

*directing council*



PAN AMERICAN  
HEALTH  
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XXXI Meeting

*regional committee*

WORLD  
HEALTH  
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XXXVII Meeting

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HOLDING OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS DURING MEETINGS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES

This document reviews the salient decisions taken by the Governing Bodies in connection with the holding of Technical Discussions during the Pan American Sanitary Conferences and Meetings of the Directing Council of the Organization, and proposes alternative courses for continuing them as hitherto or in a different way.

The V Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO in 1951 approved Resolution XXXI, which marked the beginning of the holding of Technical Discussions.

In 1953 the VII Meeting of the Directing Council approved Resolutions CD7.R23 establishing the basis for the holding of Technical Discussions thereafter and authorizing the Executive Committee to establish the procedures to be followed for them. In consequence, during its meeting in 1954 the Executive Committee approved Resolution CE22.R10 establishing the initial procedures, and since then the Technical Discussions have been an integral part of the Pan American Sanitary Conferences and Meetings of the Directing Council of PAHO. The Rules for Technical Discussions were approved by Resolution VII of the XV Pan American Sanitary Conference in 1958, and are contained in the Basic Documents of PAHO (Official Document 188, Part 12, pp. 83-85) (Annex I).

In 1974 the XIX Pan American Sanitary Conference approved Resolution XLIV instructing the Executive Committee to make a study to determine the best ways of ensuring that these discussions would make a real contribution to the development of the health programs of the Member Countries.

In 1975 and 1976 questions arose as to the duration of meetings of the Directing Council and of Technical Discussions, and the days on which these would be held. Discussions could take place on Saturdays in order not to interfere with the meetings of the Council, or else could be conducted concurrently, in which case the countries would have to assign a group of experts to participate in them.

The study done in 1975 and 1976 (Documents CD23/16, CE74/9, CD24/7 and CE76/19) reaffirmed the importance and value of the Technical Discussions for the development of the Organization's programs. Resolution XXXV of the XXIV (1976) Meeting of the Directing Council changed the term for the selection of subjects by requiring that a subject be selected two years instead of one ahead of the meeting in which it would be discussed, and in 1981, by Resolution CD28.R5, the Directing Council empowered the Executive Committee to select a topic, instead of submitting several topics to the Council in order for the selection to be made by the latter body.

By Resolution XXVI, in 1982 the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference asked the Executive Committee to review carefully all aspects of the Technical Discussions and to submit a report to the XXIX Meeting of the Directing Council with recommendations and for maximizing the impact and significance of the Technical Discussions and minimizing the expenditures of time, human and financial resources.

In 1983 the Secretariat presented a report to the Executive Committee, which in turn presented it to the Directing Council (Document CD29/8). The Council approved Resolution CD29.R6 in which it decided, among other things, that a) Technical Discussions are not to be held in the years in which the Organization's proposed program budget is to be discussed, and b) their duration is to be limited to the working hours of the Saturday of the first week of the Meeting of the Council.

The table presented as Annex II compares the number of persons attending Conferences and Meetings of the Council with those participating in the Technical Discussions, and indicates the resolutions and publications that emerged from those Discussions. This table reveals a trend toward a decline in attendance at the Technical Discussions when they were held Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. At the XXX Meeting of the Directing Council in 1984, in which the subject of the Discussions was "Increasing the operational capacity of health services for attainment of the goal of health for all by the year 2000," despite its importance, attendance at both the plenary sessions and the working group meetings was meager. Moreover, those attending the Discussions held in 1980, 1981 and 1982 said that the time allowed for the discussion of subjects of such great importance had been insufficient for their in-depth consideration.

In view of the foregoing, two alternative courses are proposed:

1. Elimination of the Technical Discussions and recourse to other mechanisms available in the Organization for exchanges of technical information on public health subjects, such as meetings, seminars, workshops, etc.
2. Continuance of the practice of holding the Technical Discussions on two days: Friday and Saturday of the first week of the Conference or Council meeting.

It is considered that the additional expenditures required in the second alternative would be minimal, and would relate specifically to payments for temporary advisors, interpretation service, etc.

Annexes

**12. RULES FOR TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS AT MEETINGS  
OF THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE AND  
OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL<sup>1</sup>**

**PART I**

**PURPOSE OF THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS**

Rule 1. The Pan American Sanitary Conference (hereinafter referred to as the Conference) and the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (hereinafter referred to as the Council) shall meet in special session to hold Technical Discussions to deal with matters of regional interest related to the activities of the Pan American Health Organization and of the national public health administrations, the study of which may produce immediate and practical results.

**PART II**

**NATURE OF THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS—PARTICIPATION**

Rule 2. The Technical Discussions shall form part of the business of the Conference and of the Council.

Rule 3. Participation in the Technical Discussions shall be open to delegates, alternates, or advisers of the delegations accredited to the Conference or the Council meeting at which the Discussions are held.

Rule 4. Representatives of international organizations, intergovernmental or nongovernmental, that maintain official relations with the World Health Organization or with the Pan American Health Organization, may participate in the Technical Discussions.

