

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE AMERICAS

56th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Americas

Washington, DC, USA, 23 - 27 September 2018

Summary report from the President (Dr. Duane Sands, Minister of Health, Bahamas)¹

PART 1: TOPICS FOR GLOBAL DISCUSSION

Draft WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change²

The Regional Committee expressed general support for the draft strategy and considered that the strategy document provided a comprehensive overview of the risks that climate change and other environmental determinants pose to health. The draft strategy's focus on primary prevention was applauded, as was its emphasis on whole-of-government and health-in-all-policies approaches and its acknowledgement of the need for intersectoral collaboration to address environmental determinants of health that fall outside the direct control of the health sector.

Numerous delegates highlighted the need for education and awareness-raising efforts to make authorities in the agriculture, energy, transport, urban planning, and other sectors aware of the potential health implications of decisions and actions taken in those sectors. Delegates also stressed the importance of ensuring the participation of health sector representatives in climate change discussions and of incorporating health considerations into policies and plans for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Several representatives of small island developing States described the devastating impact of recent hurricanes on their health care facilities and welcomed the draft strategy's emphasis on enhancing the resilience of health systems.

With regard to monitoring and reporting of progress under the global strategy, delegates stressed the importance of aligning with other global and regional reporting requirements and of utilizing indicators that could be tracked by all countries with existing information systems.

Proposed programme budget 2020-2021³

The Regional Committee applauded the proposed programme budget's alignment with the triple billion targets of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW13) and welcomed the results-based approach to budgeting and the focus on countries. It also

¹ The full report of the session (document CD56/FR) and all documents, resolutions and decisions of the session mentioned in this report are available from:

https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14469:56th-directing-council&Itemid=40507&lang=en

² [Document CD56/INF/6.](#)

³ [Document CD56/INF/4.](#)

welcomed the bottom-up consultation process and the opportunity to provide input on the programme budget in the early stages of the planning and budgeting process.

Member States were pleased to learn that no increase in assessed contributions would be sought, but several delegates questioned whether the proposed increase in the allocation to base programmes was feasible in the current context. The Secretariat was encouraged to strive to broaden its donor base. The need for a risk analysis to determine the impact of failure to mobilize the required funds was highlighted.

It was stressed that national authorities and WHO country offices must share ownership of the prioritization process. Concern was expressed about how the prioritization exercise would be carried out and how technical support would be provided in Member States that lacked a country office. A clear chain of results – showing the results for which the Secretariat would be responsible and those for which Member States would be responsible – was considered essential. The PAHO-adapted Hanlon method⁴ was considered a solid and objective means of priority-setting at both national and regional levels, and the Secretariat was urged to publish in the WHO *Bulletin* the paper prepared by the PAHO Strategic Plan Advisory Group on the method.

Methodology used to develop the indicators to measure progress in implementation of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, and review of the resulting indicators and targets⁵

The Regional Committee examined a report on the draft impact framework for GPW13 prepared by the WHO Secretariat in response to a request from the Region of the Americas. Member States expressed concern about the possible use of estimates to report on indicators for which no official data were available or for targets and indicators that fell outside the purview of the health sector. It was emphasized that, if estimates were to be used, the source of the information and the method used to arrive at the estimate must be specified. Member States underscored the need to align reporting requirements for GPW13 with other global and regional reporting procedures and requirements in order to ease the reporting burden on Member States and avoid multiple and possibly duplicative reporting requirements.

Several delegates noted that some of the indicator definitions were unclear and that some of the indicators were qualitative in nature and therefore open to different interpretations. Concern was expressed about a lack of clarity with regard to the results chain, with several delegates remarking that it was not clear how much responsibility countries would bear for the achievement of individual targets and for the overall triple billion targets, nor was it clear what role the regional offices would play in that regard. It was emphasized that the targets and indicators must take account of regional realities and specificities.

It was suggested that the WHO Secretariat should set up a formal consultation process and formulate a road map for the development and approval of indicators.

