



*executive committee of
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



54th Meeting
Washington, D. C.
April 1966

Provisional Agenda Item 11

CE54/6 (Eng.)
24 March 1966
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

Pursuant to Resolution XXXVI of the XVI Meeting of the Directing Council, the Director of the Bureau invited an Expert Committee to prepare a final draft of standards for the Americas for the international transportation of human remains.

Because of the peculiar nature of the subject, the Expert Committee was composed of representatives of health services and consular, diplomatic, and customs officials. The Committee met in Washington, D. C. from 13 to 15 December 1965 and received the advisory services of the Technical Unit on Tourism of the Pan American Union and of the National Funeral Directors Association of the United States of America.

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau furnished the Secretariat of the meeting as well as the pertinent administrative background material and the Report prepared by a Study Group which had met in 1965, plus a collection of the legislation currently in force in the Americas on this subject.

The Committee unanimously approved the following statement:

"The greater ease of communications today and the considerable increase in tourism make the international transportation of human remains a matter of practical interest that justifies the establishment of uniform standards.

The international transportation of human remains should be simplified so as not to increase the problems of the families with complicated and unnecessary procedures that appear to overlook the moral and social considerations involved in such cases.

It is possible to simplify the administrative procedures involved in obtaining authorization for the international transportation of human remains if it is borne in mind that, contrary to a deep-rooted opinion, a corpse does not constitute a health risk even when death was due to a quarantinable disease, since its power to infect disappears when it is suitably embalmed.

Embalming might become the general practice in the countries of the Americas since it is the most appropriate method of preserving human remains; however, this in no ways implies that other, simpler, and equally effective methods, cannot also be used."

In addition, the Committee approved the general standards appearing in its Final Report. (Annex I).

There was unanimous agreement on the standards, save on a single point, item d. of Regulation 4, which called for "Authorization for the shipment of the body, if necessary." To it Mr. Scott C. Lyon (United States) presented the following reservation:

"It is recommended that Article 4.d be deleted. This requirement for a document authorizing shipment of the body is likely to lead to unnecessary bureaucratic complications and delays, since it implies the need for a formal document, with attendant problems of authentication and proof of competence to authorize shipment, whereas at present these matters are generally handled on an informal basis. In our experience, the transit permit (see Article 4.c) is sufficient formal evidence of authorization for moving the body."

In late December 1965 the Director of the Bureau sent the Final Report of the Expert Committee to the Governments of the Organization and at the same time asked for their opinion on how to achieve uniform legislation in the countries of the Americas.

Up to the date of preparation of this document, the following Governments had replied: Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, and Venezuela. The following countries acknowledged receipt of the Report and stated that the draft general standards were under study: Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Mexico. Replies were also received from the competent authorities of Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, and Montserrat.

The replies are generally favorable to the proposed standards, but some include interesting remarks. It seems to be the general opinion that the matter should be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Pan American Sanitary Conference, to be held in Washington, D. C. in late September 1966.

In compliance with paragraph 3 of Resolution XXXVI mentioned earlier, the Director of the Bureau has the honor to submit to the Executive Committee for consideration the Draft Standards prepared by the Expert Committee and the observations made by the Governments and health authorities of the Americas (See Annexes), and to invite the Executive Committee to make recommendations on the measures to be adopted in the matter of international transportation of human remains.

CE54/6 (Eng.)
ANNEX I

F I N A L R E P O R T

of the

EXPERT COMMITTEE

on

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

FINAL REPORT

The Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains met in Washington, D.C., from 13 to 15 December 1965 at the Headquarters of the Pan American Health Organization at the invitation by the Director of the Bureau who had established the Committee to comply with the instructions received from the XVI Meeting of the Directing Council to prepare a final draft on standards for the Americas on international transportation of human remains.

MEMBERS

The following members attended the meeting:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Mr. William M. Annetti | Chief Technical Section Memorial Division Department of the Army United States of America |
| Mr. José Camacho | Minister Embassy of Colombia Washington, D. C. |
| Dr. Oscar C. Croxatto | Chief, Pathology Service Hospital Muñiz Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| Dr. John H. Hughes | Chief, Entomology and Sanitation US Public Health Service United States of America |
| Dr. Louis Jacobs | Chief, Division of Foreign Quarantine US Public Health Service United States of America |
| Mr. Solomon S. Lutchman | Counsellor to the Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago Washington, D. C. |
| Mr. Scott C. Lyon | Deputy Director Office of Special Consular Services Department of State United States of America |
| Mr. Joel Medina | Chief, Consular and Maritime Dept. Ministry of Finance and Treasury Panama |

Dr. Guillermo Román Carrillo

Director of Biostatistics
Ministry of Health
Mexico

Mr. Héctor Ramiro Ruano

Assistant Director General
of Customs
Ministry of Finance and Public
Credit
Guatemala

Mr. Ricardo Stubbs

First Secretary
Embassy of Peru
Washington, D.C.

The following persons attended as observers:

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Mr. Francisco J. Hernández

Chief, Technical Unit on
Tourism
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Economic and Social Affairs
Pan American Union

Dr. José Pérez Colón

Specialist,
Technical Unit on Tourism
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Economic and Social Affairs
Pan American Union

NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Edward C. Johnson

Chairman, International
Relations and Transportation
Committee

Mr. Frank E. Fairchild, Jr.

Member, International
Relations and Transportation
Committee

The Secretariat of the meeting was composed of the following officers
of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau:

Dr. John C. Cutler

Deputy Director, PASB,
Representative of the Director

Dr. José Quero Molares

Technical Secretary

Mr. Enrique D. Cueto

Officer in Charge of
Secretarial Services

WORKING DOCUMENTS

The Secretariat prepared and made available to the members of the Committee documentation classified in two sections. The first, comprising background material, included the following documents:

Letter of the Chairman, International Relations and Transportation Committee, National Funeral Directors Association of the United States, Inc., dated 11 December 1962, addressed to Dr. James Watt, Assistant Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service

Letter of 1 September 1964 from Dr. James Watt to Dr. Abraham Horwitz, Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

Letter sent by Dr. Abraham Horwitz on 4 September 1964 to Dr. James Watt

Document presented to the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Pan American Health Organization (Washington, D.C., 19-23 April 1965) (Document CE52/17)

Presentation and discussion of Item 19 at the ninth plenary session of the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of PAHO

Resolution XVIII, approved by the ninth plenary session of the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of PAHO

Document presented to the XVI Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (Washington, D.C., 27 September/ 8 October 1965) (Document CD16/27)

- Annex I: Document presented to the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Committee
- Annex II: Information received since the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Committee
- Annex III: Report of the Study Group on International Transportation of Human Remains
- Appendix I: Draft Proposal for International Transportation of Human Remains - General Standards for the Americas

Presentation and discussion of Item 32 at the fifteenth plenary session of the XVI Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO

Resolution XXXVI, approved at the fifteenth plenary session of the XVI Meeting of the Directing Council

The second section contained the international and national laws and regulations in force regarding the transportation of human remains from one country to another, as follows:

Resolution 14, Third Session of the Executive Board, World Health Organization

International arrangement concerning the conveyance of corpses (Berlin Convention of 1937)

Legislación vigente en las Américas sobre transporte internacional de cadáveres

Other documents before the Committee were the detailed Mexican regulations for the transportation of human remains; the documents from the Air Transport Association of America, provided by the Technical Unit on Tourism of the Organization of American States; two letters one from the Laboratory Department and the other from NIAID of the United States Government; a model certificate from the State of Massachusetts; and a letter from the Johnson Mortuary.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

At its first session the Committee approved the draft rules of procedure prepared by the Secretariat, which read as follows:

OFFICERS

Rule 1

At its first session the Committee shall elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Rapporteur. These, together with the Director of the Organization, or his representative, and the Technical Secretary, shall constitute the officers.

