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Organisation mondiale de la Santé

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Special Group for the Review
of the Constitution of WHO

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Current status of the relationship between WHO and PAHO

One of the areas identified by the special group for the review of the Constitution at its third meeting as possibly meriting further consideration is the current status of the relationship between WHO and PAHO. This document describes briefly the current status of legal and practical integration achieved.

1. Article 54 of the Constitution provides that the Pan American Health Organization,¹ which existed prior to the establishment of WHO, "... shall in due course be integrated with the Organization. This integration shall be effected as soon as practicable through common action based on mutual consent of the competent authorities expressed through the organizations concerned."
2. On 24 May 1949, the Director-General of WHO and the Director of PAHO signed an Agreement between the two organizations. The Agreement is stated in the Preamble to be a measure towards the implementation of integration as provided for in Article 54. It provides that the governing bodies of PAHO (Pan American Sanitary Conference and the Directing Council) and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (which acts as the Secretariat of PAHO) serve respectively as the Regional Committee and the WHO Regional Office for the Americas, though each organization shall retain its respective names. It establishes the basis for a range of coordinated actions through the adoption by PAHO of conventions and programmes that are compatible with the policy and programmes of WHO, the exchange of information, the provision of a budget for regional work and the management of funds allocated by WHO to the Bureau as the Regional Office, in accordance with the financial policies and procedures of WHO. The Agreement also provides that it may be supplemented with the consent of both parties, although this has never been formally done.
3. Apart from the Agreement there have been a number of areas in which PAHO and WHO have been integrated in practice, albeit not as a single legal entity.² Although separate budgets are approved (first WHO, then PAHO), they are developed in parallel. The membership of PAHO and the Region of the Americas are the same. Furthermore, although PAHO staff have a separate legal status from WHO staff, they are functionally integrated. In addition, the salaries, pension and staff health insurance benefits of PAHO staff are all the same as for WHO staff. The Staff Regulations and Rules of WHO, as well as the WHO Manual setting forth the administrative rules applicable to the functioning of the Organization, are also applicable to PAHO, although provision exists for modifications to be made when necessary.

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¹ Called at the time "the Pan American Sanitary Organization".

² For a review of the impact this continued separate legal status has on the term of office and selection process of the Director, AMRO, see document EB/Constitution/4/4.