

FOURTEENTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

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13 February 1961

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND LEGAL MATTERS

PROVISIONAL MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING

Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi
Monday, 13 February 1961, at 9.30 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: Dr H. van Zile HYDE (United States of America)

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. Draft first report of the Committee on Administration, Finance and Legal Matters to the Committee on Programme and Budget	2
2. Report on amendments to the Staff Rules, as confirmed by the Executive Board	2
3. Travel expenses and allowances for members of the Executive Board .	3
4. Supplementary budget estimates for 1961	16



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1. DRAFT FIRST REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND LEGAL MATTERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMME AND BUDGET (Document A14/AFL/25)

The CHAIRMAN introduced the Committee's draft first report to the Committee on Programme and Budget (A14/AFL/26).

Decision: The draft first report was approved.

2. REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE STAFF RULES, AS CONFIRMED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Item 3.19 of the Agenda (Resolution EB27.R15; Document A14/AFL/9)

Mr SIEGEL, Assistant Director-General, Secretary, explained that under the provisions of the Staff Regulations, the Director-General was authorized to issue Staff Rules which were subject to confirmation by the Executive Board. Document A14/AFL/19 contained the amendments made to the Staff Rules since the last session of the Health Assembly and they had been confirmed by the Executive Board in resolution EB27.R15.

Mr BRADY, representative of the Executive Board, said that the Board had been given information about the amendments to the Staff Rules and had noted that some were due to alterations in the Joint Staff Pension Scheme which would come into force on 1 April 1961. The other amendments were intended to clarify the text and to bring it into line with changed circumstances.

In reply to a question asked by Mr KITTANI (Iraq), the SECRETARY confirmed that the first amendment listed was related to the new Joint Staff Pension Scheme which had been adopted for the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The revised text would be effective from 1 April 1961, when the new Scheme came into force.

The CHAIRMAN read the following draft resolution:

The Fourteenth World Health Assembly

NOTES the amendments to the Staff Rules made by the Director-General and confirmed by the Executive Board.

Decision: The draft resolution was adopted.

3. TRAVEL EXPENSES AND ALLOWANCES FOR MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Supplementary Agenda Item 2 (Document Al4/AFL/19)

The SECRETARY said that document Al4/AFL/19 contained a recommendation that the per diem of members of the Executive Board, which had never been changed since 1948, should be increased to \$ 25 for Geneva and \$ 30 for any meetings in New York. The question of per diem rates had been considered at the fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly and new rates had been approved taking into account the increases in the cost of living. Paragraph 4 of the document before the Committee contained the financial implications of the proposed increase.

The CHAIRMAN explained that, in view of the nature of the item, it had not been considered by the Executive Board. The matter had been raised by the Director-General on the basis of the action taken in the United Nations.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) agreed that there was justification for an increase in the per diem rates since they had been fixed a long time ago and there had been a steady increase in the cost of living. Prior to the fifteenth session

of the General Assembly, the rates for members of United Nations committees and commissions had been \$ 25 for New York and \$ 20 for Geneva and elsewhere. The Secretary General had provided information for the General Assembly to show that the rates were inadequate and had recommended that they should be raised to \$ 35 for New York and \$ 25 for Geneva and elsewhere. However, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the General Assembly had decided that an increase to \$ 30 for New York and \$ 23 for Geneva would suffice. In addition, the General Assembly had noted that the cost of living in other parts of the world was often considerably less than in Geneva and had therefore decided that the Secretary General should be given discretion to fix the rates for other localities at an amount not exceeding \$ 23 a day.

The matter had been considered very carefully in the United Nations and, in the interests of uniformity, he thought that WHO should adopt the same rates.

He therefore proposed that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution set forth in document 114/AFL/19, the first paragraph of the operative part being amended to read: "Members of the Executive Board shall be paid a per diem allowance at the rate of \$ 23 while attending meetings in Geneva, \$ 30 while attending meetings in New York and, while attending meetings elsewhere, at a rate to be fixed by the Director-General and not to exceed the equivalent of \$ 23".

Mr LE POOLE (Netherlands) fully agreed with what had been said by the delegate of Iraq and supported the proposed draft resolution. He asked the Secretariat for information about the per diem rates for members of expert committees.

