

*executive committee of
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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PRESENTATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PAHO/WHO STAFF
ASSOCIATION

Attached is the Staff Association presentation to the Executive Committee on staff matters. The issues discussed include:

1. The Organization and International Commitments
2. Building
3. Contracts
4. Staff-Management Relations
5. Economic Situation
6. WHO Meeting
7. Meeting of the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA)
8. Women's Issues

In reviewing our presentation to the 109th Meeting of the Executive Committee of PAHO/WHO in June 1992 it is clear that the Staff Association is still dealing with the same concerns that affected the staff at that time: the Organization (PAHO) and international commitments, the Headquarters building, contracts, post reclassification, selection procedures, women's issues, and staff-management relations.

1. The Organization and International Commitments

The central topic at the Twelfth Council of the Staff Association had to do with the quality of the technical cooperation that the Organization provides to the countries. The participants were clear in stating that the Organization is experiencing one of its most serious crises, namely the crisis affecting its leadership in the health field, while other agencies without a health specialization, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, are taking on a leadership role in this area. Now PAHO will also be forced to compete with specialized offices of the United Nations that offer services similar to the ones that PAHO provides, in an already shrinking market and during an economic crisis (Annex I, Resolution No. CAP/XII/4).

2. Building

The proposal to transfer Headquarters and its staff to the state of Maryland is an extremely controversial issue, especially since the staff is not being consulted about the planned location for the new building and the impact that this decision could have on the employees with respect to housing, taxes, and private and/or public transportation.

The factors discussed in Document CE109/22, Item 6.1, Section 2, and the resolution of the General Assembly of the Washington Local Organization (Annex II) have remained unchanged and thus are still a concern of the Staff Association.

3. Contracts

The variety of contracts used by the Organization to recruit local and/or national personnel creates innumerable job-related complications. Although they appear to represent a savings to the Organization under the category of staffing, in fact these services are of dubious usefulness since they jeopardize the quality and efficiency of the services that PAHO provides to the Member Countries.

The problems surrounding these contracts, which the Association has observed and brought to the attention of the Executive Committee previously, remain essentially the same:

- Lack of appropriate accident insurance.

- Lack of health insurance coverage for the staff member or their dependents.
- Lack of a retirement or pension fund.
- Job insecurity and instability.

As a consequence of the increasing number of these contracts, the Organization is being transformed from a specialized international organization into a local services organization, thus substantially lowering the quality of the technical cooperation and advisory services that are and have been the *raison d'être* of these international agencies.

4. Staff-Management Relations

The Association recognizes that the appointment of the Chief of Personnel has altered the picture of relations with the office that she directs, creating the expectation that the staff rules and procedures will be adhered to. Increased efficiency can be seen in the processes and actions directed toward solving the discrepancies and differences that arise out of working relations and conditions.

In view of the above, the Association fails to understand the Administration's refusal to include a staff representative on the Post Classification Committee. If the classification and/or reclassification of a post is carried out in accordance with the staff rules and procedures, that process should be clear and aboveboard, conforming only to a well-defined methodology. Participation in this process, as well as the selection process, should constitute one of the harmonious working ties between the Administration and the staff representatives. The single objective of both bodies is to select and/or classify personnel based on their ability, qualifications, and responsibility vis-à-vis the duties required by the vacant post, independent of personal considerations and/or other commitments. It is important to remember as well that this objective is a guiding principle of our Organization.

For these reasons the Twelfth Council of the Association, in its Recommendation No. 12, Paragraph 2, resolves:

"To request the Director to reinstate the Staff Association to the Post Classification Committee" (Annex III).

5. Economic Situation

Recognizing that WHO and its Regional Offices are undergoing a financial crisis, it should be noted that at the meeting of the Executive Board of WHO this past January, the Regional Office for the Americas was congratulated--and the Staff Association would

like to concur in this--for the way it has confronted the financial crisis that is affecting WHO.

At the same meeting it was also indicated that the reorganization going on within PAHO has meant that more than two thirds of the staff hired are outside the United Nations common system. We need to think about ways to cut down on spending without sacrificing the quality and efficiency of the services that the Organization provides.

Replacing international civil servants with local ones, besides possibly lowering the quality of the services that the Organization provides, also has a negative impact on the current system of benefits for the previously hired regular staff with long years of service. This impact takes the form of reduced contributions to the pension fund and the health insurance fund, casting doubt on the very survival of these funds, as well as of the other benefits that were created to attract and retain a highly qualified staff to fulfill the Organization's mission.

These services are becoming crucial, especially in view of the living conditions on the continent and their impact on health.

6. WHO Meeting

The meeting of the Representatives of the Regional Staff Associations with the Representatives of the Association at Headquarters in Geneva, in January 1993, took place in an unusual atmosphere. A climate of uncertainty and insecurity generated by the publicity for the political campaign (to elect the Director of WHO) permeated the building at Headquarters and affected the relations and operations of the members of the WHO Staff Association. This was unprecedented and is something that never should have happened within the walls of so prestigious an institution with such a long history.

