



*executive committee of
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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MECHANISMS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN PAHO AND
NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International contacts among scientists and health workers, through voluntary associations and professional societies, long preceded the establishment of intergovernmental health organizations. Such professional associations and societies in the health field, because of their special expertise and their voluntary and independent character, can help and be helped by the intergovernmental organizations. The general policy defining relationships for this purpose is covered in Article 26 of the Constitution of the Pan American Health Organization and Article 71 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization (Annex I).

To implement Article 71, the First World Health Assembly (1948) adopted a set of working principles governing the admission of nongovernmental organizations into official relations with WHO (Annex II). These principles cover the criteria on which admission should be based, the procedures to be carried out for this purpose and the privileges associated with official relations. The Third World Health Assembly (1950) made clear (Annex II) that the large number of NGOs already in official relations with WHO automatically have the same relationship with the Regional Offices, including that for the Americas.

With regard to the Pan American Health Organization, the XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference (1954), by means of Resolution CSP14.28 (Annex III), adopted criteria essentially similar to WHO's, without establishing procedures or specifying privileges. The Directing Council, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, has established ad hoc official relations with certain international associations in the Americas (Annex III). A number of applications for admission to official relations with PAHO are now pending (Annex IV).

It would seem desirable at this time to formalize procedures, through a simple process that is not too time consuming for the Governing Bodies and which adequately safeguards the eligibility of the NGOs from the standpoint of suitability for official relations with PAHO.

The rationale for establishing official relations between the Pan American Health Organization and an NGO may be outlined as follows:

Purpose and Significance

A. For the applicant

1. Through official meetings and other means access is possible to an international forum, and communications with the Governments of the Hemisphere are facilitated.
2. Important information on scientific and organizational aspects of international health work might be available, both directly from the Organization itself and, through it, from Member Governments.
3. Improved avenues may be established for contacts with related organizations in the Americas who are not affiliated as NGOs.
4. A direct approach may be made to the Organization on the development of programs of mutual interest.
5. The recognition inherent in acceptance for official relations, meaning that PAHO standards have been met, confers an important international prestige.

B. For PAHO

1. A prime avenue may be opened up for wider contact with professionals and non-professionals throughout the Americas.
2. Needed information may more easily be gathered and professional collaboration may be more readily obtained in carrying out PAHO's program.
3. An important source may be provided for wider consultation on scientific matters, to supplement PAHO's own advisory groups, as needed.
4. Additional points of view and opinions may be made available at the meetings of the Pan American Sanitary Conference or the Directing Council when either of these Governing Bodies is considering matters of mutual interest to the Organization and the NGOs.

5. Information on PAHO activities, programs and recommendations may be given wider dissemination through the scientific journals and other publications of the NGOs.

Procedures for Admission and Periodic Review

Criteria for admission to official relations have been established by the XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference, but further specifications are needed to make this procedure operational. Mechanisms need to be set up to specify exactly what documentation must be submitted by the applicant; the various stages to be undertaken in the initial review process; the roles to be played by the Secretariat and the Governing Bodies in review and decision; and the frequency, procedure and standards for reviewing status of an already admitted NGO, with particular regard to interest, responsiveness and participation.

PAHO may wish to follow a procedure similar to that of WHO (Annex II), or may prefer, in order to avoid further extending the agenda of the Governing Bodies, to ask the Director to establish specifications for applying the criteria for admission. It may also wish to delegate to him the study of the application and the final decision, with provision for Executive Committee review of this decision.

Recommendations

Since it appears that there is considerable potential advantage to expanding the number and utility of relations with NGOs, the Executive Committee might wish to review the subject and propose a procedure to the Directing Council.

Alternative guidelines for such a procedure might be:

- 1) The Directing Council might establish a standing subcommittee of the Executive Committee and assign to it a review and decision procedure similar to WHO, including the drawing up of specifications for applying the criteria and carrying out preliminary reviews.
- 2) The Directing Council might instruct the Director to prepare specifications and procedures for the initial review, to determine the frequency of further reviews, and delegate in him the authority to carry out the procedures with requisite care and diligence. Before notifying the applicant of admission or rejection, the Director would inform the Executive Committee, or a standing subcommittee, of his decision, and at the same time transmit to it the background material on which he had based his decision, with the request that any member objecting notify him within 60 days.

In the absence of such objection, the Director would, after the 60-day interval, notify the NGO. In the event of an objection, the Director would place the matter on the agenda of the next meeting of the Executive Committee for final decision.

Regardless of the alternative chosen, the Director should present annually to the Executive Committee and to the Directing Council or Pan American Sanitary Conference a report on the status of NGOs, detailing the applications received, the initial and periodic reviews undertaken, and the decisions reached, and include a complete list of the NGOs in official relations with PAHO.

Annexes

CONSTITUTION OF WHO

Article 71

The Organization may, on matters within its competence, make suitable arrangements for consultation and co-operation with non-governmental international organizations and, with the consent of the Government concerned, with national organizations, governmental or nongovernmental.