The SECRETARY replied that the rates for members of expert committees were left to the discretion of the Director-General. In the past they had in practice been the same as for members of the Executive Board, because that was the rate which the Director-General had considered appropriate. The per diem for members of expert committees was not however necessarily the same as that for members of the Executive Board.

Mr WYATT (United States of America) fully agreed with the proposal put forward by the delegate of Iraq. It was important that there should be uniformity between the United Nations and the specialized agencies unless there were any strong reasons for the agencies to act differently. In the present instance there were no such strong reasons.

With regard to the members of expert committees he assumed that, as in the past, the rates would be approximately the same as those for members of the Board.

Referring to paragraph 5 of the document before the Committee, he took it that there would be a slight reduction in the Supplementary Budget Estimates if the Committee decided on \$ 23 rather than \$ 25 as the rate of per diem for Geneva.

The SECRETARY confirmed that the United States delegate was correct in his final assumption.

Dr PENG THONG (Cambodia) asked what had caused the Director-General to propose a different rate of per diem from that adopted by the United Nations.

The SECRETARY explained that the Director-General's recommendation had been based on the functions assigned to the Board as the executive organ of the Health Assembly, as was explained in paragraph 3 of document A14/AFL/19.

Dr SCHANDORF (Ghana) emphasized that there had been increases in the cost of living not only in New York and Geneva but in many other places as well. Account should also be taken of the great distances which some delegations had to travel to attend meetings. When representatives of his country went to meetings in New York or Geneva they had to cross several frontiers and to meet the high cost of living on the journey. Fortunately his Government had appreciated the difficulties and had subsidized its delegates. He was however convinced that \$ 25 was a reasonable per diem for Geneva, and he strongly urged the Committee to accept the Director-General's recommendation.

Dr CAYLA (France) said that he had been impressed by the arguments put forward by the delegate of Iraq, particularly the argument in favour of co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies. He therefore supported the Iraq proposal.

Mr ROFFEY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that he too was inclined to support the proposal submitted by the delegate of Iraq. He would be glad to have some further explanation as to why the Director-General had recommended the rate of \$ 25 rather than \$ 23 as approved by the United Nations.

The SECRETARY replied that the United Nations decision had been taken in respect of various committees and commissions which bore little, if any, resemblance to the Executive Board of WHO. There had been no co-ordination or consultation on the part of the United Nations and the views of WHO had not been sought on the subject. He suggested therefore that the question of co-ordination did not really arise in the case at issue. The present rates had remained unchanged for more than twelve years, while per diem paid by governments and other organizations had been increased more than once. The Director-General had considered that \$ 25 was a reasonable figure for Geneva and he had therefore recommended it for the members of the Executive Board.

Dr EVANG (Norway) did not think that the fact that the Executive Board bore little resemblance to the United Nations committees really affected the issue. Where subsistence rates were concerned, the relative importance of the committee was irrelevant. Moreover, the fact that the United Nations had made no attempt to co-ordinate with WHO was no justification for WHO to fail to co-ordinate. He would, therefore, support the proposal made by the delegate of Iraq. He considered, however, that the per diem for members of expert committees should continue to be left to the discretion of the Director-General.

Dr TRAN VY (Viet-Nam) also supported the proposal made by the delegate of Iraq, in the interests of securing uniformity of practice with the United Nations and other agencies. He assumed that, in practice, the rates for members of expert committees would be the same as for the Executive Board and he wondered what the financial implications would be. Was the suggested increase for members of the expert committees included in the figures of \$ 1200 for 1961 and \$ 400 for 1962 quoted in paragraph 4 of the document before the Committee?

The SECRETARY explained that those figures related only to the proposed changes in the per diem for members of the Executive Board. Any other changes which the Director-General might make in accordance with his administrative discretion would be covered by adjustments in the budget within the ceiling established by the Health Assembly.

Mr LE POOLE (Netherlands) agreed with the delegate of Norway. Since the decision in the United Nations had been adopted unanimously, he could not understand why any Government should take a different attitude in the Health Assembly from that which it had adopted in the United Nations.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) agreed with the delegate of Norway that the distinction between the Executive Board and such bodies as the International Law Commission was totally irrelevant. The point at issue was not the function of the committee but the cost of living. It was true that members of certain of the United Nations organs received an honorarium in addition to the per diem, but that question had not been raised in connexion with the Executive Board.