All of the sessions of the Committee shall be plenary sessions and shall be of a private character. The Committee may constitute Working Groups if it is considered necessary.

QUORUM

Rule 2

The discussions of the Committee shall be invalid:

- (a) unless at least two-thirds of its members are present, and,
- (b) if a representative of the Director is not also present.

VOTE

Rule 3

(a) Scientific and technical questions. Scientific or technical questions shall not be submitted to a vote. If the members of the Committee cannot agree, each shall be entitled to retain and express his personal opinion; this statement of opinion shall take the form of an individual or group report, which shall state the reasons why a divergent opinion is held.

(b) Other questions (administrative, etc.). Questions which are not purely scientific or technical may be submitted to a vote, and the decision of the Committee shall in such cases be taken to a majority of the members present and voting. If the votes are equally divided, the Chairman shall have the casting vote.

METHOD OF VOTING

Rule 4

At the request of any member a vote by secret ballot or by roll-call may be taken.

DIVISION OF VOTE

Rule 5

Parts of a recommendation or motion may be voted on separately if any member of the Committee so requests.

AMENDMENTS

Rule 6

(a) Plurality of amendments. If two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Committee shall first vote on the one which is furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then on the one which is the next furthest removed in substance, and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

(b) Nature of amendments. Where an amendment revises, supplements, or reduces the scope of a recommendation or motion, the amendment shall first be put to the vote. If it is adopted, the revised recommendation or motion shall then be put to the vote.

POINT OF ORDER

Rule 7

During the discussion of any question, a member may raise a point of order, and the Chairman shall give his ruling on the point of order immediately.

ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE

Rule 8

During a discussion of any matter, a member may move the adjournment of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority in the debate. The proposer may speak in favour of it and one other member against it.

LIMITATION OF SPEECHES

Rule 9

The Committee may limit the time allowed to each speaker.

CLOSURE OF DEBATE

Rule 10

At any time a member may move the closure of the debate, whether or not any other member has signified his wish to speak. Any such motion shall have priority in the debate. If permission to speak against the closure has been requested, it may be accorded to not more than one member. The Chairman shall take the opinion of the Committee on a motion for closure. If the Committee is in favour of closure, the Chairman shall declare the debate closed.

SECRETARIAT OF THE MEETING

Rule 11

The secretariat shall be provided by officials placed at the disposal of the Committee by the Director; these officials shall assist the Rapporteur in the preparation of the final report of the Committee.

The Director, or his representative, may at any time make either oral or written statements concerning any questions under consideration.

FINAL REPORT

Rule 12

The final report of the Committee shall be approved before the close of the meeting.

WORKING LANGUAGES

Rule 13

The working languages of the Committee shall be English and Spanish.

AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 14

These Rules may be amended or supplemented by adoption of a decision in agreement with the Director of the Organization or his representative.

METHOD AND HOURS OF WORK

The Committee decided to devote the first plenary session to a general discussion of the problems indicated by the Deputy Director of the Bureau, and another two sessions to the formulation of standards governing the international transportation of human remains in the Americas.

The Committee, by proposal of Dr. John C. Cutler, was guided in its discussion by the draft standards prepared by the Working Group on the international transportation of human remains (Document CD16/27, Annex III, Appendix I).

A working party composed by Dr. Croxato, Dr. Román, Mr. Annetti and Mr. Medina, the Rapporteur acting as Chairman, was charged with the preparation of a new draft of the general standards in the light of the views expressed in the course of the debates.

The hours of work approved were from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 to 5 p.m.

OFFICERS

Pursuant to Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure, the Officers were as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Chairman | Dr. Louis Jacobs |
| Vice-Chairman | Dr. Oscar Croxatto |
| Rapporteur | Mr. Joel Medina |
| Representative of the Director | Dr. John C. Cutler |
| Technical Secretary | Dr. José Quero Molares |

SESSIONS

Three plenary sessions and a closing session were held. At the closing session the present Final Report was approved. The Chairman of the Committee was entrusted with its transmittal to the Director.

DRAFT STANDARDS

The Committee unanimously approved the following declaration:

The greater ease of communications today and the considerable increase in tourism make the international transportation of human remains a matter of practical interest that justifies the establishment of uniform standards.

The international transportation of human remains should be simplified so as not to increase the problems of the families with complicated and unnecessary procedures that appear to overlook the moral and social considerations involved in such cases.

It is possible to simplify the administrative procedures involved in obtaining authorization for the international transportation of human remains if it is borne in mind that, contrary to a deep-rooted opinion, a corpse does not constitute a health risk even when death was due to a quarantinable disease, since its power to infect disappear when it is suitably embalmed.

Embalming might become the general practice in the countries of the Americas since it is the most appropriate method of preserving human remains; however, this in no way implies that other, simpler, and equally effective methods, cannot also be used.

The Committee also approved the following general standards with a reservation concerning Article 4.d presented by Mr. Scott C. Lyon (see Annex).

Definitions

Article 1. International transportation of human remains is understood to be the shipment of the body from the country where the death occurred to the country of its final destination immediately after either death or disinterment.

Article 2. The transportation of bodies between frontier districts within 48 hours after death shall not be subject to these standards.

Article 3. For the purposes of these standards an impervious coffin shall be any container or box, of whatever material, which can be hermetically sealed by lining or encasing in plastic, rubber, metal or similar material either by the fact of sealing, soldering or by adding adhesive materials.

Documentation

Article 4. For international transportation of human remains, the following documents shall be required:

- a. An official certificate of death issued by the local registrar of death, or similar authority.

- b. A certified statement by the person authorized to prepare the remains, indicating the manner and method in which the body was prepared and indicating that the coffin contains only the body in question and necessary clothing and packing;
- c. A transit permit stating the surname, first name, and age of the deceased person, issued by the competent authority for the place of death, or the place of burial in the case of exhumed human remains, and
- d. Authorization for the shipment of the body, if necessary.

Health Measures

Article 5. The human remains shall be subject to the following measures:

- a. Thorough washing with an effective disinfectant; disinfection of all orifices; packing of all orifices with cotton saturated with an effective disinfectant; wrapping in a sheet saturated with an effective disinfectant; and placing in an impervious coffin; or
- b. Proper embalming (arterial and cavity) and placement in an impervious coffin.

Shipment Requirements

Article 6. Human remains prepared for international shipment must be placed in an impervious coffin. Where the cause of death was a quarantinable disease, as defined in the International Sanitary Regulations, the human remains must be embalmed (arterial and cavity) and placed in an impervious coffin.

The impervious coffin must thereupon be hermetically sealed and may be shipped without any other covering (except in the case of shipment by sea), or for protective purposes may be fitted in a wooden box, or one made of other material, so as to prevent movement; or may be wrapped in a specially designed fabric.

Transportation by land, air and sea

Article 7. The following regulations shall apply to the transportation by rail:

- a. The impervious coffin may be transported in the baggage compartment of a passenger car.

