



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Provisional agenda item 2

A58/2
28 April 2005

Reports of the Executive Board on its 114th and 115th sessions

1. The 114th session of the Executive Board (24-26 May 2004) was held under the amended Rules of Procedure adopted in resolution EB112.R1. The Board held its 115th session from 17 to 24 January 2005. This report summarizes the main outcomes; full texts of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Board at both sessions are contained in documents EB114/2004/REC/1 and EB115/2005/REC/1.

114TH SESSION (24-26 MAY 2004)

2. The Board adopted resolution EB114.R1 on sustainable financing for **tuberculosis prevention and control**, for submission to the Health Assembly, encouraging Member States to fulfil commitments already made towards stopping tuberculosis. It also requested the Secretariat's intensified support for Member States, including the strengthening of mechanisms to facilitate sustainable financing.

3. After an extensive debate, members of the Board adopted resolution EB114.R2 on the **prevention and control of cancer**, for consideration by the Health Assembly. It included recommendations to national health authorities for outcome-oriented objectives for their cancer control programmes, and requested the Director-General, inter alia, to set WHO's work in the context of relevant strategies already adopted.

4. A similar emphasis on prevention pervaded the discussion of **disability, including management and rehabilitation**. Members adopted resolution EB114.R3, for transmission to the Health Assembly. Inter alia, it urged a strengthening of national policies, strategies and programmes within the context of existing United Nations commitments and recommendations, with support from WHO, and called for collection of more reliable data.

5. A formal decision was taken to abolish the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee, the Programme Development Committee and the Audit Committee and to establish a single **Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC)** in their place (resolution EB114.R4).

6. The Board commended the Secretariat's work on **avian influenza**, including its technical consultations, communications, and issuance of guidelines and recommendations. Members stressed the importance of preparedness against potential influenza pandemics.

7. The Board noted reports on **recruitment of health workers from the developing world**, with proposed WHO actions and recommendations for countries and international partners; **human resources in health**, with members urging greater implementation of resolution WHA57.19 on international migration of health personnel; and **manufacture of antiretrovirals in developing**

countries. High quality of medicines and the usefulness of WHO's prequalification project were themes that ran through the discussion of the latter (see paragraph 29 below).

8. Progress on the implementation of **multilingualism in WHO** was noted, although the constraints of time and money were recognized and some members commented on the need for more work.

9. After an extensive debate on **social health insurance**, members agreed to the drafting of the text of a resolution for consideration at the 115th session. The Board also decided similarly to defer reconsideration of applications from two **nongovernmental organizations** for admission into official relations with WHO. (See paragraphs 17 and 35, respectively).

115TH SESSION (17-24 JANUARY 2005)

10. The tragic events in south Asia in December 2004 weighed heavily on the proceedings. In his report, the **Director-General** focused largely on the Organization's response, with a videoconference with specialists and field staff on an aircraft carrier off Banda Aceh, Indonesia. He noted that the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change had underlined WHO's indispensable role in ensuring international security. Unforeseeable disasters added to the growing demand for public health activities, whether preparedness for pandemics or tackling social determinants of health, and were together part of the reason for the proposed increase in the programme budget for 2006-2007.

11. The Board appointed Dr Luis Gomes Sambo as **Regional Director for Africa**, as from 1 February 2005, and expressed its appreciation to the retiring Regional Director, Dr Ebrahim M. Samba (resolutions EB115.R1 and EB115.R2, respectively). It reappointed Dr Marc Danzon as **Regional Director for Europe** as from 1 February 2005 (resolution EB115.R3).

12. The new **PBAC** made several recommendations to the Board on the Proposed programme budget 2006-2007. Expressing concern about the high proportion of the total budget made up by voluntary contributions, it urged that steps be taken to redress the undesired consequences of the decreasing proportion represented by the regular budget. The Board proposed to review the work of the single committee in 2006 after a full cycle of meetings. It accepted the committee's recommendation that the consultative process on **strategic resource allocations** should continue, with new draft guiding principles being submitted at its 116th session. The Board noted the continuing consultative process for the **Eleventh General Programme of Work 2006-2015** and the draft outline of that programme.