The delegate of Ghana had referred to the expenses incurred by members of the Board in travelling to meetings, but those should be fully covered by the fact that per diem was paid during the travelling period. He noted that paragraph 2 of the operative part of the draft resolution in document A14/AFL/9 referred to the rate of \$ 10 per day for subsistence during travel by sea. He understood that the United Nations rate was \$ 8 a day and he wondered whether the figure of \$ 10 represented an increase in the WHO allowance.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL said that the per diem allowance for members of the staff of international organizations varied according to the grade of the individual. It would, therefore, seem quite logical that the per diem allowance for members of various bodies should vary according to the status of those bodies. The principal organs of the United Nations were not involved since their members were government representatives and received per diem from their Governments. The Executive Board was, however, one of the principal organs of WHO and was in a unique position by virtue of its constitutional functions and its composition. Consequently, the question of co-ordination with United Nations did not really arise. On the basis of the status of the Board and the increase in the cost of living, he had recommended \$ 25 a day as a reasonable subsistence allowance.

In reply to the delegate of Iraq, he explained that there had been no change in the per diem allowance for time spent for travelling by sea. That had been fixed at \$ 10 a day at the First World Health Assembly.

Dr GOOSSENS (Belgium) regretted that the Committee should have spent so long a time discussing a relatively minor point. At the outset, he had been impressed by the arguments put forward by the delegate of Iraq and there had seemed to be no reason to adopt a different rate in the United Nations and WHO. The Director-General had just given some valid reasons for so doing but Dr Goossens pointed out that, although there might be no similarity between the functions of the Executive Board and those of the United Nations Committees, the original per diem allowance had been the same for all - \$ 20. It would, therefore, seem reasonable that any increase should now also be the same.

Dr VARGAS-MENDEZ (Costa Rica) pointed out that the sum in question was negligible and hoped that the Committee would not attempt to make such niggling economies in other items of the budget. There were fundamental differences between the Executive Board and the committees of the United Nations and there was no reason why WHO should automatically adopt the same rate as the United Nations. He would, therefore, gladly support the Director-General's recommendations.

Dr EVANG (Norway) agreed that the rates of per diem varied for members of the staff of international organizations, but he thought it would be invidious to make a similar differentiation between the members of different committees.

With regard to the point made by the delegate of Ghana, he emphasized that savings on the item could be allocated for important projects in the field which were awaiting attention.

Mr SAITO (Japan) emphasized that where economies could be made they should be made. The sum involved might not be large but it was still worthwhile to save it and put it to a better use.

Dr SCHANDORF (Ghana) said that he too would favour any possible saving by WHO, but he would also like his Government to be able to save the money spent on subsidizing its delegates.

The CHAIRMAN said that the delegate of Iraq had submitted a draft resolution in the following terms:

The Fourteenth World Health Assembly,

Considering that the per diem paid to members of the Executive Board was established in July 1948 and that costs have increased since that date,

DECIDES

1. Members of the Executive Board shall be paid a per diem allowance at the rate of \$ 23 while attending meetings in Geneva, \$ 30 while attending meetings in New York and, while attending meetings elsewhere, at a rate to be fixed by the Director-General and not to exceed the equivalent of \$ 23;

2. The applicable per diem allowance shall be paid to members of the Executive Board during periods of necessary travel to and from the place of meeting and attendance at the place of the meeting except that such allowance will be reduced to \$ 10 for each full day (midnight to midnight) when travelling by sea.

He then asked the delegate from Ghana whether he wished to propose amendments to that text.

Dr SCHANDORF (Ghana) replied that he could not support the Iraqi draft resolution as he was in favour of the Director-General's recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN observed that presumably Dr Schandorf would wish to substitute the figure \$ 25 for the figure \$ 23 in the draft resolution.

Dr SCHANDORF (Ghana) confirmed that the Chairman's assumption was correct.

Mr Le POOLE (Netherlands) asked whether the delegate of Iraq would be prepared to insert an additional paragraph in the preamble reading: "Taking into account resolution 1590 (XV) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its Fifteenth Session.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) said that he would have no objection to such a reference.

Mr KHANACHET (Saudi Arabia) observing that there was only one formal proposal before the Committee namely the Iraqi draft resolution moved the closure of the discussion as he considered that the text could now be put to the vote.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that Dr Schandorf had confirmed that he was proposing an amendment to the draft resolution.

In the absence of any objection he ruled the motion for closure of the discussion carried.

