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PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FOOD PROTECTION AND ZOOSES (INPPAZ), 2002-2003

The importance of food safety is reflected in the decisions recently adopted at the 53rd World Health Assembly of WHO, which issued Resolution WHA53.15 establishing food safety as a priority and making the corresponding recommendations to the Member States and the Director-General of WHO. Similarly, the 42nd Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization issued Resolution CD42.R3, adopting a strategic plan on food protection. The resolution urged the Member States to organize food safety programs as an essential public health function, with active coordination among the health, agriculture, and industry sectors, and recommended that they update and modernize their systems for the inspection and control of food for domestic consumption and export.

The orientations of both the Governing Bodies of the Organization and RIMSA XI underscore the importance of food safety for the countries of the Region and the need for the specialized technical cooperation center in this area to respond to the demands of the Member States.

This proposal presents a report on the technical cooperation activities carried out during the period 1999-2000, as well as the strategies and activities programmed for 2001-2003.

The Members of RIMSA are invited to examine the report and offer their comments to the Secretariat on proposals contained therein.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents information on the background and mission of the Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonoses (INPPAZ), a specialized center of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for technical cooperation in food safety. The document chronicles the historical development of INPPAZ, including the specialization of its mission, which, by mandate of the Governing Bodies of PAHO, has been narrowed to deal exclusively with the area of food safety.

During the period 1999-2000, the countries of the Region, with PAHO technical cooperation, have made progress in strengthening their national food safety programs. Technical cooperation has emphasized the organization of programs, epidemiological surveillance of foodborne diseases (FBDs), the modernization of food inspection and control systems, the organization of laboratory networks, and support for organizing communication and health education activities.

Improved epidemiological surveillance in the countries of the Region has resulted in additional and more reliable data on the incidence of FBDs, while facilitating a more logical approach to intervention activities aimed at their prevention. The adoption of approaches to food protection and inspection based on the implementation of good manufacturing practices (GMPs) and the hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) methodology, has helped countries make significant improvements in the sanitary quality of food for export and domestic consumption. Progress made toward the institutionalization of an Inter-American Food Network has laid the foundations for a laboratory registry that will form part of that network and has also sparked the development of national and municipal laboratory networks. Likewise, countries have improved their management of food regulations by adopting information systems designed for this purpose, developed with PAHO technical cooperation. The formulation of a plan of action that uses social communication to promote community participation in food safety will help to strengthen the educational component in the countries of the Region.

Projections for the period 2001-2003 include proposals for implementing interprogrammatic activities with other PAHO programs linked to risk factors for the presence of FBDs. Such activities will facilitate the rational use of resources and more comprehensive technical cooperation.

The Institute will work to secure agreements with the governments of the countries in the Region to designate Reference Centers in Latin America and the Caribbean to their responsibilities with respect to food analysis services and improving technical cooperation in this field. Also during this period, agreements with other cooperation agencies, such as the

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), will be sought that clearly establish mechanisms and responsibilities for the implementation, development, and evaluation of coordinated technical cooperation projects in food safety.

With regard to management strategies for the period, the approval of the Director is being sought for a new organizational and functional structure for INPPAZ, in keeping with its food safety mission.

1. Introduction

PAHO technical cooperation in food safety was established as a structured program as a result of the recommendations issued at the 1985 Inter-American Conference on Food Protection (Washington, D.C.). These recommendations paved the way for approval of the Plan of Action for the period 1986–1990 during the XXII Pan American Sanitary Conference (September, 1986).

The Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonoses dates back to 1991, when it was created by an agreement between the Government of the Argentine Republic and the Pan American Health Organization to serve as the executor of the PAHO Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Safety. Since then, significant changes in food safety have taken place at both the regional and global level. These changes have prompted international organizations working in food safety to adapt their technical cooperation programs, which in turn, has led to recommendations that have changed the mission, functions, lines of action, future programming, and resources of the Institute.