Rule 5. In the Technical Discussions, opinions are expressed in a personal capacity.

Rule 6. The documents pertaining to the Technical Discussions shall be issued by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau separately from the documents of the Conference or the Council.

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<sup>1</sup> Approved by Resolution VII of the XV Pan American Sanitary Conference (September-October 1958), and modified pursuant to Resolution IV of the XVIII Meeting of the Directing Council (1968), Resolution XXXV of its XXIV Meeting (1976), and Resolution V of its XXVIII Meeting (1981).

### PART III

#### SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

Rule 7. The Technical Discussions shall deal with only one subject, which shall be selected at a meeting of the Conference or the Directing Council preceding by two years that of the Conference or the Directing Council at which the Technical Discussions are to be held. The selection shall be based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee. The Governments and the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall be entitled to suggest subjects prior to or in the course of the meeting of the Executive Committee in which the recommendation to the Conference or the Directing Council will be made. The Bureau shall inform the Governments of the Organization of the subject recommended by the Executive Committee. Both the Conference and the Council shall be entitled to delegate the selection of subjects to the Executive Committee.

### PART IV

#### DESIGNATION AND DUTIES OF THE EXPERTS

Rule 8. The Conference or the Council, as the case may be, shall select the subject for the Technical Discussions by the affirmative vote of a simple majority of the Governments present and voting in plenary session.

Rule 9. The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall, at the earliest possible date, inform the Governments, territories, and organizations entitled to be represented of the subject selected for the Technical Discussions.

Rule 10. The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall designate the necessary expert or experts to prepare the introductory statement(s) on the subject selected for the Technical Discussions.

Rule 11. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall place at the disposal of the designated expert or experts such background material as may be considered useful for the preparation of the introductory statement(s).

## PART V

### ORGANIZATION OF THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

Rule 12. The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall, at the earliest possible date, send the Governments, territories, and organizations entitled to be represented a copy of the introductory statement(s).

Rule 13. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall not be held responsible for the opinions and ideas expressed in the introductory statement(s).

Rule 14. The Conference or the Council, on examining the program of sessions, shall schedule the date on which the Technical Discussions are to be held. Preferably, the date should fall approximately midway in the course of the Conference or the Council meeting.

Rule 15. The Technical Discussions will be held in special session, and while they are being held no other activity of the Conference or the Council shall take place.

## PART VI

### DELIBERATIONS AND REPORTS

Rule 16. The Conference or the Council shall elect the moderator and the rapporteur for the Technical Discussions which are to be held during the meeting. The moderator shall preside over and organize the Technical Discussions in such a way as to facilitate the detailed study and analysis of the subject of the Technical Discussions. If working groups are organized, each one shall appoint a moderator and a rapporteur.

Rule 17. The Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau shall appoint a technical secretary to assist the moderator and the rapporteur. He shall also be entitled to appoint technical secretaries to assist the rapporteurs of the working groups.

Rule 18. The Technical Discussions shall open with a statement by the designated expert or experts, who will give a brief summary of the introductory paper prepared for the Discussions.

Rule 19. The Conference or the Council may establish working parties to examine the Technical Discussion topics. Each working party shall elect a moderator and a rapporteur, who will be assisted by the technical secretary appointed by the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

Rule 20. No minutes of the sessions shall be kept. The rapporteur shall prepare a report summarizing the opinions expressed in the course of the Technical Discussions and stating the conclusions reached, if any.

**Rule 21.** The moderator shall transmit the Report of the Technical Discussions to the Conference or the Council, for presentation in plenary session.

**Rule 22.** The Conference or the Council may adopt decisions on the topic of the Technical Discussions, following the same procedures as those applied for the other decisions of the meeting.

**Rule 23.** The Director of the Bureau shall give the widest possible distribution to the reports and other documents, through the *Boletín* and other special publications of PASB.

<u>Topic/Year</u>	<u>Conference/Council Attendance</u>	<u>Attendance at Technical Discussions</u>			<u>Resolution Approved</u>	<u>Publication</u>
		<u>Friday Plenary</u>	<u>Working Groups</u>	<u>Saturday Plenary</u>		
Managerial Analysis of Health Systems 1982	292	120 (41%)	50 (17%)	80 (27%)	CSP21.R32	Scientific Publication No. 449 (1983)
Sanitary Control of Food 1981	194	50 (25%)	45 (23%)	35 (18%)	CD28.R39	Scientific Publication No. 421 (1982)
Community Health Education 1980	172	70 (40%)	50 (50%)	40 (23%)	CD27.R34	<u>Boletín</u> April 1981 (Spanish)
Strategies for extending potable water supply and excreta disposal 1979	149	120 (80%)	75 (50%)	60 (40%)	CD26.R22	Scientific Publication No. 390 (1979)
The Impact of Drugs on Health Costs. National and International Problems 1978	132	100 (75%)	50 (37%)	65 (49%)	GSP20.R27	<u>Boletín</u> December 1979

Information taken from Document CD90/20 (Annex III), 1983.