- b. Each country shall be responsible for fixing the time limit within which the body must be removed at its final destination.

In case of transportation by road the impervious coffin must be conveyed preferably on a closed hearse or failing such, in an ordinary closed van (truck) or automobile, placed in such a way as to prevent movement.

The impervious coffin may be conveyed also in the baggage compartment of a passenger aircraft or in a cargo aircraft and may be equipped with a vent or safety valve provided that precautions are taken to prevent the escape of liquids or noxious gases.

In case of transportation by sea the impervious coffin, in order to preclude movement, must be packed in an ordinary wooden case, or one made of other material, or may be placed in a specially designed fabric container.

Common Provision

Article 8. Regardless of the mode of transportation, wreaths, flowers, and other similar funeral articles may be sent with the coffin only when it is permitted by the provisions in force in the country to which it is being sent.

Final Provisions

Article 9. The above formalities may be reduced either through bilateral agreements or by joint decision in particular cases.

Article 10. The transportation of ashes shall not be subject to health or other special measures.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Committee, together with the Representative of the Director and the Technical Secretary, sign the present Final Report in the English and Spanish languages.

DONE in Washington, D.C., on the fifteenth day of December, nineteen hundred and sixty-five.

(s.) Dr. Louis Jacobs
Chairman

(s.) Dr. John C. Cutler
Deputy Director, PASB,
Representative of the Director

(s.) Mr. Joel Medina
Rapporteur

(s.) Dr. José Quero Molares
Technical Secretary

ANNEX

RESERVATION CONCERNING ARTICLE 4.d,

PRESENTED BY MR. SCOTT C. LYON

It is recommended that Article 4.d be deleted. This requirement for a document authorizing shipment of the body is likely to lead to unnecessary bureaucratic complications and delays, since it implies the need for a formal document, with attendant problems of authentication and proof of competence to authorize shipment, whereas at present these matters are generally handled on an informal basis. In our experience, the transit permit (see Article 4.c) is sufficient formal evidence of authorization for moving the body.

CE54/6 (Eng.)
ANNEX II

REPLIES FROM GOVERNMENTS

(SEAL)

(TRANSLATION)

Argentine Republic
National Executive Power
Ministry of Social Welfare and
Public Health

Buenos Aires, 28 February 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525, 23rd Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037
U. S. A.

Dear Sir:

At the request of the Minister, I am pleased to reply to your letter LO-CL-28-65 concerning the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains.

The Ministry has considered the Draft Standards adopted by the Committee and finds them as to form and concept, in accord with the country's opinion in this regard.

As to the legislative aspect, it is believed that Article 4 might envisage certification, by the Consul of the country of destination of the documents mentioned in the various paragraphs of this article, a step that would not cause delay and would give official support to the transaction.

It is further believed that the most effective way to follow in seeking to obtain uniform legislation in this regard in the countries of the Americas would be an international treaty.

Yours very sincerely,

Note No. 10 - 5/66.-

(SEAL)

(sgd)

Dr. Victorio V. Olguin
Department of International,
Social, and Public Health
Affairs

Department of International
Social and Public Health Affairs
Paseo Colón 255 - 7th floor
Buenos Aires, Argentina

(TRANSLATION)

Republic of Colombia
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Palace of Ministers, 6th floor
Bogota, D. E.
Telegrams and Cables: "Minsalud"

Division: ADMINISTRATION

No. 02860

Section:

Bogota, 2 March 1966

DIRECTOR,
PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter LO-CL-28-65 dated 27 December 1965.

It is the opinion of this Ministry that the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains is satisfactory, and it therefore has no changes to suggest.

As for the best procedure to follow for their adoption, we consider the second alternative you suggest more suitable, namely, that to submit them to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference for approval, and subsequently to recommend their adoption to the various Governments.

Very truly yours,

(sgd)
Roberto Acosta Borrero
Director of the Ministry

VCM/igh
c.c. Dr. Vásquez Vigo.

(TRANSLATION)

Republic of Colombia
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Palace of Ministers, 6th floor
Bogota, D. E.
Telegrams and Cables: "Minsalud"

Division: ADMINISTRATION

No. 02860

Section:

Bogota, 2 March 1966

DIRECTOR,
PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter LO-CL-28-65 dated 27 December 1965.

It is the opinion of this Ministry that the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains is satisfactory, and it therefore has no changes to suggest.

As for the best procedure to follow for their adoption, we consider the second alternative you suggest more suitable, namely, that to submit them to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference for approval, and subsequently to recommend their adoption to the various Governments.

Very truly yours,

(sgd)
Roberto Acosta Borrero
Director of the Ministry

VCM/igh
c.c. Dr. Vásquez Vigo.

(TRANSLATION)

(SEAL)

Dominican Republic
Secretariat of State of Health and
Social Welfare

Santo Domingo, D.N., 25 January 1966

JUR-No. 0581

Ref: Your IO-CL-28-65

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your request for an opinion on the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains, I am pleased to inform you that I have no objections to it.

I should like to inform you that the regulations on this subject in force in the Dominican Republic prohibit the transportation of the bodies of persons whose death was due to a quarantinable disease.

As for the best procedure for achieving the uniform legislation in the Americas, I believe that your second suggestion is best, namely that the draft standards should be submitted to the Pan American Sanitary Conference this year.

Very truly yours,

(signed)
Dr. Julio Espaillet R.
Minister of Health and Social
Welfare

(TRANSLATION)

EL SALVADOR
(SEAL)
Ministry of Public Health
and Social Welfare

Note No. 04486
File No. 105
Mail No. 1204

San Salvador, 4 March 1966
Section: Secretariat
Subject:

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letter LO-CL-38-65 with which you were good enough to enclose the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains which at your invitation met at the new Headquarters in Washington, D. C., from 13 to 15 December last year.

I have taken note of that report and have also informed the pertinent authorities. I am pleased to advise you that we have no objection whatever, including the elimination of paragraph d) of Regulation 4.

As to the procedure for achieving uniform legislation in the countries of Latin America, I believe the most advisable one would be to authorize the Ambassadors to the Organization of American States to approve the pertinent agreement.

Very truly yours,

(signed)
Benjamin Interiano
Minister

(Seal of the
Ministry)

(TRANSLATION)

H O N D U R A S

(SEAL)

Secretariat of State
Offices of the
Department of Public Health and Social Welfare

Tegucigalpa, 22 February 1966

Note No. 299-66

Dr. John C. Cutler
Deputy Director
Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your inquiry about the legal regulations for the international transportation of human remains, I am pleased to inform you that my country has incorporated those regulations (in accordance with the recommendations of the Expert Committee) into the Health Code which will be submitted to our Legislature in the near future. The articles included into our Code are the same as those recommended by the Expert Committee and they were included in common agreement with the PAHO/WHO Country Representative stationed here.

Very truly yours,

(signed)

Dr. José Antonio Peraza
Minister of Public Health and
Social Welfare

cc: Dr. José Ramón Quiñones, PAHO/WHO
Country Representative in Honduras
cc: Files

MINISTRY OF HEALTH,

21 SLIPE PEN ROAD,

P.O. BOX 478,

KINGSTON, JAMAICA.