Specifically, in the interest of greater efficiency, the External Advisory Group to the Director on Veterinary Public Health recommended the specialization of INPPAZ as the Reference Center for the Hemisphere on Food Safety, with emphasis on cooperation activities aimed at the prevention of foodborne diseases.

The advisory bodies of INPPAZ and the Governing Bodies of PAHO have since accepted the recommendations of the External Advisory Group. This cleared the way for the adoption of Resolution CD42.R3 at the 42nd Directing Council of PAHO, in which the Member States were urged to strengthen their national food safety programs and promote better intersectoral coordination for their management. The Institute's mission is clearly stated as one of facilitating cooperation among the governments of the Region, with a view to implementing the content of the Resolution.

This document presents the mission, functions, plan of action, and resources of the Institute, in light of the changes in food safety that are occurring worldwide, the activities

carried out to date, and the recommendations of the PAHO Governing Bodies. This document is based on the strategic plan presented earlier to the PAHO Directing Council, which gave rise to the aforementioned Resolution. Accordingly, its guidelines are to serve as a reference for orienting PAHO technical cooperation activities in food safety and for mobilizing country resources to strengthen regional capacity in the prevention of FBDs.

In addition to the mandates of the PAHO Governing Bodies, which include the Strategic and Programmatic Orientations, the proposed program of the Institute is based on the technical cooperation approaches of the Organization. Fundamental among these are direct technical cooperation, the mobilization of resources, the development of standards, training, research, and the dissemination of information.

1.1 *Organizational Structure*

INPPAZ is part of PAHO's network of regional units, known as the Pan American Centers. Administratively under the Division of Disease Prevention and Control (HCP), INPPAZ coordinates its cooperation activities with the Program on Veterinary Public Health (HCV), also under HCP.

INPPAZ has recently been reorganized, and currently consists of the Office of the Director and the areas of technical cooperation, information technology, and administration, as indicated in the attached organizational chart. Pursuant to the Agreement with the Government of the Argentine Republic, the INPPAZ has three advisory bodies:

- *International Coordination Council (ICC):* political-institutional in nature and comprised of the ministers of health and agriculture of the countries of the Region; its function is to advise the Director of the Organization in matters related to the orientation of the Institute's priorities and strategies, the evaluation of activities, and compliance with the agreement between the Argentine Government and the Organization. The ICC held meetings in 1993, 1994, and 1997.
- *Scientific and Technical Committee (STC):* advises the Director of the Organization on the analysis and scientific and technical evaluation of the INPPAZ program of work. The STC held meetings in 1994 and 1999.
- *Program Committee for Argentina (CPA):* Made up of representatives from Argentina's Ministry of Health and Social Action, Secretariat of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and PAHO; it supports the programming, execution, and evaluation of INPPAZ technical cooperation and collaboration activities in Argentina. The CPA holds annual meetings.

1.2 Resources

- *Human resources.* A roster of staff posts is included in the Annex.
- *Physical resources.* INPPAZ currently occupies facilities in Martínez, Buenos Aires Province, on land ceded by the Government of Argentina, pursuant to the agreement establishing the Institute.
- *Financial resources.* The INPPAZ budget has two sources of financing: the regular funds of the Organization and those contributed by the Argentine Government pursuant to the terms of the agreement establishing the Institute, which is subject to adjustments agreed upon with the Government annually.

The Director of PAHO currently approves the biannual program budget of the Institute. The 2000-2001 budget is US\$ 2,560,658.00, \$1,060,658.00 of which comes from PAHO's regular budget, with the remaining \$1,500,000.00 contributed by the Government of Argentina. Although Argentina's contribution has been pending for some time now, negotiations are under way for payment of its debt to the Organization.