The SECRETARY explained that the Director-General had not put forward any suggestion about the per diem allowance for meetings not held at either Geneva or New York because he did not consider that fixing such a rate was a responsibility which should be left to him. Members of the Committee would be aware that one of the Executive Board's important functions was to submit nominations for the post of Director-General to the Health Assembly. In the United Nations the position was different since that function was carried out by the Security Council.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL emphasized that the constitutional relationship between the Executive Board, the Health Assembly and the Director-General was clearly laid down and he considered that the decision about the Executive Board's per diem allowance should lie with that body within a maximum limit specified by the Health Assembly.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) regretted that that important point had been raised at the present late stage. He sympathized with the Director-General's attitude but considered that there were some objections to the Executive Board itself fixing its own per diem. He was concerned with the principle at stake. Perhaps the Health Assembly could fix the rates for meetings held away from Geneva or New York.

The CHAIRMAN said he was aware that the discussion had been closed but it had obviously been essential subsequently for the Director-General to clarify an important point.

In accordance with Rule 65 of the Rules of Procedure he would put to the Committee a motion to reopen the discussion, which would require a two-thirds majority.

Decision: The motion was carried by 64 votes to 1 with 12 abstentions.

Dr EVANG (Norway) considered that the Committee was putting itself into a ridiculous situation; surely the solution would be for the Iraqi delegate to revert to the original wording of operative paragraph 1 (as given in document A14/AFL/19) with the figure he had proposed.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) pointed out that a number of delegates had expressed support for his draft resolution and he could not comment on Dr Evang's suggestion before hearing their views.

Professor AUJALEU (France) supported Dr Evang's suggestion.

Mr Le POOLE (Netherlands) thought Dr Evang's strictures too severe. The Committee had not had an opportunity of discussing the Director-General's suggestions apart from the sums he had put forward. Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution set out in document A14/AFL/19 was not particularly relevant, since the Executive Board never met in New York. On the other hand operative paragraph 1 in the Iraqi delegate's draft resolution did fill the bill. For instance during the present year the Executive Board had met in New Delhi and it might meet in other continents in the future.

He appreciated the Director-General's objection to the additional provision in operative paragraph 1 of the Iraqi draft resolution and suggested that since meetings outside Geneva were rare the rates for them could be determined by the Health Assembly and a proviso might perhaps be added stipulating that the rates would be in conformity with existing practices in the United Nations.

Mr WYATT (United States of America) wondered whether the Iraqi delegate would be prepared to agree to the Executive Board itself fixing the rates for meetings elsewhere though he fully understood the objections to such a procedure.

Dr GOOSSENS (Belgium) speaking as one of the delegates who had supported Mr Kittani's standpoint, agreed with Dr Evang's suggestion.

Mr SAITO (Japan) asked whether it might not be possible for the Health Assembly to authorize the Director-General to fix a rate between an upper and lower limit of say \$ 23 and \$ 20.

Mr KHANACHET (Saudi Arabia) wondered whether Mr Saito's suggestion might be acceptable to the Director-General; clearly some provision must be made for fixing the per diem rate when meetings were not held either in Geneva or New York.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the Executive Board itself fixed the date and place of its sessions and it should be empowered also to determine the per diem when meetings were held away from Geneva or New York.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) said that in the interests of reaching a compromise, for meetings not held in Geneva or New York, he was willing to agree to the Executive Board being empowered to fix the rate within the ceiling of \$ 23 and not below say \$ 15.

In reply to the Chairman, Dr SCHANDORF (Ghana) confirmed that he maintained his amendment to that new formulation of the draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the amendment proposed by the delegate of Ghana to operative paragraph 1 that the per diem allowance for Geneva be \$ 25 and for New York \$ 30.

Decision: The amendment was rejected by 43 votes to 4 with 18 abstentions.

The Iraqi draft resolution was adopted by 54 votes to 3 with 10 abstentions.

4. SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR 1961: Item 3.4 of the Agenda
(Document A14/AFL/5 Rev.1)

The SECRETARY, introducing the item, explained that certain developments had occurred since the Executive Board's twenty-sixth session which would alter the figures in the supplementary budget estimates submitted in document A14/AFL/5 Rev.1. It would be noted from paragraph 2.1 that because the proposed changes in the Pension Fund arrangements would take effect on 1 April 1961 instead of 1 January, the estimated additional cost to WHO resulting from its participation in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund would amount to \$ 67 500 instead of \$ 90 000 as previously estimated.