13. The Board appreciated the performance assessment of the **Programme budget 2002-2003**. Considering the **Proposed programme budget 2006-2007**, members broadly welcomed the increasingly refined process of results-based budgeting and the strategic directions and priorities presented, but there were different views about the proposed increase in assessed contributions. The Board agreed that the Director-General would engage in further consultations before resubmitting that proposed budget, revised in the light of members' comments, to the Health Assembly.

14. Having considered the report on the **Real Estate Fund**, the Board requested submission of a report, at its 117th session, on progress towards development of a capital master plan and a long-term mechanism for its financing (decision EB115(10)). It also decided that PBAC would consider

proposals for construction projects at its second meeting and report directly to the Health Assembly thereon.

Technical and health matters

15. After an extensive debate on **responding to health aspects of crises**, dominated by consideration of the effects of the south Asian earthquake and tsunami, the Board adopted resolution EB115.R11 for transmission to the Health Assembly. The text called on the international community for continued, strong support in humanitarian crises and emphasized inter alia the need for preparedness plans, coordinated responses and cooperation with other international agencies.

16. Reconciling members' different views, a drafting group produced a revised draft resolution on **infant and young child nutrition**, which the Board adopted (resolution EB115.R12). Inter alia, the resolution recommended to the Health Assembly urged the upholding of the recommendation for exclusive breastfeeding of infants for six months, tight controls on nutrition and health claims on foods for infants and young children, and control of microbial contamination of powdered infant formula. It requested the development of guidelines for clinicians and carers on infant formulas.

17. The proposed resolution on **social health insurance** drafted after the 114th session (see paragraph 9 above) was discussed and amended. The Board adopted resolution EB115.R13 for consideration by the Health Assembly. It retained the strong commitment to planning for the transition to universal coverage and financing systems that include a method for prepayment. It also requested inter alia technical support to Member States for developing such systems and coordination with relevant international partners.

18. The Board adopted resolution EB115.R15, for transmission to the Health Assembly, agreeing to the establishment of an annual **World Blood Donor Day** as an integral part of national blood-donor recruitment programmes. It urged Member States to ensure the proper use of blood transfusion in clinical practice and to support coordinated, regulated and sustainable blood programmes, with emphasis on voluntary, nonremunerated donation.

19. The Board, commending the preceding consultative process, adopted the revised procedure for selection of recommended **International Nonproprietary Names** for pharmaceutical substances (resolution EB115.R4) and noted the revised general principles for guidance in devising such names. Conversely, it agreed to maintain the existing Guidelines for the WHO review of **dependence-producing psychoactive substances** for international control and requested further work.

20. The Board adopted resolution EB115.R14 on **malaria** which recommended to the Health Assembly a draft resolution that emphasized, inter alia, the impact of the disease in other regions of the world than Africa, access to new combination therapies, the value of insecticide-treated bednets, research, surveillance and efficient use of funds.

21. Another broad consultative procedure had resulted in the proposal of a draft resolution on the **public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol**. The text adopted in resolution EB115.R5, for consideration by the Health Assembly, requested, inter alia, intensified international cooperation (including information systems), recommendations for effective interventions, broad collaboration on implementation of policies, and open consultations.

22. Although members acknowledged the value of information and communication technologies for health strategies, the Secretariat was advised to be attentive in its approach. The Board adopted

resolution EB115.R20 on **eHealth**, for transmission to the Health Assembly, requesting inter alia continued preparative work for integration of eHealth into health services and systems, the sharing of experience, and support for eHealth initiatives among countries that share a common language.

23. In discussing **rational use of medicines** by prescribers and patients, members considered a draft resolution that concentrated particularly on antimicrobial resistance as a threat to global health security but was directed at patient safety and effective treatment. Resolution EB115.R6, which the Board adopted for consideration by the Health Assembly, urged, inter alia, firmer leadership from WHO, accelerated implementation of previous resolutions dealing with antimicrobial resistance and associated technical support on request, and sharing of knowledge and experience.

24. After discussion of implementation of the **International Plan on Ageing**, members adopted resolution EB115.R7, which was designed to guide WHO's actions. The draft resolution that it recommended to the Health Assembly focused on prevention and treatment of age-related diseases, the social environment of elderly people, and social implications.