Funds allocated for extrabudgetary projects of the countries:

- Government of Brazil. An agreement was signed between the National Sanitary Surveillance Agency and INPPAZ to establish a national food legislation system and a national training program in SSOP, GMP, and HACCP for a total of \$1,000,000.00. This agreement is currently being implemented;
- Agricultural and Livestock Service of Chile (SAG). Funds in the amount of \$59,435.00 allocated to organize a program for the control of chemical residues and miscellaneous food safety and zoonosis activities;
- Income from services (PAZ-FOS-025-PG). Revenues earned by the Institute as a supplier of reference standards and other technical services to 21 countries in the Region. INPPAZ revenues through 2001 have totaled \$116,186.00.

2. PAHO Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Protection

INPPAZ is responsible for implementing the Plan of Action of the Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Safety, in coordination with the PAHO/WHO Representative Offices in the countries. The basic focus of the program is to help countries strengthen national capacity to prevent risks that can lead to the transmission of foodborne disease to the population, taking into account all links in the food chain, from production through the final consumer.

The program objectives were:

- To engage in cooperation activities to enable the countries to ensure a safe food supply for their populations; and
- To help countries strengthen their national capacity to reduce human morbidity and mortality from FBDs.

Plan of Action has five components:

- Organization of national food safety programs;
- Strengthening of analytical capacity;
- Strengthening of inspection services;
- Surveillance of foodborne diseases; and
- Promotion of food protection through community participation.

The following section summarizes the principal achievements of the PAHO Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Safety during the past two years.

2.1 *Organization of National Programs*

PAHO has promoted the concept of national food safety programs to standardize the technical criteria of the programs while promoting a transparent vision of sectoral policy in that field. This cooperation has prompted almost 60% of the Region's countries to form integrated program structures through the organization of national or local commissions. Countries were encouraged and supported in their efforts to foster better coordination between the public and private sectors with a view to creating integrated programs. Argentina, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay have already enacted legislation establishing programs with intersectoral participation.

The Regional Workshop on the Organization of National Food Safety Programs brought together 39 participants from 14 countries of the Region. At the conclusion of the workshop, discussion was held on a document entitled "Organization of National Food Safety

Programs,” designed as a set of guidelines to help countries incorporate new strategies for the institutional organization of food protection activities. Participants laid the foundations for strategies aimed at: sensitizing political levels in the countries; program organization and basic organizational structure; and achieving better interinstitutional coordination. The participants also reached agreement that the designation “food safety programs” adequately describes the essential public health function exercised by the countries in the area of food protection.

Interprogrammatic activities carried out in conjunction with the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (BIREME)—another of PAHO’s Pan American Centers—resulted in the development of a system to facilitate the management of information on food regulations. The system was delivered to all the Latin American countries to assist them in managing information on food legislation and serve as support for their efforts in the harmonization of standards in support of the food trade.

The system currently has the pertinent legislation of Argentina, and part of the legislation of Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, the Andean Community (JUNAC), and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR). Argentina has already adopted the system in its entirety for its national legislation, and is working to implement it at the provincial level.

The recent incorporation of the food legislation of the European Union into this regional project is a major milestone, transforming it into an international reference system for national food regulations. Other important developments include a national food legislation system in Brazil and the addition of Cuba to this regional project.

With a view to strengthening national *Codex Alimentarius* committees, technical cooperation activities have been carried out jointly with the FAO, including workshops to strengthen contact points and national committees, carried out with participants from the Andean region, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Southern Cone.

In coordination with the Regional Coordinating Committee of the *Codex Alimentarius* for Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, PAHO is working to promote the strengthening of national committees in the countries of the Region. PAHO is a permanent adviser to the Regional Coordinating Committee of the *Codex Alimentarius* for Latin America and the Caribbean, currently presided over by the Dominican Republic.

2.2 *Strengthening of Analytical Capacity*

Cooperation in this component is geared to the organization of contaminant control programs through the use of laboratory networks equipped with quality assurance systems that complement epidemiological studies on contamination risks.