Ref: HH 149/459/01

15th February, 1966

Dear Dr. Horwitz,

I acknowledge receipt of the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains which was forwarded with your LO-CL-28-65 dated 30th December, 1965. I consider it a very useful report.

I should like to make the following comments:

Article 3, page 8. I am a little concerned about the use of plastic material in conveying human remains. I question whether it affords sufficient "protection" against damage by luggage and other packages.

Article 4(a), page 8. For greater clarity, I suggest "certificate of cause of death" rather than "certificate of death".

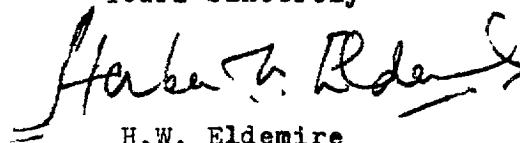
Article 6, page 9. I am still a bit concerned about "wrapped in a specially designed fabric".

Article 7, second paragraph on page 10. I am not clear about the impervious coffin being equipped with a vent or safety valve. If the coffin is to be impervious, it seems to me that this provision defeats the purpose.

Jamaica's representative will have an opportunity to discuss the matter when it is presented to the Executive Committee.

I support the second suggestion for dealing with the Report, i.e. that it be considered by the Executive Committee of the organisation for presentation to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference to be held in the Fall of 1966.

Yours sincerely



H.W. Eldemire
Minister of Health

Dr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director,
Pan American Health Organisation

(TRANSLATION)

P A N A M A

C A B L E

LT

5 MARCH 1966

OFSANPAN

WASHINGTON, D. C.

REUR LO-CL-28-65 TRANSPORTATION HUMAN REMAINS HEALTH MINISTER
SUPPORTS IDEA SUBMITTING DRAFT STANDARDS TO NEXT PAN AMERICAN
SANITARY CONFERENCE

DR. CALVO
DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH

(TRANSLATION)

Ministry of Public Health and
Social Welfare
Asunción, Paraguay

S. G. No. 25

18 February 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, PAHO/WHO
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

We are pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letter IO-CL-28-65 dated 27 December 1965.

We are pleased to inform you that the document in question was studied by the pertinent sections of this Department.

We have no objections to the interesting draft proposal, except that presented by Mr. Scott C. Lyon, whose opinion we share.

Very truly yours,

(signed)
Prof. Dr. Dionisio Gonzalez Torres
Minister

(TRANSLATION)

(SEAL)

Republic of Peru
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Lima, 1 March 1966

Note No. 251/66-DGS

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I refer to your circular letter No. LO-CL-28-65 under cover of which you sent me the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains. This Report has been examined by officials at the Ministry and it is their opinion that the proposals of the Committee will facilitate the essential procedures for transporting human remains.

As for the proposed procedure for official approval of the standards, we believe that the second is the most suitable; in other words, that the standards be submitted to the next meeting of the Pan American Sanitary Conference, after the Executive Committee has ascertained and taken the opinions of the Governments into consideration.

Very truly yours,

(sgd)

Daniel Becerra de la Flor
President of the Council of
Ministers and Minister of Public
Health and Social Welfare

cc:

No HE 1/4/29

In replying, the above number and date of this letter should be quoted

TBL 34241-EXT 20



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HOUSING,
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, "KNOWSLEY",
1, QUEEN'S PARK WEST,
PORT-OF-SPAIN

... 16th February, ... 1966

Sir,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter LO-GL-28-65 of 30th December, 1965, under cover of which you transmitted a copy of the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains.

The contents of the Report have been studied by the technical officers of this Ministry and they have agreed generally with the proposed standards.


They are in full agreement with Article 4(d) of the proposed standards and do not, therefore, support the reservation of Mr. Lyons of the United States of America. It is considered that human remains which are to be transported from one country to another, must not only be properly sealed from the point of view of public health and a certificate of cause of death accompany the remains, but some responsible Government officials should be satisfied that the remains being shipped is the corpse which is to be transported.

The standards should also provide for a casket to be so officially sealed that it would not be possible to break the seal. This precaution is considered necessary in order to prevent a corpse other than the authorised one from being transported.

With regard to the procedure to be followed to achieve uniform laws and regulations on international transportation of human remains, diplomatic negotiations as outlined by you in your letter would be quite appropriate except that Trinidad and Tobago also receive human remains from other sources such as for example the United Kingdom and it is uncertain whether the United Kingdom has observer status on the Council of the Organisation of American States. This observation also applies to the alternative method proposed.

It is considered that regardless of the procedure chosen, any decisions reached by the Pan American Health Organisation in this matter should be referred to the World Health Organisation with a view to achieving world-wide standardisation of the procedures.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,


Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Health and
Housing.

Dr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director,
PAHO/WHO,
525, Twenty-third Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20037,
U. S. A.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 15, 1966

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

The following views of the United States Government are submitted in reply to your letter of December 30, 1965 transmitting the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains.

The proposed standards for the international transportation of human remains contained in the above mentioned Report appear to be generally satisfactory. However, it seems to us that Article 4 (d) might be deleted as unnecessary in view of subparagraph (c) of the same Article. It is also suggested that Article 4 (b) be amended, in order to require the certification of a responsible public official on the required statement. This could be done by substituting the words "A statement signed by the person authorized to prepare the remains, and certified by an appropriate government official or notary public," for the words "A certified statement by the person authorized to prepare the remains."

It would be helpful in ensuring against unnecessary customs delays upon arrival if each shipment of remains were accompanied by copies of the documentation required under 4 (b) and (c). This would be

particularly

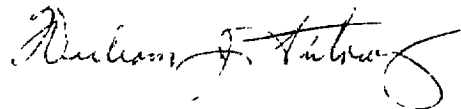
Dr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director,
Pan American Health Organization,
525 Twenty-Third Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C., 20037.

particularly important in the case of any hermetically sealed coffin. We suggest, therefore, that the following new unlettered paragraph be added to Article 4:

"Copies of the documentation required under subparagraphs (b) and (c) above shall accompany the shipment of remains."

With respect to the procedure to be followed in bringing the proposed standards to the attention of governments, it is our view that this might most readily be done by resolution of the Pan American Sanitary Conference. This resolution should approve the standards and recommend their application by the countries concerned by legislative measures or in any other manner consistent with national conditions and practice. We do not think the resolution should confine itself to recommending the incorporation of the standards into national legislation. The requirement of legislation in our view would be open to the objections that it would tend to freeze procedures at the current technological level and would pose difficulties for those countries, like the United States, with a federal form of government.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William J. Stibravy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William J. Stibravy
Director, Office of International
Economic and Social Affairs

(TRANSLATION)

Republic of Venezuela
(SEAL)
Ministry of Public Health
and Social Welfare

General Department

Office of International
Public Health

Caracas, 15 February 1966

No. SI-258-66

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525 - 23rd Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

I refer to your letter LO-CL-28 of 27 December 1965 concerning the Draft Standards for the International Transportation of Human Remains. I am pleased to inform you that the juridical aspects were studied by the Legal Department of this Ministry, and the technical aspects by the Public Health Department.

Their opinions appear in the attached document. The Ministry believes in principle, that the standards proposed, with such changes as might be made as a result of the study currently under way in the Member Countries of the Organization, are acceptable and adequate for the purpose. As you will see, there is unanimous agreement that these standards should be submitted to the next meeting of the Pan American Sanitary Conference and not to a special meeting.