⁴ [Document CD55/7.](#)

⁵ [Document CD56/INF/5, Add. I.](#)

PART 2: TOPICS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025

The Committee agreed on a road map for developing the PAHO Strategic Plan for the period 2020–2025.⁶ The plan will be aligned with global mandates, in particular the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but will also respond to the regional priorities agreed by Member States in the Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas 2018–2030.⁷ The process is expected to culminate with the discussion of the plan at the 57th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), 71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Americas, in September 2019.

Report on strategic issues between PAHO and WHO

The Regional Committee examined a report⁸ prepared by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau in response to a request by Member States, which had called upon the Bureau to transform the yearly report on WHO reform into a report on issues of strategic importance to the relationship between PAHO and WHO. The report outlined the Region's role in various global initiatives, including the WHO transformation agenda, the implementation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, the development of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and the reform of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. It also covered various financial and administrative matters, including WHO budget space allocation for the Americas, the WHO personnel mobility scheme and staff health insurance.

It was suggested that future reports should include more analysis of challenges and opportunities. It was also pointed out that the amount of WHO funding received by the Americas remains considerably lower than in the other regions, and the Bureau was urged to continue working to close the gap between approved and available funding.

Regional strategies and plans of action

The Committee approved the following regional strategies and plans of action:

Plan of Action for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health 2018–2030⁹

The plan is intended to implement the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health at the regional level. Its overall goal is to protect the gains achieved so far and close remaining gaps in order to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all women, children and adolescents in the Americas. Activities envisaged under four strategic lines of action will seek to address underlying determinants of the health of women, children and adolescents through a multisectoral approach. The plan

⁶ [Document CD56/INF/2, Rev. 1.](#)

⁷ [Document CSP29/6, Rev. 3.](#)

⁸ [Document CD56/INF/3.](#)

⁹ [Document CD56/8](#) and [resolution CD56.R8.](#)

aligns with and builds on numerous other regional mandates, including the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, approved in 2014.¹⁰

Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control 2018–2030¹¹

The plan of action will build on the progress made under the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control,¹² adopted in 2008. Its goal is to reduce the incidence of and mortality rates from cervical cancer by one third by 2030, with the ultimate aim of eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem in the Americas. The plan is in line with the WHO Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health; World Health Assembly resolution WHA70.12, on cancer prevention and control in the context of an integrated approach; the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control; and Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4, on reduction of premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases.

Plan of Action on Human Resources for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage 2018–2023¹³

The plan presents priority objectives for each line of action proposed in the Strategy on Human Resources for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, adopted in 2017.¹⁴ It aims to address inequalities in the availability, distribution and quality of health workers, between and within countries, between levels of care and between the public and private sectors. It will also address issues related to education and accreditation of health professionals, regulation of professional practice, professional mobility, needs forecasting, and retention and migration of health workers.

Plan of Action on Entomology and Vector Control¹⁵

The plan's objective is to strengthen regional and national capacity for the prevention and control of key vectors and reduce the transmission of vector-borne diseases. It focuses on prevention, surveillance and integrated vector control for arboviruses, malaria and selected neglected infectious diseases (Chagas disease, leishmaniasis, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis and others) through integrated and innovative strategies, using efficacious, sustainable, low-cost, evidence-informed interventions and best practices for vector control. The plan is aligned with the WHO Global Strategic Framework for Integrated Vector Management, and the activities envisaged to support its five strategic lines of action are adapted principally from the goals, milestones and targets of the Global Vector Control Response 2017–2030.¹⁶

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¹⁰ [Document CD53/5, Rev. 2.](#)

¹¹ [Document CD56/9](#) and [resolution CD56.R9.](#)

¹² [Document CD48/6.](#)

¹³ [Document CD56/10, Rev. 1,](#) and [resolution CD56.R5.](#)

¹⁴ [Document CSP29/10.](#)

¹⁵ [Document CD56/11](#) and [resolution CD56.R2.](#)

¹⁶ <http://www.who.int/vector-control/publications/global-control-response/en/>