25. The Board relooked at avian influenza and the pandemic potential of the H5N1 strain of influenza virus, and adopted resolution EB115.R16 on strengthening **pandemic influenza preparedness and response** for consideration by the Health Assembly. The text emphasized preparedness, surveillance, cooperation with animal health and other sectors, reduction of the current shortage of vaccines and antiviral medicines, assessment of the feasibility of stockpiling such medicines, and evaluation of personal protection measures.

26. Acknowledging the gravity of the consequences of an accidental or deliberate release of smallpox virus, the Board accepted the proposal for an expanded global **smallpox vaccine reserve**.

27. The Board confirmed the importance of the **Revision of the International Health Regulations** following a briefing in progress by the Chair of the Intergovernmental Working Group. Noting also the report on eradication of **poliomyelitis**, members expressed their commitment to that goal and called for continuing support and funding.

28. Board members welcomed the frank analysis of the status report on achievement of the **health-related Millennium Development Goals** and, after a wide-ranging debate, agreed to hold an electronic consultation on a draft resolution for submission to the Health Assembly. They decided to undertake a similar exercise with the draft resolution on the **Ministerial Summit on Health Research** (Mexico City, 16-20 November 2004).

29. At the request of a Member State, issues surrounding local manufacture of **antiretroviral agents** and the flexibilities allowed by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights were discussed again (see paragraph 7 above). The Board noted the Secretariat's report.

30. Members generally supported the **draft global immunization strategy** with its five strategic areas and, noting the report, provided guidance for future work, including continued consultation, before presentation of the draft to the governing bodies of WHO and UNICEF.

Financial matters

31. In resolution EB115.R8, the Board recommended a **scale of assessments** of Members for the biennium 2006-2007. In noting the report on the **status of collection** of assessed contributions of

Member States, the Board recognized that PBAC would receive an update in May 2005 before making recommendations to the Health Assembly.

32. In resolution EB115.R9 the Board recommended that the Health Assembly approve **amendments to the Financial Regulations** that simplified financial policies and procedures, and thereby confirm the revised **Financial Rules**.

Management matters

33. Reviewing the **working methods of the Health Assembly**, Board members agreed that the ministerial round tables should be discontinued but requested the Director-General to continue consideration of the other issues in his report.

34. In decision EB115(1), members adopted an amended **provisional agenda for the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly** and, by decision EB115(2), agreed that the **116th session of the Board** would be held from 26 to 28 May 2005 at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

35. The Board in resolution EB115.R10 decided to change the status of **official relations with WHO** of some **nongovernmental organizations**, and, noting the report of its Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations, adopted decision EB115(3). As both nongovernmental organizations whose applications remained undecided at the 114th session (see paragraph 9) had requested a postponement of further consideration, the Board decided not to discuss the matter.

36. Decisions EB115(4)-(9) record the laureates selected to receive **awards**. The Board also decided to revise an article in the Statutes of the Ihsan Dogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize and noted the approval by the State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation Selection Panel of procedural guidelines.

37. The Board noted the report on implementation of recommendations by the **Joint Inspection Unit** and its recent reports, in particular that on multilingualism. Although progress with the web site was recognized, some members acknowledged the financial implications of multilingualism.

Matters for information

38. The Board noted the **reports requested by earlier resolutions**, covering progress made in the following areas: **promotion of healthy lifestyles, violence and health, smallpox eradication – destruction of variola virus stocks, traditional medicine, scaling up treatment and care within a coordinated and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, and strategic approach to international chemicals management**, as well as the information provided on the **Commission on Social Determinants of Health**, whose launch was planned for March 2005, and the update on the **status of the debate in the United Nations General Assembly on reproductive cloning of human beings**. It further noted the reports on the 42nd session of the **Advisory Committee on Health Research** and on **expert committees and study groups**, calling in the latter instance for follow-up on recommendations.

Staffing matters

39. In adopting resolutions EB115.R17-R19, the Board confirmed **amendments to the Staff Rules**.

40. The Board noted the annual report on **human resources**, the report by the **International Civil Service Commission**, and the **statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations**.

= = =