As of January 2001, a total of 55 laboratories in 24 countries have been registered in the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL). Created in 1997, the objectives of the Network are to facilitate the harmonization of analytical methods and promote the concepts of equivalence, transparency, and information exchange. An Executive Committee was established for INFAL, with INPPAZ and FAO acting jointly as Secretariat *ex officio* of the Network.

The plan of action includes activities to secure financing, register and evaluate all participating Network laboratories, promote the organization of national laboratory networks, and train staff. A survey of the registered laboratories is currently under way that will be placed on the Internet, where it will be continuously updated by the participating countries and facilitate information exchange on the potential and capacity of national laboratories in the Region.

Cooperation has also resulted in the creation of an INFAL Web page and “virtual office,” facilitating on-line working meetings for the groups involved in this initiative.

INFAL activities have succeeded in providing ongoing support for the development of national networks, in addition to strengthening the Uruguayan Network of Food Analysis Laboratories and creating a municipal network of food laboratories within the country. Argentina and Venezuela are currently receiving similar support for the creation of national networks.

With a view to promoting the implementation of a system for prioritizing food protection in the countries of Latin America, a seminar was held for officials in charge of food protection programs. This seminar provided an opportunity to discuss the scientific bases and methodology of risk analysis.

Argentina’s National Livestock Health Service (SENASA) is receiving support through a project to strengthen the laboratory reference services of the National Program for the Control of Chemical Residues in Food, which has been developed jointly with the Argentine National Institute for Agricultural Technology (INTA).

Training programs in “rapid” methods in food microbiology were carried out to strengthen capacity to analyze microbial contaminants. These programs received scientific and

technical support from WHO Collaborating Centers. Technical cooperation, in the form of training programs, was also provided to countries to strengthen analytical services for the detection of microbial contaminants and improve methods for detecting marine toxins.

As a contribution to the dissemination of knowledge and information on microbial resistance to antibiotics, a project to study this topic was prepared, using specimens from humans and animals. And in 2000, 18 countries from the Region participated in an international course on surveillance of *Salmonella* and testing for resistance in this bacterium, held in conjunction with WHO.

With regard to chemical contaminants, interlaboratory tests were begun in 1996 to conduct analysis of chlorinated pesticide residues, involving the participation of 19 national laboratories in 8 countries. This project, together with the development of a bank of pesticide standards, helps to meet the needs of countries for laboratory quality assurance programs, in view of the shortage of laboratory standards and the lack of critical reagents in commercial catalogs to carry out tests. To date, 36 of these standards have been distributed, including those for organochlorine and organophosphate pesticides.

Moreover, during 1999 and 2000, a project was carried out to develop and update a regional information system to register and control veterinary drugs and their residues in food. The project was carried out in association with the International Office of Epizootics (IOE) and involved the participation of 20 countries of the Region and veterinary drug producers.

2.3 *Strengthening Inspection Services*

Resources for this component have been geared to strengthening national capacity to promote the adoption of the good manufacturing practices (GMPs), sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOP), and the hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) methodology which covers the entire food production chain. This is approached vis-à-vis training activities, the dissemination of information, and direct technical assistance.

Support materials used in training have been standardized with a view to consolidating what should be mutually understood in this area in the Region and achieving the best possible harmonization of conceptual materials. These materials have been developed for information purposes and consist of a manual, *PowerPoint* slides, and videotapes.

In view of the demand for technical cooperation in the area of staff training, representatives from 15 countries of the Region received training from instructors in HACCP and SSOP for the fishing industry. These training courses were carried out in collaboration with the International HACCP Alliance and the HACCP Alliance for Seafood.

In October 2000, the III Pan American Meeting of National Services and Institutions for Inspection and Quality Control of Fish Products was held in Colombia, in collaboration with the FAO and the Center for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOPECSA). Conference activities included the review and updating of all facets of fish product inspection for the domestic market and of the HACCP methodology and inspection in the fishing industry. Concepts of equivalence between inspection systems of the various countries were also reviewed at the meeting. In addition, a pre-conference workshop on verification of HACCP plans and prerequisite programs brought together 55 regional participants from government, universities, and private industry.

