

Safety and security of staff and premises and the Capital Master Plan

Report by the Director-General

1. In May 2009 the Sixty-second World Health Assembly considered a report on the safety and security of staff and premises and the Capital Master Plan,¹ which had been prepared at the request of the Executive Board. Some Member States requested the further development of proposals on this matter, and this report accordingly presents to the Board some suggestions, including the establishment of a long-term, sustainable financing mechanism.

THE CURRENT SAFETY AND SECURITY CONTEXT

2. In January 2009 a report submitted to the ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board stated that WHO's ability to implement its health programmes depended on a safe and secure working environment for its staff.² In discussing that document, the Committee expressed disappointment that the Organization was unable to comply with the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards in many locations and to finance the necessary level of activities related to the safety and security of staff and premises.³

3. The safety and security of WHO staff and premises need to be seen in the context of the United Nations system as a whole. At its first and second sessions of 2008, the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) considered the increasing challenges for the safety and security of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. Although it recognized the guiding principle of "no programme without security" (i.e. the need to strike an appropriate balance between the exposure of staff to risks and the performance of crucial tasks in adverse conditions), CEB also noted that the danger was growing faster than the reaction – not only for the United Nations system, but also for the broader humanitarian community. The situation had continued to deteriorate significantly, and United Nations personnel have been the targets of deliberate attacks by extremists and armed groups in an increasing number of areas where United Nations system organizations operate. The attacks in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, in Algiers on 11 December 2007, and in Islamabad on 5 October 2009 have confirmed that disturbing trend.

¹ See document WHA62/2009/REC/3, summary record of the fifth meeting of Committee A, section 2.

² Document PBAC9/2.

³ See document EB124/3.

4. WHO recorded a total of 120 security incidents involving staff members in 2007 alone. Most took place in the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions. In 2007, a driver was shot dead in Ethiopia while on duty, two local staff were shot at and seriously injured in Pakistan, and one international staff member died in a plane crash. The trend for 2008 was equally worrisome: two WHO employees were seriously wounded during two separate shooting incidents in Somalia; two WHO staff members who were part of a United Nations convoy were killed during a suicide attack in Afghanistan; two WHO employees were taken hostage in Pakistan; and one WHO driver was kidnapped and later released in Yemen. In addition to such serious incidents, each year a number of WHO staff are victims of assaults, robberies, car jacking, death threats, thefts and residence break-ins. In 2009, there have been 113 incidents, including 4 armed attacks, 12 break-ins and 35 robberies and crimes against property.

CURRENT STATUS OF FUNDING FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY OF PERSONNEL AND PREMISES

5. In WHO, there are four types of safety and security expenditures borne by the Organization; they can be summarized as follows.

(a) Cost-shared security expenditures at the global level. These are the contribution to the United Nations Security Management System made by participating entities, and they cover the staff and operational costs of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security – both in New York and in the field. In 2008, these costs amounted to US\$ 6.5 million.

(b) Cost-shared security expenditures at the country level. These are the contribution to the country-specific security budget which may include the costs for the following: compliance with United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards for common premises, radio operators, communication equipment and any other security needs deemed to be common and therefore shared. In 2008, these costs amounted to US\$ 5.8 million.

(c) Agency-specific security expenditures at the country level. These vary from country to country and may include costs for the following: compliance with United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards in locations where WHO is accommodated in its own premises; Minimum Operating Residential Security Standard compliance for staff; and any other security needs considered to be agency-specific at a given location. In 2008, US\$ 3 million were spent on compliance with these two sets of Standards.

(d) Costs and capital investments related to the safety and security of premises. It is to be noted that WHO accommodates its staff in property that is either owned, occupied on a cost-shared basis, rented commercially or provided rent free by Member States. The conditions of accommodation vary greatly and often do not match the Organization's needs in terms of space, safety, security and environmental standards. A further point, noted by the Executive Board at its 120th session,¹ is that considerable additional investment would be required over time to ensure that buildings, equipment and systems meet the aforementioned standards. In the current biennium, although the Capital Master Plan includes capital projects of a total value of US\$ 23 million, only US\$ 4.2 million are available for their implementation.

¹ See document EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the eighth meeting, section 1.

6. With regard to cost-shared security expenditures at the global level, and as requested by United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/138, the Secretary-General is submitting to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session in 2009 a comprehensive plan for a strengthened and enhanced system-wide security management system. This plan may well result in an increase in WHO's cost-share expenditure at the global level. Currently these costs are centrally funded and managed, using a per-employee levy through the payroll in order to spread costs evenly across programmes.

7. With regard to cost-shared security expenditures and agency-specific security expenditures at the country level, these remain largely unfunded. Where possible, costs are borne by the country office budgets or, failing that, by the respective regional office budget.

8. Lastly, as regards the costs for the safety and security of premises it is to be recalled that in response to the request made by the Executive Board at its 115th session,¹ the Secretariat elaborated a 10-year Capital Master Plan for the period 2008–2017. The Capital Master Plan offered a strategic and integrated approach to managing and maintaining the Organization's physical infrastructure, including the safety and security of premises. In May 2007, the Plan was considered and noted by the Health Assembly,² which heard that the draft plan had been welcomed by Executive Board members at the Board's 120th session, but that the Board had been of the view that the resource requirements of the Capital Master Plan should be considered as an integral part of the programme budget rather than being part of a separate appropriation resolution. However, the Plan remains substantially underfunded.