The central topic was the deteriorating staff working conditions during 1992. General Services employees continued to face possible reductions in salaries and pensions, while salaries for professional employees were not competitive. Added to this was the elimination of the meritorious salary increases (admittedly a small incentive) for years of service (20, 25, and 30 years) and excellent performance of duties which the Organization has awarded to its employees. This incentive is being eliminated by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly which gives no thought to the limited opportunities for career development available in the system, and asks the Organization to implement this decision solely based on the idea that a common system of wages and subsidies should be established for all professional employees. The Regional Associations and the Association at Headquarters in Geneva have taken a strong stand against this type of action, which undermines the conditions of service and jeopardizes

the Organization's ability to hire staff and to retain those with many years of service and experience.

7. Meeting of the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA)

The FICSA meeting was held at the installations of the Regional Office of WHO in Brazzaville. The main issues discussed were:

- Future policies concerning relations with the International Civil Service Commission.
- General Service salaries.
- General Service pension fund.
- Professional salaries and subsidies.
- Improved status of women in international civil service.
- Staff conditions in the field.
- Social security.
- Legal matters.

In his opening address to the 47th Council in Brazzaville, the President of FICSA was reported as saying that: "FICSA could only fulfill its mandate if executive heads were ready to cooperate effectively with independent and properly elected staff representatives. Strong and independent staff associations were the basis and justification of the achievements of the Federation at the common system level. At its last session, ACC had adopted a very strong and positive resolution reiterating the importance of staff and the reason why their conditions of service must not be sacrificed in the name of short-term financial savings. Such reductions could not take the place of the political will that was necessary to vote the resources to carry out the programs and missions assigned to the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

"The entire United Nations system was faced by new challenges in the absence of financial resources. In meeting those challenges, teamwork between administrations and strong and independent staff associations was essential. That would bring into play the full gamut of skills, expertise, industry and imagination that would make it possible to satisfy the needs of women and men throughout the world who so desperately expected assistance from United Nations."

The 46th FICSA Council adopted the following main decisions:

- To reaffirm the desire of staff associations to collaborate in the administration of their organizations in order to facilitate any restructuring necessary to respond to the emergency in the United Nations system.

- To urge the Administration of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to collaborate with the staff associations in order to determine the impact of these reorganizations and to develop and prepare pertinent measures for the redistribution, retraining, and possible elimination of staff, including a plan of action for the medium and long term in this regard. And to reiterate the importance of the basic principles of the associations, including independence, privileges, and immunities, as well as the right to social security and pensions.

- To request FICSA to ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to include the topic of short-term contracts on the agenda for the next meeting of the Administrative Coordinating Committee (ACC). And to urge the directors of the specialized agencies to adopt the necessary measures to develop, in conjunction with the staff associations, a joint policy to halt abuses of short-term contracts and to give regular status particularly to those that have lasted for more than 22 months by converting them into fixed-term contracts.

- To recommend that the associations promote the introduction of a policy within the same organization that will lead to career development for these personnel, extending to them the benefits that are enjoyed by other staff categories within the United Nations system.

Resolutions were also issued on human resources development, staff safety, and working conditions in high-risk areas, as well as on the methodology used to conduct surveys of General Service salaries at Headquarters.

8. Women's Issues

The Subcommittee on the Status of Women of the Staff Association recognizes the commitment of the PAHO Administration to improving the balance of men and women in professional positions, especially decision-making positions. The following chart, which shows the status of women in professional grades in PAHO on 1 March 1993 and on 1 March 1992, reveals, however, that the 29.08% overall figure for women in all professional grades conceals some serious deficiencies. The figure for professional field staff is only 22.75%; women are clustered in the lower professional grades (up to P3) where there continues to be a glass ceiling; women are more adequately represented in the language services than in the technical areas of the Organization; there is a paucity

of women in the P4 and P5 grades gaining the necessary PAHO experience to take on coordinator and Country Representative positions in the future; and the pool of experienced staff in the GS category is largely untapped for filling vacancies at the lower P level.

The Subcommittee of the Executive Committee on Women, Health and Development, at its 12th Meeting in 1992, asked the Director to carry out a study of the factors impeding the recruitment of women to professional posts, and seek ways to promote female staff in the Bureau to positions of higher authority. The Subcommittee requested again at its 13th Meeting in 1993 that the Director provide it with a report on the impediments to recruiting women, and placed the subject on the agenda of its 14th Meeting, to be held in April 1994. The Staff Association endorses that request, which it believes will show that there is not a shortage of qualified women, but rather lingering prejudice in some quarters about accepting women candidates; an often unnecessary requirement for a medical degree; a lack of a career development policy in PAHO; spouse employment problems; and an absence of part-time or shared employment opportunities, child care arrangements, or flexi-workplace options.

The Staff Association notes that the countries could do more: they could encourage PAHO to appoint qualified women to positions in the Country Representative Offices; expose women to PAHO experience by including more women in their delegations to the meetings of the Governing Bodies; suggest the names of qualified women to be included in the roster; and circulate vacancy notices to women in their countries.

