

*executive committee of
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Topic 17: DECENTRALIZATION OF ACTIVITIES OF THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY
BUREAU TO THE ZONE OFFICES

(Topic proposed by the Government of Mexico)

BACKGROUND

In order to carry out its functions efficiently and expeditiously as executive organ of the Pan American Health Organization, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, which at the beginning endeavored to handle continental problems from its headquarters in Washington, later found it necessary to establish zone offices to which it has delegated certain operational responsibilities.

The experience of PAHO, as well as that of WHO with its regional offices, has shown the advantage of a certain degree of administrative and technical decentralization, which makes for speedier and more effective collaboration with Member Governments because of the following:

1. There is an ever-increasing demand for consultative and advisory services on the part of the countries.
2. As the Member Countries expand their national public health programs, so do their requirements increase for the training of personnel at the various levels.
3. There is a wide diversity in the health problems of the various countries within one zone, and even in those in different regions of a same country.
4. Since the PASB serves as Regional Office of the World Health Organization, it must carry out a certain number of specific functions that depend on policies and programs of world-wide scope.

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5. There occurs at times, in the staff of the Bureau, a predominance of public health professionals from a very small number of countries, thereby reducing the interchange of experience, orientation, and training, which constitutes one of the primary needs of, and one of the greatest benefits to be gained from, international agencies.

In view of the foregoing, the Executive Committee may wish to consider the adoption of the following resolution:

Draft Resolution

The Executive Committee,

Bearing in mind the diversity of health problems in the different countries comprising the zones of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau; and

Considering that the policy of administrative and technical decentralization has given favorable results in recent years, but that the process must be a continuous one,

RESOLVES:

To request the Director of the Bureau to present a report to the next meeting of the Executive Committee describing the present status of the decentralization of activities of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, the Bureau's experience in this matter, and the measures it may be proposed to take in the future.