



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Third meeting

Provisional agenda item 2.1

EBPBAC3/2
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Strategic directions

Management reforms and processes in WHO: overview

BACKGROUND

1. The Secretariat has recently adopted a more systematic, integrated and strategic approach to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization. Information on the main thrusts of these reforms was submitted to the Executive Board at its 115th session after review by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.¹ At the suggestion of the Chairman of the Committee an item on managerial reform has been included in the Committee's agenda in order to discuss the subject more thoroughly.

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO MANAGERIAL REFORMS

2. **The situation.** The public health landscape, both globally and locally is becoming increasingly complex, which requires more harmonization and better coordination at global, regional and country levels. Partners are expecting increasing transparency and accountability, as well as measurable results. Factors such as the increasing share of voluntary contributions in WHO's budget, advances in information technology, innovation in managerial techniques, and an increasingly competitive job market affect the way the Secretariat can and should be managed. WHO has been a key player in shaping and responding to change in the public health arena; expectations of Member States and the international community have been raised and the Secretariat intends to meet them.

3. **The diagnosis.** A number of the policies adopted, and mechanisms and managerial tools were inadequate. For example, although the Secretariat adopted results-based management five years ago, the existing management framework needs to be more strategic, and does not facilitate collaborative ways of working across the Organization; financial policies and mechanisms do not provide the required flexibility to implement programmes effectively. Significant improvements are required in policies and processes for human resources in order to ensure that the right skills are used in the right places. In many locations, infrastructure for information technology does not allow appropriate access to information vital for the effective implementation of programmes; and accountability mechanisms are insufficient to accompany greater delegations of authority.

¹ Document EB115/INF.DOC./5.

4. **The response.** The common objective of reforms is to strengthen managerial capacity in order to ensure that the Organization's functions are fulfilled more effectively. More specifically, managerial improvements aim for greater ability to **respond** to countries, increased **collaboration** across the Organization, more **efficient use of resources** and **improved results**, greater **transparency**, **accountability**, and **integrity**, improved **working environment**, and strengthened **capacity of offices** at all levels.

5. Meeting these objectives requires a systematic and strategic approach. Efforts focus on strengthening four functional areas that characterize effective management: ensuring that supportive **policies** are framed, promulgated and adhered to, improving core **systems** and procedures, increasing **service** levels, and ensuring that proper **accountability** and **learning** mechanisms are in place.

MANAGERIAL REFORMS

6. Managerial reforms in the Secretariat can be visualized as a circular flow, starting from the ability to develop and articulate a strategic direction, and translating this direction into operational plans. Effective financing and staffing of the Organization flows from this, as does provision of timely operational support. Closing the loop requires clear accountability, monitoring of results, learning from experience, and feeding those findings back into strategies and ways of working (see diagram at Annex).

7. Reforms are currently at varying stages, some already being implemented, others under development. Significant achievements have been made in the initial segments of the circular flow, i.e. strategic and operational planning:

- the **General Programme of Work 2006-2015** is being submitted to the Executive Board at its 117th session after review by the Committee;¹
- the framework for **results-based management** has been renewed and is being implemented; a key component is the medium-term strategic plan;²
- **guiding principles for strategic resource allocation** are part of the new medium-term strategic plan;³
- **operational planning** for the biennium 2006-2007 has been completed, with increased emphasis on joint planning across the three levels of the Organization;
- the **strategic direction and competency** of specific organizational units is being systematically reviewed and human and financial resources aligned accordingly.

¹ Document EB117/16.

² See document EBPBAC3/5.

³ Document EB117/17.

8. Progress has also been made in the specific areas described below.

Improving management of financial resources. This has involved, for instance, changing policies for income and recording, introducing a more coordinated and strategic approach to mobilization of resources, and channelling voluntary contributions to where they are most needed and streamlining their administration.

Improving management of human resources. This includes developing leadership and management skills through, for example, the Global Leadership Programme, emphasizing in all managerial processes the importance of competencies, maintaining a focus on staff development and learning, streamlining recruitment and selection processes, and moving with the United Nations system on contract reform.

Rationalizing WHO's information and knowledge management platform. A comprehensive global strategy and governance mechanism for information technology has been developed; efforts are being made to transform WHO into an effective learning and knowledge organization, and connectivity of all offices has been improved through the global private network.

Implementing the Global Management System. The System is a management tool that integrates programme management, finance, human resources, procurement, and other administrative areas. As such, it brings together in a single system many of the managerial reforms under way. It is currently in the design phase and is due to be commissioned during 2007.