CONSTITUTION OF PAHO

Article 26. Relations with Other Organizations:

The Conference or the Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation and cooperation with other organizations interested in or concerned with public health and, to this end, may conclude special agreements with such organizations.

RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Working Principles Governing the Admission of Non-governmental Organizations into Official Relations with WHO¹

1. *Criteria to be fulfilled before a non-governmental organization becomes eligible to be considered for relationship with the World Health Organization under Article 71 of the Constitution*

The World Health Organization should, in relation to non-governmental organizations, act in conformity with any relevant resolutions of the General Assembly or Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and the following criteria should be met before an organization can be regarded as eligible to be considered for relationship :

- (i) The organization shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the World Health Organization.
- (ii) The aims and purposes of the organization shall be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Constitution of the World Health Organization.
- (iii) The organization shall be of recognized standing and shall represent a substantial proportion of the persons organized for the purpose of participating in the particular field of interest in which it operates. To meet this requirement, a group of organizations may form a joint committee or other body authorized to act for the group as a whole.
- (iv) The organization shall have a directing body and authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives; evidence of this authority shall be presented if requested.
- (v) The organization shall normally be international in its structure and scope, with members who exercise voting rights in relation to its policies or action.
- (vi) Save in exceptional cases, a national organization which is affiliated to an international non-governmental organization covering

¹ Text adopted by the First World Health Assembly (*Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org.* 13, 96, 326) and amended by the Third, Eleventh and Twenty-first World Health Assemblies (resolutions WHA3.113, WHA11.14 and WHA21.28).

BASIC DOCUMENTS

the same subject on an international basis shall present its views through its government or through the international non-governmental organization to which it is affiliated. A national organization, however, may be included in the list¹ after consultation with, and with the consent of, the Member State concerned, if the activities of the organization are not covered by any international organization or if it offers experience upon which the World Health Organization wishes to draw.

2. Procedure for admitting organizations into relationship with WHO

- (i) The Board's Standing Committee on Non-governmental Organizations, composed of five members, shall consider information submitted by non-governmental organizations, voluntarily or by invitation, and shall make recommendations to the Board; it may invite any such organization to speak before it in connexion with the organization's application. Bearing in mind the desirability of ensuring valuable contributions to the work of the World Health Organization in terms both of quality and quantity, the committee may recommend postponement of consideration or rejection of an application.
- (ii) In accordance with the provisions of Article 71 of the Constitution, the government concerned shall be consulted with regard to possible approval of any national organization.
- (iii) The Board, after considering the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Non-governmental Organizations, shall decide whether an organization is to be admitted into relation with WHO.
- (iv) The Director-General shall inform each organization of the Board's decision on its application. The Director-General shall maintain a list of the organizations admitted into relation and this list and any amendments thereto shall be circulated to the Members of the World Health Organization.
- (v) This list shall also be circulated to the chairmen of expert committees, who may make recommendations or suggestions for using the services of any organization where this seems desirable.
- (vi) The Board, through its Standing Committee on Non-governmental Organizations, shall review the list every three years and shall determine the desirability of maintaining relations with the organizations on the list.

¹ See para. 2 (iv).

RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

3. *Privileges conferred by relationship with the World Health Organization*

(i) The right to appoint a representative to participate, without right of vote, in its meetings or in those of the committees and conferences convened under its authority, on the following conditions :

Whenever the Health Assembly, a committee or conference convened under its authority, discusses an item in which a related non-governmental organization is particularly interested, such an organization, on the invitation of the chairman of the meeting or on his acceding to a request from the organization, shall be entitled to make a statement of an expository nature, and may, with the consent of the meeting, be invited by the chairman to make, in the course of the discussion of the item before the meeting, an additional statement for purposes of clarification.

(ii) Access to non-confidential documentation and such other documentation as the Director-General may see fit to make available through such special distribution facilities as the World Health Organization may establish.

(iii) The right to submit a memorandum to the Director-General, who would determine the nature and scope of the circulation.

In the event of a memorandum being submitted which the Director-General considers might be placed on the agenda of the Health Assembly, such memorandum will be placed before the Executive Board for possible inclusion in the agenda of the Assembly.

BASIC DOCUMENTS

Principles to Govern Relations between WHO and Regional and National Non-governmental Organizations¹

1. *Regional or national non-governmental organizations which are affiliated to international non-governmental organizations with which WHO is in official relations*

These are, by definition, in official relations with the regional organization under the terms of the resolution of the First World Health Assembly concerning relations with non-governmental organizations,² and therefore no formal action by the regional committee is required.

2. *Regional or national non-governmental organizations which are affiliated to international non-governmental organizations not in official relations with WHO*

In order that WHO may facilitate the formation of strong international non-governmental organizations in the various technical fields, arrangements with the above-mentioned regional or national organizations will be on the basis of informal working relations.

3. *Regional and national organizations for which there is no international non-governmental organization*

These can be admitted into working relationship with the World Health Organization, subject to consultation between the Regional Director and the Director-General.

¹ Text adopted by the Third World Health Assembly (resolution WHA3.114)

² See page 67, paragraph (vi).