Finally, the Eleventh Council of the Staff Association in its Resolution CAP/XI/3 requested an update on the status of the requests made by the Directing Council to the Director in 1991, in Resolution CD35.R6, paragraphs 3.c) and 3.d): "3.c)...that he (the Director) review the Organization's recruitment and hiring criteria, rules, and guidelines to assure that there are no discriminatory practices; and d) ...take a leadership role, in consultation with other international agencies and organizations and with Member States, to find solutions to the employment problems of the spouses of international civil servants."

PAHO/WHO STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY GRADE AND SEX

A. HDQ PROFESSIONAL STAFF																
	MALE								FEMALE							
	PAHO		WHO		PAHO/WHO		PCT		PAHO		WHO		PAHO/WHO		PCT	
	1992	1993	1992	1993	1992	1993	1992	1993	1992	1993	1992	1993	1992	1993	1992	1993
UNGRADED	3	3	0	0	3	3	100.00	100.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00
D-2	2	2	0	0	2	2	100.00	100.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00
D-1/P-6	5	3	0	1	5	4	100.00	80.00	0	1	0	0	0	1	00.00	20.00
P-5	46	44	22	21	68	65	89.47	90.27	6	5	2	2	8	7	10.53	09.73
P-4	21	19	9	12	30	31	60.00	60.78	13	13	7	7	20	20	40.00	39.22
P-3	9	9	9	8	18	17	42.86	37.77	16	19	8	9	24	28	57.15	62.23
P-2	13	11	2	3	15	14	55.55	53.84	9	10	3	2	12	12	44.45	46.16
P-1	3	4	2	2	5	6	27.77	35.29	8	6	5	5	13	11	72.23	64.71
TOTAL	102	95	44	47	146	142	65.47	64.25	52	54	25	25	77	79	34.53	35.75
B. FIELD PROFESSIONAL STAFF																
UNGRADED	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00
D-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00
D-1/P-6	5	4	0	0	5	4	83.33	66.66	1	2	0	0	1	2	16.67	33.34
P-5	34	32	5	7	39	39	95.12	95.12	2	2	0	0	2	2	4.88	04.88
P-4	52	53	62	58	114	111	77.02	76.02	16	17	18	18	34	35	22.96	23.98
P-3	4	3	2	3	6	6	54.54	66.66	4	3	1	0	5	3	45.46	33.34
P-2	5	5	6	11	11	16	61.11	76.19	5	4	2	1	7	5	38.89	23.81
P-1	2	3	3	1	5	4	50.00	40.00	4	4	1	2	5	6	50.00	60.00
TOTAL	102	100	78	80	180	180	76.59	77.25	32	32	23	21	55	53	23.41	22.75
C. PROFESSIONAL STAFF																
UNGRADED	3	3	0	0	3	3	100.00	100.00	0	0	1	0	1	0	25.00	00.00
D-2	2	2	0	0	2	2	100.00	100.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.00	00.00
D-1/P-6	10	7	0	1	10	8	90.90	72.72	1	3	0	0	1	3	9.10	27.28
P-5	80	76	27	28	107	104	91.45	92.03	8	7	2	2	10	9	8.55	07.97
P-4	73	72	71	70	144	142	72.72	72.08	29	30	25	25	54	55	27.28	27.92
P-3	13	12	11	11	24	23	45.28	42.59	20	22	9	9	29	31	54.72	57.41
P-2	18	16	8	14	26	30	57.77	63.82	14	14	5	3	19	17	42.23	36.18
P-1	5	7	5	3	10	10	35.71	37.03	12	10	6	7	18	17	64.69	62.97
TOTAL	204	195	122	127	326	322	71.17	70.92	84	86	48	46	132	132	28.83	29.08

ANNEX I

RESOLUTION NO. CAP/XII/4

Leadership of the Organization

The Twelfth Council of the Staff Association,

Having identified and discussed certain situations that it feels could jeopardize the leadership of the Organization, such as:

1. Lack of coordination of international and interagency cooperation in some countries;
2. The growing incursion of agencies without a health specialization into the technical cooperation activities that are the traditional domain of the Organization;
3. The fact that although improved management practices have been incorporated, they are not being implemented fast enough to enable us to meet the growing and complex demand for cooperation in the countries; and
4. The fact that the current hiring practices of the Organization are not competitive in the international market, which cuts down on possibilities for improving technical excellence,

Resolves:

- 1) To bring this concern to the attention of the Director.
- 2) To carry out a study, coordinated by the Executive Committee of the Association, of the above situations in the countries.

ANNEX II

NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE WASHINGTON LOCAL ASSOCIATION,

Aware that preliminary work has begun on the design of a new Headquarters Building and that the design of the facility will directly affect the working conditions of the staff,

RESOLVES:

To request the Director to include staff representatives, appointed by the Washington Local Organization, in all stages of the planning, design, and construction of the new Headquarters Building.

ANNEX III
RECOMMENDATION NO. 12

Post Classification

The Twelfth Council of the Staff Association,

Recommends

That the Executive Committee:

1. Obtain all information available from the WHO Staff Association with regard to participation by the Staff Association representative on the Post Classification Committee.
2. Request the Director to reinstate the Staff Association to the Post Classification Committee.