Very truly yours,

(sgd)
Domingo Guzmán L. (SEAL)
Minister of Public Health
and Social Welfare

DO/TgN.-

Attachment

DRAFT STANDARDS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

Opinions of the Legal Office

The amendment of our current legislation on this subject will be facilitated by the fact that it consists of an Executive Decree (Rules for Cemeteries, Burials, and Exhumations, dated 3 November 1948) and is not a Law. It will therefore be possible to incorporate any change advisable from an international standpoint into our national legislation without requiring the approval of our legislature.

As to the best procedure to follow to secure uniformity of standards and their adoption in the American countries, we prefer the alternative of submitting them to the Pan American Sanitary Conference at its forthcoming meeting in the Fall of 1966. After due study and possible changes, that body could recommend the adoption of these standards to all the Member Governments of the Pan American Health Organization.

Regarding the standards themselves, our comments are as follows:

1. The exception proposed by Article 2 implies that the transportation of bodies between frontier districts should not be subject to the same standards as those established by each country for long-distance shipment. We are aware that the exception is intended to avoid the negotiations required by shipment from one country to another because usually the distance between frontier districts is short. Nevertheless, to what extent can we consider districts to be frontier districts when their extreme points are very far apart? And in such a case, would it not be preferable for the shipment to be made according to international standards?

2. It is our belief that the "certified statement by the person authorized to prepare the remains indicating the manner and method in which the body was prepared" that Article 4.b calls for as the essential formal document required to effect shipment will make for delays and difficult negotiations. In effect, in requiring the statement to be certified, it means that the document must be notarized; in other words, that the signature and the qualifications of the persons who have intervened must be authenticated, and that is a slow and complex procedure. Moreover, it is especially serious because the remains may be held back from being shipped to their final destination until such time as that notarization has been completed.

We therefore recommend that certified statement be changed to some other word such as certificate, or declaration, which does not require the completion of cumbersome formalities.

3. We consider that the reservation concerning Article 4.d presented by Mr. Scott G. Lyon is very much to the point. The authorization he objects to calls for official steps cause unnecessary difficulties that can

very well be avoided extra-officially. Furthermore, the requirements in items a), b), and c) of the article are sufficient to identify the body and meet the conditions for legal transportation.

We believe that in addition to the exact identification of the body or exhumed remains, the outside of the coffin should also bear a paper label or tag of appropriate size affixed to it in a conspicuous place.

4. Regarding the first paragraph in Article 7, we believe that the preference it alludes to refers exclusively the closed hearse, and that, only failing such, will the other alternatives be used. As the text now reads it does not clearly indicate which vehicle is preferred, and we therefore recommend that the paragraph be changed to read as follows: "In case of transportation by road, the impervious coffin will be conveyed preferably on a closed hears or, failing such, in an ordinary closed van (truck) or automobile, placed in such a way as to prevent movement".

5. As to the last item of the same article, which refers to transportation by sea, we consider that transportation by river and lake should be added also. The text should therefore be changed to read: "In the case of transportation by sea, river, or lake, the impervious coffin, etc.".

By and large, the purpose of these standards is praiseworthy, especially from the humanitarian point of view; also, because the standards are in keeping with the constant advances being made in modern communications, which circumstances should be borne in mind to support the adoption of the standards on an international scale.

Opinions of the Public Health Department

1. Should the Governments consulted unanimously agree that the standards such as those proposed are necessary and advisable, then the most practical step would be to present a definitive or quasi-definitive document to the Pan American Sanitary Conference which is scheduled to meet in the Fall of 1966. A Treaty, which requires ratification, takes too long and is really not warranted by this matter.

2. As to the standards themselves, they will probably be most useful in cases of recent death or embalmed bodies, but no mention is made of exhumations. It sometimes happens that soon after burial a request for exhumation and transportation is received. In Venezuela the regulations leave it to the discretion of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to grant the permit if less than five years have elapsed since burial; after a longer interval no health permit is required.

3. In addition to the identification appearing in the documents, it is considered advisable for an immovable plaque or other appropriate device giving minimum information for purposes of identification to be affixed to the coffin. That information may be limited to the name, age, sex, and place of final destination of the body.

4. Article 2 of the standards provides a what in practice may be a highly debatable exception since the transportation of bodies between

frontier districts within 48 hours after death is exempted from the international standards. Article 5 offers two alternatives; washing with an effective disinfectant or embalming; it should be borne in mind that if either of these procedures is not applied and the coffin is not impermeable, the resultant circumstances will be highly disagreeable, especially in torrid zones where decomposition sets in even before 24 hours have elapsed.

5. The first paragraph of Article 6 does not except any quarantinable disease, and in part this is logical. But it should be remembered that Pasteurella pestis can survive in bone marrow for a month or more; also, that although in the case of rats, fleas leave the dead animal as soon as its body begins to cool, in the case of human bodies, fleas may remain in the clothing or other body covering, and such fleas may be infected, with the natural consequences in the case of transportation or embalming, especially if it is borne in mind that at present plague is a rural disease. It could therefore happen that in some cases the cause of death may not have been diagnosed because no doctor was in attendance and, no measures were taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

6. The final part of Article 7 should perhaps be clarified, for, if it is not to permit the escape of liquids or gases? the purpose of a vent or safety valve in the coffin is not very clear.

7. It might be advisable to make it a requirement for every shipment by air or sea that the impervious coffin be placed in a properly secure wooden box.

8. The reservation to Article 4.d presented by Mr. Scott C. Lyon seems reasonable, and we would be in favor of deleting that requirement.

(TRANSLATION)

OF.CAI/014/66

Committee on International Affairs

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

14 January 1966

Dear Sir:

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains.

The matter will be studied by the competent national authorities and their observations will be sent to you in due course.

Yours very truly,

(signed)

Murillo Belchior
Executive Director

Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525 23rd Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Ref: IO-CL-28-65 PAHO

MINISTER OF
NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE



MINISTRE DE LA
SANTÉ NATIONALE ET DU BIEN-ÊTRE SOCIAL

CANADA

OTTAWA

January 28, 1966.

Dr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director,
Pan American Sanitary Bureau,
525 - 23rd Street N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20037.

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

This will acknowledge receipt of your communication of 30 December 1965, your reference LO-CL-28-65, transmitting the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains which met in Washington, D.C., from 13 to 15 December 1965.

You have also requested that I have the Report, including the general standards approved by the Committee, examined by pertinent authorities and convey any observations which may be made. You also submit for my consideration alternate methods and procedure to be followed in order to achieve uniform laws and regulations on this subject in all countries in the Americas and invite an expression of the opinion of the Canadian Government in this regard.

I am pleased to advise at this time that steps have been initiated to comply with both requests you have made and I would point out, as you will readily appreciate, that in order to obtain a consensus viewpoint, it will be necessary to consult with other agencies who would be concerned. Would you, therefore, consider this as an interim reply with the assurance that a more definitive expression of our views will be forthcoming prior to the indicated date of 7 March 1966.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Allan MacEachen'.
Allan J. MacEachen.

(TRANSLATION)

(SEAL)

Ministry of Public Health
Republic of Costa Rica

No. 580-66

San José, 12 February 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525 23rd Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Sir:

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. IO-CL-29-65 of 27 December 1965 under cover of which you sent the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains, which met at the new Headquarters building of the Organization in Washington, D.C., from 13 to 15 December 1965.

