerate progress and improving access to data through the World Health Data Hub.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

13. The Committee, on behalf of the Executive Board, recommended that the Health Assembly should note the report contained in document A75/6 and adopt the draft resolution contained in document A75/46.

14. With regard to the report on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025, the Committee, on behalf of the Executive Board, recommended that the Health Assembly should note the report contained in document A75/8 and adopt the following amended draft resolution:

The Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Director General on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025;¹ and having noted the report of the Programme, Budget

¹ Document A75/8.

and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly;¹

Considering also the request in respect of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, made to the Director-General in resolution WHA74.3 (2021),

1. APPROVES the extension of the period of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work from 2023 to 2025;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(i) to consult with Member States on the report of the Director-General on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025² and to submit the outcome of the consultation to the Executive Board at its 152nd session, for its consideration and adoption, through the Programme Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board;

(ii) to continue working on the development of Proposed programme budget 2024–2025, based on the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, as extended; with this development work to have regard to the priorities set out in the Director-General's report² and the Member State consultation thereon.

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¹ Document A75/53.

² Document A75/8.