At its twenty-seventh session the Executive Board had in its resolution EB27.R24 requested the Director-General to make an adjustment as from 1 April 1961 in the pensions for retired OIHP staff members similar to that to be granted to pensioners of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The estimated cost in 1961 would be \$ 1500.

The figures just approved by the Committee for changes in per diem allowances for Members of the Executive Board would require in 1961 an additional amount of \$ 720 and not \$ 1200 as originally calculated.

As a result of those adjustments the figures in the suggested draft resolution contained in the document before the Committee would have to be revised. In part I of that draft resolution both figures should read \$ 7090 instead of \$ 7570 and the total of Parts I, II and III should read \$ 805 094 instead of \$ 805 574.

The last figure in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution should read \$ 759 385 instead of \$ 759 865.

Mr BRADY, representative of the Executive Board, reported that the Executive Board had been informed by the Director-General at its twenty-sixth session that he had found it necessary to submit supplementary estimates for 1961 to meet additional requirements not foreseen at the time when the programme and budget estimates for 1961 were reviewed by the Thirteenth World Health Assembly. The items were listed in the document just introduced.

The supplementary estimates had been examined in the first instance by the Board's Standing Committee on Administration and Finance and its report was contained in Annex 6 to Official Records No. 106. In the light of that report and its own review and having considered the Director-General's report on the casual income estimated to be available to finance the proposed supplementary budget estimates, the Board had adopted resolution EB26.R11 recommending to the Fourteenth World Health Assembly that it approve those estimates. It had further recommended the adoption of a resolution amending the Appropriation Resolution for 1961 by increasing the amounts voted under paragraph 1 to a total of \$ 825 374 to be financed from additional casual income.

The most important item in the supplementary estimates, of which the Secretary had already given details, was the future financing of the malaria eradication programme and the Board had endorsed the Standing Committee's recommendation that as a first step towards alleviating the situation, provision should be made under the regular budget as from 1961 to meet the administrative and operational services

costs at headquarters and regional offices. The Board had, therefore, decided to approve the inclusion in the supplementary estimates for 1961 of provision for those costs to the total amount of \$ 621 754. The Standing Committee's first report on that matter would be found in Annex 5 of Official Records No. 106.

The Board had reviewed in some detail the Organization's assistance to the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville) up to the time of its twenty-sixth session and had noted with a great deal of satisfaction the promptness and adequacy of the assistance which the Director-General had rendered. The Board had noted that the major portion of the cost of such assistance was to be reimbursed by the United Nations, but that certain of the expenditures which would normally have been incurred under the WHO regular budget in any case were to be financed from that source. The Board had endorsed the Standing Committee's view that provision should be made in the supplementary estimates for 1961 for an amount of \$ 107 250 to meet the costs of the assistance planned to be given to the Congo from WHO's regular budget.

The Executive Board had been informed by the Director-General that he expected casual income to be available to finance those items and that no additional assessments on Members would be needed.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the supplementary budget estimates be considered item by item.

Mr TANDAN (India), referring to the problem of financing the malaria eradication and control programme, expressed his delegation's view that the programme should continue to be financed by special contributions which more advanced countries had

generously made in the past and which he hoped they would keep up. He was anxious that an urgent appeal again be made for such contributions to the Malaria Eradication Special Account and that steps be taken to ensure that the programme could proceed if those contributions fell short of requirements. Perhaps, another appeal for pledges should be made at the present Health Assembly so that countries might have an opportunity of giving public expression of their desire to assist others.

His Government found it difficult to accept the proposal that administrative and operational services costs be included in the regular budget as from 1961 because it was already assigning considerable sums to the programme. Income per head in India was low and at the present stage in its development - probably like other countries in the same position - his Government would be reluctant to accept further liabilities for the programme throughout the world.

Mr KITTANI (Iraq) said that it would be impossible for the Committee to approve the amount proposed in the Director-General's supplementary budget estimates before the Health Assembly itself had taken a decision on the principle of the administrative and operational costs being included in the regular budget which would be a new departure. It would appear from the document before the Committee that the Director-General had assumed that the Health Assembly would approve his proposal.

The CHAIRMAN said that that issue would be discussed at the joint meeting to be held with the Committee on Programme and Budget that afternoon when the situation would presumably be clarified.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.