Yours very truly,

(signed)

Dr. Oscar F. Tristán
Minister

Copy: Files

(TRANSLATION)

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Republic of Guatemala
Department of International
Treaties and Organizations

Number: 312

Classification I-OAS-10.3.4.

Guatemala City, 4 January 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. IO-CL-28-65 dated 27 December 1965, with which you sent a copy of the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains, which met in Washington, D. C., from 13 to 15 December 1965.

I am pleased to inform you that the appropriate national authorities have already been requested to give their comments and observations on the matter, and these will be forwarded to you as soon as they are received.

Yours very truly,

(signed)
Gustavo Santiso Galvez
Director, International Treaties
and Organizations

(TRANSLATION)

Dr. M. B. Márquez Escobedo
Kepler No. 76, México 5, D. F.

México, D. F., 10 January 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525 23rd Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

I have just received a copy of the Final Report on the Meeting of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains which was held in Washington, D. C., from 13 to 15 December 1965.

In thanking you, I take the opportunity of wishing you a prosperous and happy 1966.

Very sincerely yours,

(signed)
M. B. Márquez Escobedo

cc: Mr. José Quero Molares
PAHO Foreign Relations Officer
525-23rd St., N. W.
Washington, D. C.

C 6.



Communications on this subject
should be addressed to—

Administration Building

~~THE SECRETARY OF DEFENCE~~
~~THE SECRETARY OF DEFENCE~~
Administrator
ANTIGUA

Antigua.

and the following
Number quoted: A. 8/19

3rd March, 1966.

Sir,

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OF
HUMAN REMAINS

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter LO-CL- 28-65 of the 30th December, 1965 enclosing a copy of the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains, which met in Washington, D.C., from 13th to 15th December, 1965.

As requested in your letter the general standards for transportation approved by the Committee have been examined by the pertinent authorities in this territory and I am pleased to inform you that the practices obtaining in Antigua for some considerable time conform to the said standards.

In regard to the question of the method of procedure which should be followed in order to achieve uniform laws and regulations on this subject in all countries of the Americas, it is the opinion of this Government that the simple alternative of referring the matter to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference should be adopted.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

O. Singh
Administrator
Antigua.

Mr. Abraham Horwitz
Director
Pan American Health Organisation
525 Twenty-Third Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20037
U.S.A.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
BAHAMAS.

8th February, 1966

Ref. 144

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter No. LO-CL-28-65 of 30th December, 1965, addressed to His Excellency the Governor and to say that the practices recommended by the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains are in fact followed in the Bahamas.

2. The rules followed rest at the present time upon international practice and not upon specific legislation. The introduction of legislation will be considered at a suitable time.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHIEF SECRETARY.

The Director,
Pan American Health Organization,
525, 23rd, Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037,
U. S.A.

*Ministry of Health
and Community Development,
Barbados*

____ 9th February, 1966. ____

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter LQ-CL-28-65 dated 30th December, 1965, enclosing the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains and to state that local regulations differ in some important respects from the proposals contained in the Report.

2. The Public Health (Importation and Exportation of Human Remains) Regulations, 1959 stipulate that

- (i) the body must be embalmed
- (ii) death must not have been due to a quarantinable disease
- (iii) the body must be placed in a hermetically sealed metal coffin and encased in a wooden coffin or box.

3. No objection to the new proposals can be foreseen, inasmuch as their adoption is unlikely to lead to health hazards. Their adoption, however, would necessarily involve amendments to local regulations.

4. It is hoped that any aesthetic problems which might arise by the relaxation of the embalming requirements will have been given due consideration by the experts.

Yours faithfully,

J. Barker
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Health and Community
Development.

Mr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director,
PAHO/WHO,
525 Twenty-third Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C.,
20037 U.S.A.

Nº2069/S.1

IN REPLYING, THE ABOVE NUMBER
AND DATE OF THIS LETTER SHOULD
BE QUOTED

*Ministry of Health
and Community Development,
Barbados*

11th February, 1966

Sir,

Further to my letter ref. 2069/1 of 9th February, 1966 in reply to your LO-CL-28-65 dated 30th December, 1965, I am to inform you that it is considered that the second possibility, which would be to present the proposed standards together with the opinions expressed by the Governments and the Executive Committee of the Organisation to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference, should be adopted.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Health and Community Development.

Mr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director, PAHO/WHO.,
525 Twenty-third Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C., 20037.,
U.S.A.

bpj.

DOMINICA

NO. L & S.S.3/39^{II}

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SERVICES,
DOMINICA,
WEST INDIES.

1st March, 1966

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter of 30th December, 1965, in connection with the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains, and to say that the standards recommended are acceptable to this territory.

Government however, favours the second possibility as outlined in your letter under reference, as the best procedure to be followed in adopting the standards recommended.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

V.L. Shaw
(V.L. SHAW)

Acting Principal Secretary
Ministry of Labour & Social Services.

The Director,

Pan American Health Organization,

Pan American Sanitary Bureau,

Regional Office of the World Health

Organization,

525 Twenty-Third Street, N.W.,

Washington, D.C., 20037,

U.S.A.

ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE,

PLYMOUTH,

MONTSERRAT, W.I.

Your ref. _____

Our ref. M.51/26-VI

11th February, 1966

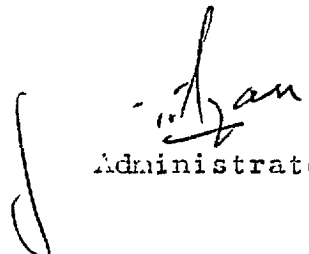
Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter No. LC-CL-28-65 of 30th December, 1965, together with the Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains.

In so far as this island is concerned the Honourable Attorney General and the Senior Medical Officer have both advised that in respect to paragraph 8 of Article 4 of the report "As long as "a" is provided there is no necessity for "c". It is, therefore, considered that a, b, and d are adequate.

The matter relating to the methods of procedure to be followed in order to achieve uniform laws and regulations on the subject, will be referred to the appropriate authority and its observations will be transmitted to you in due course.

Yours faithfully,


Administrator.

The Director,
PAHO/WHO,
525 Twenty-third Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20037,
United States of America.

TER/cv1.



*executive committee of
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



54th Meeting
Washington, D. C.
April 1966

Provisional Agenda Item 11

CE54/6 (Eng.)
Addendum I
18 April 1966
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH-SPANISH

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

R E P L I E S F R O M G O V E R N M E N T S

(TRANSLATION)

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MINISTER'S PRIVATE OFFICE
International Affairs Committee

Rio de Janeiro, Guanabara State

4 April 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525 23rd Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

In reply to letter number IO-CL-28-65 from your Organization, I have pleasure in informing you that the Minister of Health is in complete agreement with the draft standards, except that he makes the same reservation as that presented by Dr. Scott C. Lyon with respect to Article 4 d, for which he sees no need.

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

Murillo Belchior
Executive Director

MB/IFS/Lvc.



BRITISH HONDURAS

Please Quote

No. 4025/11/66 (4)

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
AND HEALTH
BELIZE CITY.

26 March, 1966.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of 30th December, 1965, about international transportation of human remains, I am to inform you that most of the general standards approved by the Committee are already being followed by the medical and health authorities in this country. The other proposals made by the Committee appear to be generally acceptable.