9. Work is under way on improvements in the areas described below.

Managing different sources of financing. The increasing disproportion between the regular budget and voluntary contributions calls for greater clarity as to the ways in which different sources of financing are used to implement programmes efficiently, in line with the programme budget.

Devising an accountability framework. A framework is in preparation. It defines from whom authority flows, to whom, and for what purpose; to whom those responsible are accountable, and their duty in exercising that authority.

Collaborating with other organizations in the United Nations system. Efforts are being made to achieve efficient collaboration globally and locally with other bodies of the United Nations system, and development-related agencies, networks and processes, and more proactive participation in their activities.

Capturing lessons learnt. Further efforts are required to grasp feedback and to integrate it into strategic and operational planning, and programme implementation.

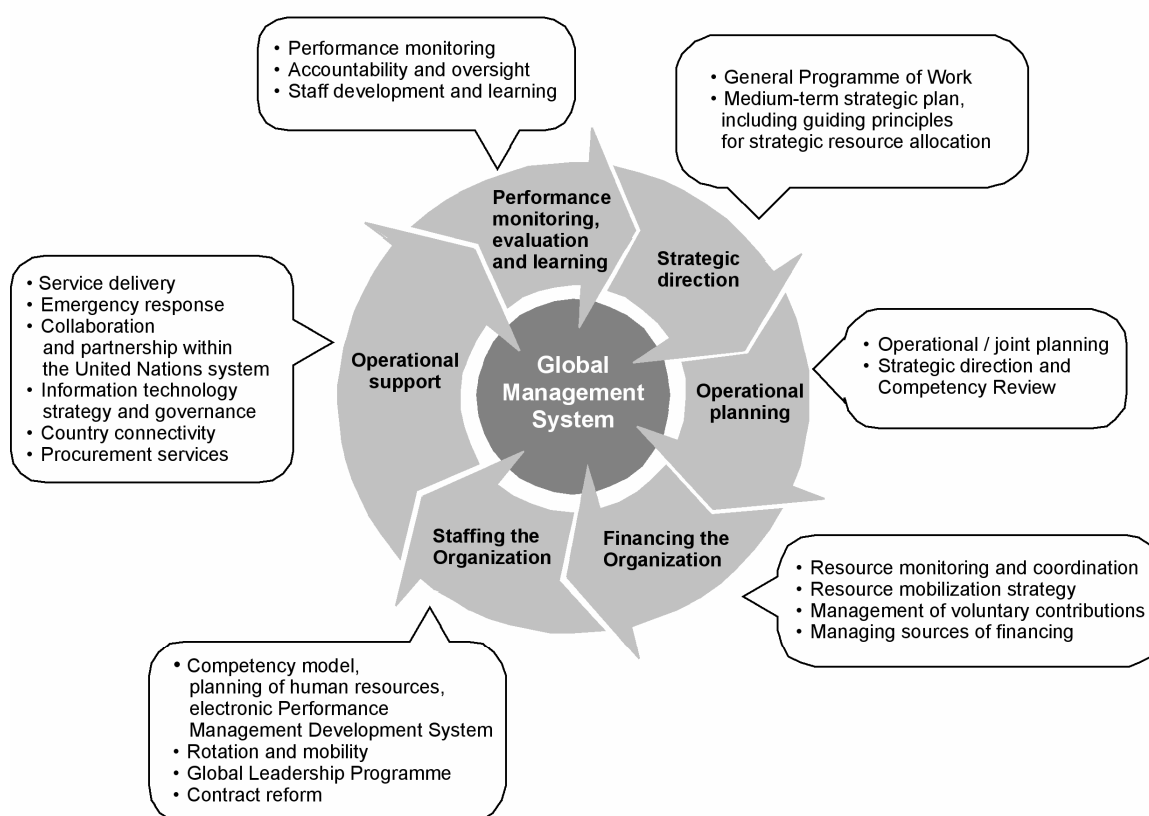
Delivering managerial and administrative services. In particular, more efficient response to emergencies is needed.

Reviewing specific administrative areas. Areas such as **procurement** and **infrastructure management** are being reviewed in order to reflect the changing needs of programmes and ways of working.

ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

10. The Committee may wish to focus its discussion on both the overall approach to managerial reforms, to ensure a common understanding of their purpose, and on certain specific areas, in particular improving management of financial resources, managing different sources of financing, and improving management of human resources.

ANNEX

Overview of workstreams contributing to managerial reforms

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