Moreover, the Secretariat of Plant and Animal Health of Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture has received technical cooperation for training some 250 veterinarians working in the inspection of foodstuffs of animal and vegetable origin. These training activities provided instruction on inspection methods based on GMP, SSOP, and the HACCP methodology.

With a view to incorporating the Region's academic sector and institutionalizing training in this area, universities are receiving technical cooperation to organize food safety training activities that emphasize application of the HACCP methodology. To this end, cooperation is being channeled to graduate programs at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina, the University of San Marcos in Peru, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, as well as the University of the West Indies in the English-speaking Caribbean.

2.4 *Surveillance of Foodborne Diseases (FBDs)*

In past years, technical cooperation in this component led to increased reporting of FBDs by countries to the regional epidemiological surveillance system. Up to December 2000, information had been received on 487 outbreaks involving 146,552 people and 251 deaths.

In 1999 an international meeting was held to evaluate the surveillance system for FBDs. Present were 38 representatives from 18 countries of the Region. At the meeting, important decisions were adopted to strengthen surveillance in the countries. The recommendations emanating from the meeting included a call to form interinstitutional teams at all levels, to incorporate the FBD surveillance component in national disease surveillance systems, and to standardize reporting nomenclature. Also recommended was the direct electronic transfer of data to the information system as a way of keeping information on the regional situation up-to-date and facilitating information exchange among countries.

In 2000, a technical consultation on FBDs prompted new approaches to surveillance in the countries, including a new system of harmonized nomenclature; more specific reports on outbreaks and causative agents; a more well-defined flow of information from the countries; and guidelines for university and postgraduate training of professionals involved in surveillance. The meeting also recommended the strengthening the network of public health laboratories and clinics in support of FBD surveillance. The report of this meeting has been included in the informative documentation mentioned earlier.

One particularly important outcome of the meeting has been the successive inclusion of factors contributing to outbreaks in the regional data on FBDs. This, together with the anticipated improvements in determining the etiologic agents of disease, will provide core data to better guide interventions and studies on risk assessment and implementation of the HACCP methodology.

A review of the *Guide to Establishing Epidemiological Surveillance Systems for Foodborne Diseases* (GUIAVETA) produced an updated instrument for assisting the countries, with its inclusion of the recommendations issued by the aforementioned technical consultation and information on new advances in surveillance of FBDs. This new edition of GUIAVETA has been included in the informative documentation.

2.5 *Promotion of Food Protection through Community Participation*

In view of the strategic orientations for regional and national activities in this component, put forward by an Expert Consultation held during the second half of 2000, the main focus of PAHO technical cooperation during this period is based on mass communication.

The aforementioned consultation laid the foundations and developed the strategies for a regional plan of action that provides for the organization of activities to sensitize government policymakers, community organizations, and the general public—including the food production chain—for the purpose of launching a campaign in 2001, whose first activity would be to emphasize to the public the importance of food hygiene in daily life. The report of this consultation is included in the informative documentation.

To facilitate the dissemination of the available information on this topic, the INPPAZ virtual library was created in the INPPAZ website (www.inppaz.org.ar). This virtual library contains information for different community levels, as well as links to the websites of other organizations and international authorities working in this field.

During the period, INPPAZ provided assistance to the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on proper food handling in disaster situations.

3. INPPAZ Technical Cooperation for Zoonosis Control, 1999-2000

As mentioned earlier, pursuant to the mandate issued by the Governing Bodies of PAHO, INPPAZ has specialized its technical cooperation, focusing on food safety activities. However, during the period of transition and transfer of functions to the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA), INPPAZ had to continue some of its technical cooperation activities in the area of zoonosis control. These activities are summarized as follows:

3.1 Rabies

Working with Argentina through a reference project, INPPAZ provided support for the organization of the National Reference Laboratory for the production of reference biologicals and the standardization of analytical techniques.