It is assumed that the other point raised in your letter, that is, the method of the procedure to be followed in order to achieve uniform laws and regulations on this subject, will be taken up with the United Kingdom Government.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,


(G.M. Young)

Principal Secretary.

The Director,
Pan American Health Organisation
525 Twenty-third St., N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20037,
U. S. A.

gb

(TRANSLATION)

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Bolivia

La Paz, Bolivia
1 April 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau,
Regional Office of the World Health
Organization

Sir:

The Ministry of Public Health of Bolivia has reviewed and examined the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains, which contains Draft Standards for that purpose.

The Government of Bolivia is in agreement with the report and the Draft Standards except that it wishes to make a reservation with respect to Article 4 which clearly refers more to bureaucratic formalities than to requirements for the treatment of human remains.

As to how to achieve uniform legislation in the countries of the Americas the Ministry of Public Health of Bolivia agrees that the Draft Standards should be submitted to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference to be held in the autumn of this year.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

(Firmado)
Dr. Carlos Ardiles I.
Minister of Public Health

MINISTER OF
NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE



MINISTRE DE LA
SANTÉ NATIONALE ET DU BIEN-ÊTRE SOCIAL

OTTAWA

March 31, 1966.

Dr. Abraham Horwitz,
Director,
Pan American Sanitary Bureau,
525 - 23rd Street N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Doctor Horwitz:

I have your letter of December 30, last, your reference LO-CL-28-65. I have delayed my reply in order that I might examine carefully the situation as it would involve the matters referred to in the proposed recommendation. I hope that this delay does not cause you any inconvenience.

You will appreciate that questions relating to the preparation and transportation of human remains in Canada fall essentially within provincial jurisdiction. I am advised that the subject of simple but uniform arrangements with respect to the transportation of human remains in Canada is already being considered by the provinces in co-operation with the transportation agencies. It is hoped that as a result of the consideration which is being given, arrangements of a satisfactory and uniform kind may result. This, you will appreciate, is not a matter which directly comes within my responsibility.

It may be that the proposals as set forth in the report of the Expert Committee would be relevant to the consideration which is presently being given to this matter at the levels that I have mentioned. If you think it would be helpful, I would be prepared to forward copies of the report to the various provincial authorities that might be concerned and invite observations which I would then be glad to transmit to you for your consideration.

It may be, of course, that many of the matters which are contained in the report are already within existing provincial practices and I am sure information of this kind would be helpful to you.

You have directly raised the matter of procedure in connection with the development of the report. In view of the constitutional position as I have explained it, coupled with the possibility of receiving helpful views from the provinces, I think it would be inappropriate at this time for me to express any view.

I hope the above comments may be helpful to you and I would welcome your further views.

Yours sincerely,


Allan J. MacEachen.

(TRANSLATION)

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

No. 1289-66

San José, 1 April 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525-23rd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
USA

Sir:

Further to my letter No. 580-66 of 12 February 1966 concerning the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains, I am forwarding to you the opinion of the Director of our Epidemiological Department with which this Office is completely in agreement. It is as follows:

"The most logical thing to do would be to submit the Draft Standards to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference so they can be discussed in the light of the opinions expressed by the Governments and by the Executive Committee of the Organization. The decisions taken would be submitted to each Government for incorporation into their own legislation.

With respect to the Draft of the Standards presented by the Expert Committee this Directorate believes that they are complete and has no observations to offer."

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Dr. Oscar F. Tristán
MINISTER

OFT:mcm

Copy to: The WHO/PAHO Country Representative in Costa Rica
Files

(TRANSLATION)
Republic of Cuba
Ministry of Public Health

La Habana, 25 March 1966
"YEAR OF SOLIDARITY"

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director of the Pan American
Sanitary Bureau
525 Twenty-third Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A.

Sir:

In accordance with the instructions of the Minister of Public Health, Dr. José Ramón Machado Ventura, I am pleased to send you our observations on the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains, which met in Washington, D.C., from 13 to 15 December 1965.

This report was examined and studied by our officials specialized in this matter who advised that our country should subscribe to the Draft Standards received and at the same time suggested to us that we send you a copy of that part relating to the embarkation and disembarkation of human remains of the Special Instruction No. 1-67 of 20 July 1961, which constitutes the relevant legislation at present in force in our country. I am very pleased to enclose a copy of that instruction.

As to the view of our Government concerning the procedure to be followed to ensure the enactment of uniform legislation on this subject in the countries of the Americas, I should like to say that the first procedure suggested, namely the diplomatic one, must be rejected by us since Cuba is not a member of the OAS owing to the unjust and unbecoming policy of blockading our country which is practiced and maintained by the Government of the United States, which policy has been tolerated and ratified by that agency (OAS).

In our view the second procedure is the only correct and acceptable one for our country.

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

(sgn.)
Dr. Roberto Pereda Chavez
Director, International Relations

(TRANSLATION)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Guatemala
Treaty and International
Organizations Section

Number 7617
Classification: I-OEA-10.3.4.

Please refer to the number
and classification of this
letter

Guatemala, 29 March 1966

Doctor Abraham Horwitz
Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to your letter IO-CL-28-65, dated 27 December 1965, under cover of which you were good enough to ask me to let you have comments or observations of the national authorities concerning the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains, as well as recommendation on the method for incorporating these regulations into the legislation of each country.

In this regard I am pleased to send you herewith a photocopy of the memorandum dated 16 March sent to this Office by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, and containing the opinion of the Legal Adviser of this Ministry.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

(signed)
Lic. Gustavo Santiso Galvez
Director, Treaties and
International Agencies

(TRANSLATION)

Ministry of Public Health
and Social Welfare
Guatemala, C.A.

07160

Guatemala, 16 March 1966

Sir:

With regard to your memorandum No. 136 of 4 January concerning the letter reference LO-CL-28-65 of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, I enclose the opinion of the Legal Adviser of this Ministry, which this Office approves and which reads textually as follows:

"Guatemala, 4 March 1966. Subject: PAN AMERICAN SANITARY ORGANIZATION REQUESTS COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON REGULATIONS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROCEDURE FOR INCORPORATING THESE REGULATIONS INTO THE LEGISLATION OF EACH COUNTRY.

Sir: I have studied the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains and in this regard I should like to make the following comments:

- a) In the first place I should like to point out that in Guatemala the regulations governing the control of the transportation of human remains are to be found in Article 122 and 142 of the Health Code, which provide that the transportation of human remains between departments and by road is subject to authorization by the General Directorate of Public Health.

On 22 February 1945 this Ministry issued a decision according to which permits for the transportation of human remains will be issued by the General Directorate of Public Health or its offices in the departments and that that Directorate would issue the relevant rules.

- b) In practice, as I already reported, the only health requirement called for is that before a permit for the transportation of human remains is issued a medical certificate must be presented and that when this medical certificate of death shows that the death was caused by a quarantinable disease the permit for transportation shall be denied and immediate burial of the human remains be ordered. With respect to human remains that have been exhumed the same applies.

There is no requirement for the transportation or removal of ashes or remains which have been exhumed after the normal period prescribed for exhumation (four years when they were interred in a grave in the earth and six years when interred in a niche).

A form is completed in the General Directorate of Health which indicates the authorization. This authorization must be presented to the police authorities so that they may take note

of it. This is done so that the police authorities of the whole country, who are responsible for exercising general control, can verify that the remains are being transported with the authorization of the health authorities.