9. As reported by the Director-General to the Executive Board at its 115th, 117th, 120th and 124th sessions,³ in the absence of a long-term sustainable funding mechanism for safety, security and capital investments, it is increasingly difficult for the Organization to mitigate risks and guarantee a safe and secure working environment for its staff at its various locations.

10. The estimated requirements for safety and security, including the amounts needed for initial "catch-up" where projects have been deferred in recent years, presented in the Annex. The figures do not, however, include the contribution to the United Nations Security Management System, which amounts to US\$ 13 million. For the biennium 2010–2011, the total requirements in respect of safety and security (both building-related and non-building-related) amount to US\$ 67.9 million.

11. It is to be noted that within strategic objective 13 in the Programme budget 2010–2011 only WHO's share of the cost-shared United Nations system security expenditures will be financed, together with a provision of about US\$ 10 million for crucial projects relating to safety and security. All the other aforementioned requirements for the biennium 2010–2011 remain unfunded; this represents a total shortfall of US\$ 57.9 million.

¹ See document EB115/2005/REC/2, summary record of the tenth meeting, section 1, and decision EB115(10).

² See document WHA60/2007/REC/3, summary record of Committee A, fourth meeting.

³ Documents EB115/41, EB117/18, EB120/18, EB120/18 Corr.1, EB120/18 Add.1 and EB124/3.

A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MECHANISM FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY OF PERSONNEL AND PREMISES

12. At its second session of 2008, CEB noted that the problem of funding did not so much concern mechanisms, but rather the level of resources received from Member States and donors for safety and security activities, in the shape of assessed or voluntary contributions. CEB further noted that security costs needed to be embodied in the budget for programmes at field level in order to ensure that those programme deliveries were executed in accordance with United Nations safety and security policies (i.e. including the security component as an integral part of the budget). It was pointed out that donors had to be convinced of the continuing need for, and importance of, safety and security measures, even if such measures were considered administrative expenses rather than programme costs.

13. An interagency review on funding sources and mechanisms for safety and security of staff and premises was recently undertaken for CEB's High-Level Committee on Management. The review revealed the following.

(a) The United Nations includes a provision for safety and security under the regular budget (assessed contributions) in its biennial programme budget. There are also voluntary contributions in a trust fund to complement the regular budget resources.

(b) United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies charge safety and security costs in different ways. UNESCO charges security costs, such as security equipment and infrastructure, as direct costs for implementing an activity, while an average charge per staff member is levied to cover the costs for jointly-financed activities and the Malicious Acts Insurance Programme. For ILO, the share of jointly-financed activities is charged to projects. WFP's share of jointly-financed activities is charged to the General Fund. FAO currently apportions security costs between its assessed contributions and projects funded through voluntary contributions, and continues to ensure that security costs are traced wherever possible to the project level and charged as direct costs to those field projects.

14. The review also revealed that the challenges faced by programmes, funds and agencies in regard to funding are common and are related to: (a) seeking sufficient resources from their respective donors for costs associated with safety and security, without having a negative impact on available funding for implementation of their respective programmes; (b) deciding where safety and security costs are to be charged, either as part of overhead or programme/project costs – or to a general fund, as in the case of WFP; (c) determining the nature and scope of such charges, including charging for fixed indirect costs; and (d) determining funding for unforeseen deterioration in security. Each organization is responsible for securing adequate resources from its respective governing bodies and other donor communities, and for determining the category of safety and security expenditure involved and the budget against which to charge it.

15. Effective risk management requires security to be funded in a sustainable manner rather than solely by a resource-driven financial process. The more unpredictable the funding mechanism, the greater the risk to the provision of a safe and secure operating environment for WHO staff members and their dependents. It is to be noted that despite spending about 2% to 3% of their overall budget to cover safety and security costs, including field operations, most of the organizations within the United Nations system with a substantial field presence still require more resources to ensure adequately the safety and security of their staff and premises. In the case of WHO, current spending on safety and security related costs is estimated at 1% of the overall budget.

16. In the light of these considerations, the Director-General now proposes that a centralized trust fund should be established for the safety and security of staff and premises. The account would be funded by multiple sources, including assessed and voluntary contributions as well as miscellaneous income. Biennial budgets would propose amounts to be placed in the fund, and set out the expected expenditures. This would mean that, where appropriate, voluntary funded projects would include a line item for a contribution to the security of staff and premises. The Proposed programme budget 2012–2013 would be the first to include such a trust fund.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

17. The Board is invited to provide guidance on the Director-General's proposal, with a view to submitting to the Health Assembly for its consideration a long-term, sustainable funding mechanism for the safety and security of WHO staff and premises.

ANNEX

**ESTIMATED REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFETY, SECURITY
AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS**
(in US\$ million)

Location (major offices, including country offices)	Major repairs/ alterations to buildings	Acquisitions of land and construction of buildings	Safety and security of buildings and premises	Non-building safety and security	Total
African Region	1.6	2.7	1.5	11.0	16.8
Region of the Americas	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.6
South-East Asia Region	2.1	3.2	0.6	1.5	7.4
European Region	0.4	0.0	1.2	0.8	2.4
Eastern Mediterranean Region	1.8	1.5	6.7	9.4	19.4
Western Pacific Region	1.3	0.7	0.1	2.6	4.7
Headquarters	4.3	1.0	30.6	1.4	37.3
Total	11.6	9.1	40.9	27.0	88.6

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