Moreover, the INPPAZ laboratory provided assistance in the typing of strains of rabies virus isolated in national laboratories, in assuring quality control of rabies vaccines, and in monitoring the quality of diagnostic tests and tests for typing rabies viruses. As with the aforementioned services, the distribution of reference reagents was discontinued in December 2000; these technical cooperation functions are now performed by PANAFTOSA.

3.2 Tuberculosis

INPPAZ continued to supply the countries of the Region with bovine, P.P.D., avian, and human tuberculin through December 2000. It provided technical assistance to the National Tuberculosis Reference Project (Argentina) and collaborated in the production of a lot of bovine P.P.D. (1,200,000 doses). With respect to the latter, INPPAZ also provided training on quality control tests for the biological, and served as an IOE reference laboratory.

Quality control activities on lots of BCG vaccine was also carried out on lots sent by countries of the Region. INPPAZ also provided monitoring of tuberculosis drug sensitivity tests, as well as the typing of isolates of bovine *Mycobacterium* strains.

INPPAZ has maintained a collection of *Leptospira* serovars, which is currently being transferred to national reference laboratories in the Region, in coordination with PANAFTOSA.

4. Strategic Planning for the 2002-2003 Biennium

The strategic planning of INPPAZ is carried out in accordance with the tools provided by the Office of Analysis and Strategic Planning (DAP) at PAHO Headquarters. It includes the preparation of technical cooperation projects, with their corresponding objectives, purposes, expected results, and activities outlined below.

For the execution of the activities proposed for the period 2002-2003, planning has been structured around the following projects:

- Epidemiological surveillance of FBDs;
- Food inspection systems;
- Institutional organization and regulation in food safety;
- Reference services for food contaminants;
- Education and communication.

4.1 Epidemiological Surveillance of Foodborne Diseases (FBDs)

Project objective

To strengthen the countries' capacity to carry out efficient epidemiological surveillance of FBDs at the local level.

Programmed activities

- Provide direct technical assistance to countries in order to implement epidemiological surveillance of FBDs within national epidemiological surveillance systems. Implement the information system developed by INPPAZ at the country level, and directly connect countries to the Regional System via the Internet.
- Hold workshops on the organization of local systems in 10 countries.
- Expand coverage of the regional information system for epidemiological surveillance of FBDs to include the information and methodology employed in epidemiological surveillance in the United States and Canada. This will make the Institute a central databank on outbreaks of FBDs in the Americas and strengthen the system of the Special Program on Health Analysis (SHA).
- Compile, analyze, and publish the results of SIRVE-ETA.
- Provide direct technical cooperation for the development of active surveillance systems.

- Hold workshops on clinical, laboratory, and bromatologic diagnosis, based on the standards of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and WHO.

4.2 Food Inspection Systems

Project objective

To establish the use of modern approaches to food inspection that incorporate FBD control and prevention measures.

Programmed activities

- Provide training to the human resources responsible for food protection in the public sector and the private food industry.
- Develop and disseminate standardized instructional materials for training in the new approach to inspection.
- Provide support to the inspection systems project through a strategy for disseminating scientific and technical information within the framework of information technology activities.
- Assist authorities in the development of pilot programs based on the new approach.
- Assist regulatory authorities in adapting regulations to the methodology of the new approach.
- Provide support to official food safety agencies to strengthen their capacity to monitor plans for self-regulation in the food industry.
- Act as a catalyst in the harmonization of criteria with a view to implementing the new approach.
- Promote the adaptation of the applicable principles of this system to programs for ensuring food safety in low-complexity establishments, among street vendors, and in the home.