- c) In view of the absence of pertinent national legislation, it is recommended that the Regulations drawn up by the Expert Committee be adopted. They might be adopted, as is suggested by Dr. Horwitz, at the next Pan American Sanitary Conference, which will be held in the Fall of 1966, probably in Washington, U.S.A.
- d) I should like to suggest that Article 2 and Article 4 of the draft be modified. I believe that a final paragraph should be added to Article 2, reading as follows: "...shall not be subject to the standards but to such bilateral agreements as may be adopted in this regard".

Article 4, paragraph (c) should be modified and paragraph (d) should be suppressed since, as stated by the Representative of the United States, paragraph (d) is an unnecessary formality since the transit permit referred to in paragraph (c) can also be the authorization referred to in paragraph (d). Paragraph (c) could remain as follows: "... a transit permit stating the surname, first name and age of the deceased person, cause of death, place in which death occurred or, in the case of exhumed remains, place of burial. This permit shall be issued by the competent authority of the country despatching the body or human remains".

- e) The Guatemalan Delegate to the Expert Committee, Mr. Héctor Ramiro Ruano, has already reported to the General Health Directorate and the Subdirector of that Directorate has made pertinent comments which are included in the report, a copy of which I am pleased to attach. I also attach a copy of the form at present used by the General Health Directorate for granting authorization for transportation. I am, Sir, Yours truly, John Schwank Duran, Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare."

I should be grateful if you would please pass this information on to the person concerned.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

Minister of Foreign Affairs
National Palace

(TRANSLATION)

(CABLE)

ZCZC AWA634 GDA512 HDG303
UIWA CK HBPP 022
PORTAUPRINCEHAITI 22 6 1708

ETAT
OFSANPAN
WASHINGTON, D. C.

45 AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATE FULL AGREEMENT WITH REPORT EXPERT
COMMITTEE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION HUMAN REMAINS STOP GOVERNMENT
SENDING DOCUMENT

OFSANPAN

COLL 45

(TRANSLATION)

(SEAL)

Secretariat
of
Public Health and Welfare

Undersecretariat of Public Health
Technical Department
Office of International Affairs
Number 521
335/021

Subject: Standards on International Transportation of Human Remains

Mexico, D. F., 12 March 1966

Dr. Hector A. Coll
Chief, Zone II
Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Havre No. 30
Mexico, D. F.

Sir:

In reply to your letter ZII-646-66 of 11 February 1966, I am pleased to inform you that the authorities interested in the Draft General Standards on International Transportation of Human Remains have examined the document and are generally agreed with its contents. They only suggest the following additions:

In the Chapter on Documentation, item B, at end of paragraph add the words: "the statement is to be certified by the local health authorities".

In the Chapter on Final Provisions, change Article 10 to read as follows: "The transportation of remains exhumed after the period established in the provisions in force has elapsed, and the transportation of ashes shall not be subject to health or other special measures".

Very truly yours,

(sgd)
Dr. Pedro Daniel Martínez

DLF/ezg.

(TRANSLATION)

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OF
HEALTH AND WELFARE

AGENCY: OFFICE OF THE SUBSECRETARY
OF HEALTH

TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

SECTION: International Affairs

DESK:

NUMBER OF MEMORANDUM: 021 - 614

SENDER - 335/1

SUBJECT: Draft Regulations for the International
Transportation of Human Remains

Mexico, D.F., 25 March 1966

DR. HECTOR A. COLL
Chief, Zone II
Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Havre No. 30
Mexico, D.F.

With respect to comments on the Draft Regulations for the International Transportation of Human Remains, which were requested by your Office on 11 February 1966 in letter No. ZII-646-66, I should like to make the following additional suggestions:

In the part entitled "Definitions" there seems to be some contradiction between Article 1 and Article 2, since the first states that "international transportation of human remains is understood to be the shipment of the body from the country where the death occurred to the country of its final destination immediately after either death or disinterment" and the second prescribes that "the transportation of bodies between frontier districts within 48 hours after death shall not be subject to the standards".

I should therefore like to suggest that the word "immediately" used in Article 1 be suppressed.

Yours truly,

EFFECTIVE SUFFRAGE. NO REELECTION
(Signed) DR. PEDRO DANIEL MARTINEZ.

(TRANSLATION)

Ministry of Public Health
Managua, D.N.

1153

Cable Address: SALUBRIDAD

Managua, 30 March 1966

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Director of the
Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

I write in reply to your letter IO-CL-28-65 of 27 December 1965 in which you sent me the standards approved by the Expert Committee on the international transportation of human remains by land, sea, and air.

This is to inform you that our legal adviser, Dr. Orlando Buitrago Méndez, has made a thorough examination of the document and in general we are agreed that it contains appropriate provisions and regulations which in no way conflict with the laws of Nicaragua. Consequently, it is our view that the regulations may be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Organization in the near future.

With respect to the procedure to be followed in order to ensure the adoption in the Americas of uniform legislation on this subject, we believe that the simplest way would be to submit the regulations to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference, which will be held in 1966, for consideration and approval.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed)
Dr. A. Boniche
Minister of Public Health

(TRANSLATION)

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Panama, 1 April 1966

Ministry of Labor, Social Welfare
and Public Health

Minister's Office

No. 3674-M

Dr. Abraham Horwitz
Pan American Sanitary Bureau
525 23rd St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037 U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Horwitz:

Please excuse this delay in replying to your letter LO-CL-28-65.

This is to confirm my cablegram of 4 March to the effect that our Government is in favor of the idea of submitting the Draft Standards to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference. In addition, I should like to state that we agree with the contents of the Final Report of the Expert Committee on the International Transportation of Human Remains.

Very truly yours,

(firmado)
Dr. Roderick Esquivel
Minister of Labor, Social Welfare,
and Public Health

(TRANSLATION)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
United Nations and
International Organizations

LIBERTY-EQUALITY-FRATERNITY
REPUBLIC OF FRANCE

No. 014

Paris, 17 March 1966

Dear Sir:

By your letter IO/CL/28/65 of 28 December 1965 you were good enough to bring to my attention the Final Report of the Expert Committee on International Transportation of Human Remains.

I have the honor to inform you that I have the following two observations to make on that document:

In the first place, with regard to the paragraph headed "Documentation", Article 4 (b), page 9, a certified statement by the person authorized to prepare the remains indicating the manner and method in which the body was prepared would not appear to be sufficient; it would be better, in view of the possibility of a subsequent medico-legal inquiry, to place in the casket in an impervious and non-corrodable receptacle a sample of the product used for embalming the body.

Furthermore, in the paragraph headed "Shipment Requirements", Article 6, page 9, provision is made for the human remains to be embalmed whenever the cause of death was a quarantinable disease; nevertheless, special precautions and arrangements should be envisaged for this embalming. Details of the nature of the product to be used, depending on the case, strengthening of the procedure for disinfecting the body, double envelope of the coffin.

In addition, with respect to the procedure to be used for putting these expert recommendations into effect, it would seem preferable to submit the report to the next Pan American Sanitary Conference.

I am, Sir,

Yours, truly

DR. Abraham Horwitz
Director of the Pan American
Sanitary Bureau
525 Twenty-third Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20037, USA

(sgn.)

For the Minister and by authorization
Minister Plenipotentiary
Director, United Nations and
International Organizations.