Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution

Third report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly

STATUS OF COLLECTION

1.   The Sixth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee was held in Geneva on 10 and 11 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Ms J. Halton (Australia).[1]

2.   The Committee considered the status of collection of assessed contributions,[2] including Members in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution, and special arrangements for settlement of arrears.

3.   The Committee noted that the rate of collection of assessed contributions for 2007 was 58% at 30 April 2007, the same level as at 30 April 2006. The Committee also noted that the amounts unpaid relating to prior years had been reduced to US$ 78 million at 30 April 2007 from US$ 87 million at 31 December 2006 (an 89% collection rate) with a further US$ 56 million due at the end of 2006 under special arrangements authorized by the Health Assembly. The Committee also noted that US$ 6 million had been collected during 2006 from Member States under such special arrangements.

4.   The Committee noted that the voting privileges of 10 Members (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Central African Republic, Comoros, Dominican Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Nauru, Niger and Somalia) remained suspended, and that suspension would continue at the Sixtieth and subsequent World Health Assemblies until the arrears had been reduced to a level below the amount that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution.

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[1] For list of participants, see document A60/41, Annex.

[2] For status of collection of assessed contributions as at 30 April 2007, see document A60/INF.DOC./6.

5.   The Committee also noted that the voting privileges of two Members (Democratic Republic of Congo and Dominica) would be suspended from the opening of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly and that suspension would also continue until their arrears had been reduced to below the level that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution.[1]

6.   One member of the Committee asked if it would be acceptable to write off arrears of Member States that were experiencing severe economic difficulties. It was noted that it had always been the Health Assembly's approach to give sympathetic consideration to proposals for rescheduling payment of arrears from Member States in economic difficulties, rather than to write off debts.

7.   The Committee considered the situation of the two Member States (Cape Verde and Palau) whose arrears in payment of contributions at 30 April 2007 would justify the adoption of a resolution under which their voting rights would be suspended from the opening of the Sixty-first World Health Assembly. The Committee decided that a resolution should be drafted, authorizing suspension of their voting rights from the opening of the Sixty-first World Health Assembly unless sufficient payment had been received by the aforesaid opening.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SETTLEMENT OF ARREARS

8.   The Committee noted that, although the Secretariat had maintained contact with those Member States that fell under the provision of Article 7 of the Constitution in order to explore proposals for rescheduling payment of arrears, no such proposals had yet been received from those Member States.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

9.   The Committee recommended the following draft resolution for consideration by the Sixtieth World Health Assembly:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the third report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly on Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution;[2]

Noting that, at the time of opening of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly, the voting rights of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Nauru, Niger and Somalia were suspended, such suspension to continue until the arrears of the Member State concerned have been reduced, at the present or future Health Assemblies, to a level below the amount that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution;

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[1] See document EBPBAC6/2.

[2] Document A60/42.

Noting that Cape Verde and Palau were in arrears at the time of the opening of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly to such an extent that it was necessary for the Health Assembly to consider, in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution, whether or not the voting privileges of those countries should be suspended at the opening of the Sixty-first World Health Assembly,

DECIDES:

(1)   that in accordance with the statement of principles set out in resolution WHA41.7 if, by the time of the opening of the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, Cape Verde and Palau are still in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution, their voting privileges shall be suspended as from the said opening;

(2)   that any suspension that takes effect as aforesaid shall continue at the Sixty-first and subsequent World Health Assemblies, until the arrears of Cape Verde and Palau have been reduced to a level below the amount that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution;

(3)   that this decision shall be without prejudice to the right of any Member to request restoration of its voting privileges in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution.

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