4.3 *Institutional Organization and Regulation in Food Safety*

Project objective

To formulate national food safety policies and implement processes aimed at institutional reorganization and the adaptation of existing national legislation on food safety.

Programmed activities

- Promote the creation, organization and operation of a Pan American Commission on Food Safety to serve as the primary forum in the Region for the development of policy orientations in food safety.
- Promote institutional organization in the countries through an approach that recognizes the multisectoral nature of food safety issues and the prevention of FBDs as an essential public health function. Encourage intersectoral action as a tool for managing national food safety programs.
- Promote and provide technical assistance on the organization of *Codex Alimentarius* activities.
- Expand coverage of the information system on food legislation to include the European Union and *Codex Alimentarius*.
- Consolidate the integration of the Spanish- and English-speaking countries into the information system on food legislation.
- Develop an information technology strategy in food safety to be incorporated in the Division of Disease Prevention and Control and BIREME to strengthen development of the Virtual Library on Food Safety.

4.4 *Reference Services for Food Contaminants*

Project objective

To establish national reference centers for the analysis of food contaminants through laboratory quality assurance programs.

Programmed Activities

- Provide support and technical assistance to countries for developing and participating in laboratory networks.
- Develop an information technology strategy and a regional information system on analytical capacity, and promote cooperation among countries.
- Provide support and technical assistance to countries on quality assurance and laboratory management issues.

4.5 *Education and Communication Activities*

Project objective

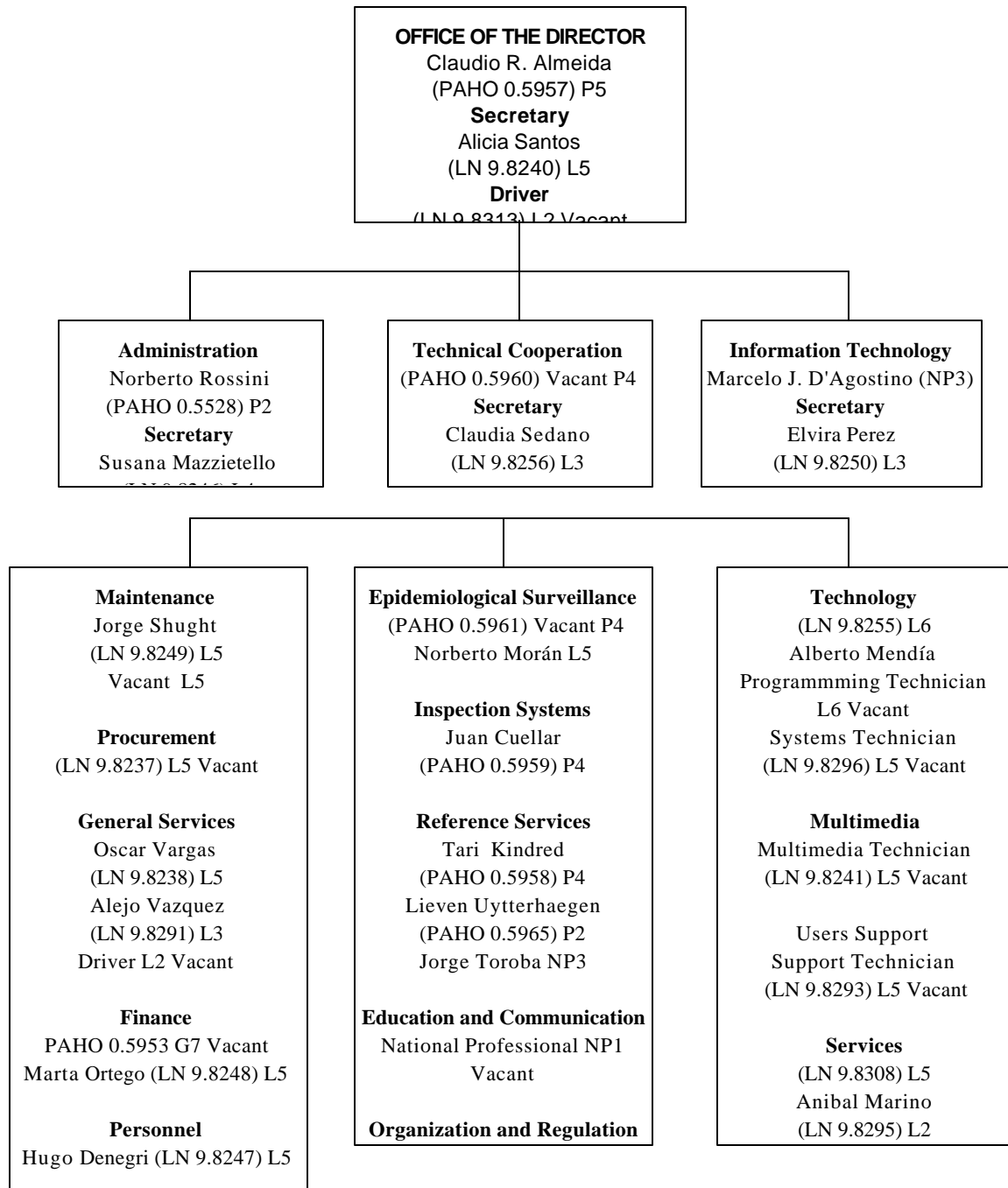
To implement education programs based on social communication, aimed at securing community participation to change behaviors to ensure the safe handling of food.

Programmed Activities

- Organize and carry out social communication activities, centering on technical cooperation to countries of the Region for the purpose of developing/adapting informative material.
- Organize and carry out regional activities aimed at sensitizing government decisionmakers to the need for assigning priorities to food safety education and communication activities within disease prevention programs.
- Develop models and materials to promote good hygiene in food handling in the home.
- Develop models and materials for incorporating food safety components in formal and informal education programs targeting educators, food handlers, food vendors, and consumers.

- Organize activities to train trainers in teaching and communication methods for food safety components.
- Recommend guidelines for the countries on the design of materials to promote hygienic food handling to be disseminated through the mass media and/or provided directly.
- Promote, within countries of the Region, coordination between food protection agencies and the education sector, consumer protection groups, and the mass media.
- Strengthen the component above by incorporating all educational models and dissemination strategies for use on the Internet, integrating these into the virtual library project.
- Within the information technology approach, finalize development of the INPPAZ publishing capability, providing bibliographic support for the layout of materials and audiovisual guides to support social communication projects.
- Develop policies for organizing social communication campaigns on food safety.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



STAFFING ROSTER**International Professional Staff****Post**

0.5957	Center Director
0.5960	Chief, Technical Assistance
0.5959	Food Protection Adviser
0.5958	Standardization Adviser
0.5961	Specialist in Epidemiological Surveillance
0.5528	Administrative Officer
0.5965	Specialist in Contaminants
4.6028	Associate Professional Officer

Support Staff

9.8255	Statistics Technician
9.8242	Multimedia Technician
9.8241	Accounting Technician
9.8239	Programming Technician
9.8247	Personnel Technician
9.8248	Accounting Technician
9.8237	Supplies Technician
9.8238	General Services Technician
9.8249	Maintenance Technician
9.8292	Maintenance Technician
9.8308	Scientific Documentation Technician
9.8246	Administrative Assistant
9.8243	Bilingual Secretary (Technical Cooperation)
9.825	Bilingual Secretary (Information Technology)
9.8256	Bilingual Secretary (Office of the Director)
9.8291	Administrative Aide
9.8254	Laboratory Aide
9.8312	Receptionist
9.8313	Driver
9.8251	Driver

Total 20 posts**National Professionals****Title**

Adviser in Food Protection
Epidemiologist
Systems Analyst
Maintenance Engineer
Librarian

Total 5 posts