CSP14.28 The XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference,

Considering that collaboration in matters of common interest to the Pan American Sanitary Organization and other international and inter-American organizations contributes to the fulfillment of the objectives of the Organization, as stated in the Pan American Sanitary Code and in the Constitution of the Organization,

RESOLVES:

That the Pan American Sanitary Organization establish and maintain cooperative relations with other international and inter-American organizations in the manner that it deems appropriate; that the criteria given below be observed when the Pan American Sanitary Organization establishes cooperative relations with any other international and inter-American organizations; and that these relations be established or maintained in accordance with the provisions set forth in Article 23 of the Constitution.

Criteria

1. The organization shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Pan American Sanitary Organization.
2. The aims and purposes of the organization shall be in conformity with the spirit, purposes, and principles of the Pan American Sanitary Code and the Constitution of the Pan American Sanitary Organization.
3. The organization shall be of recognized standing and shall represent a substantial proportion of the persons organized for the purpose of participating in the particular field of interest in which it operates. To meet this requirement, a group of organizations may form a joint committee or other body authorized to act for the group as a whole.
4. The organization shall have a directing body and authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives; evidence of this authority shall be presented if requested.
5. The organization shall normally be inter-American in its structure and scope, with members who exercise voting rights in relation to its policies or action.
6. Save in exceptional cases, a national organization that is affiliated to an inter-American nongovernmental organization covering the same subject on an international basis shall present its views through its government or through the inter-American nongovernmental organization to which it is affiliated. A national organization, however, may be included in the list after consultation with, and with the consent of, the Member Government concerned, if the activities of the organization are not covered by any international organization or if it offers experience upon which the Pan American Sanitary Organization wishes to draw.

Oct. 1954 OD-10, 29

CE13.R13 The Executive Committee,

Considering the proposals of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau that are to be included in the agreement with the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (AIDIS); and bearing in mind the necessity of not burdening the Pan American Sanitary Bureau with additional expenses,

RESOLVES:

1. To take note of the present relations between the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (AIDIS).
2. To request the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to prepare a draft agreement between the Directing Council and the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (AIDIS) for submittal to the next meeting of the Directing Council, it being understood that the expenses implied by the agreement must be within the budget of the Organization.

April 1951 Doc. 13, 23

CD5.10 The Directing Council,

Considering that the report of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau gives an account of the cooperative activities that are being carried out between the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (AIDIS);

[Considering that,] in the budget approved for the Pan American Sanitary Bureau for 1952, \$10,000 is allotted for the continuation of these activities; and

[Considering that] the opinion of the Members of this Council has been ascertained,

RESOLVES:

That the Pan American Sanitary Bureau should continue to support the cooperative activities with the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (AIDIS) during the year 1952, as it has been doing up to the present time.

Sept.-Oct. 1951 Pub. 270, 24

CD5.17 The Directing Council,

Considering that the Representative of Cuba has made a report and the Pan American Medical Confederation has submitted documents, which include the Medical Charter of Havana, its Constitution, the Final Acts of the General Assemblies of Havana, 1947; Lima, 1949; and Caracas, 1951;

Considering that the Pan American Medical Confederation is composed of the majority of the medical associations of the Americas, which in turn represent the majority of the physicians of their respective countries; and

[Considering that] the request that this Confederation be recognized officially by the Pan American Sanitary Organization has been heard and duly supported by representatives of several Member Countries,

RESOLVES:

1. To recognize officially the Pan American Medical Confederation as a nongovernmental organization representative of the medical associations of the Americas.

2. To authorize the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to reach an agreement with the Pan American Medical Confederation as to the manner in which relations between the two are to be established.

Sept.-Oct. 1951 Pub. 270, 24

CE52.R15 The Executive Committee,

Having examined Document CE52/6 on the establishment of official relations with the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools, and bearing in mind the considerations contained therein;

Having examined the status of the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools; and

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 26 of the Constitution of the Pan American Health Organization and Resolution XXVIII¹ of the XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference,

RESOLVES:

To recommend to the XVI Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO, XVII Meeting of the Regional Committee of the World Health Organization for the Americas:

a) That it establish official relations with the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools as a nongovernmental organization representing medical schools in the Americas.

b) That it authorize the Director to develop with the Federation, to the extent that financial and budgetary limitations allow, cooperative activities of mutual interest aimed at strengthening medical education programs in the Americas.

April 1965 OD 62, 37

CD16.38 The Directing Council,

Having considered Document CE52/6 on the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools, and bearing in mind the considerations contained therein;

Having examined the statutes of the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 26 of the Constitution of the Pan American Health Organization and Resolution XXVIII of the XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference; and

Considering Resolution XV adopted by the Executive Committee at its 52nd Meeting,

RESOLVES:

1. To establish official relations with the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools as a nongovernmental organization representing the medical schools in the Americas.

2. To authorize the Director to develop with the Federation, to the extent that financial and budgetary limitations allow, cooperative activities of mutual interest aimed at strengthening medical education programs in the Americas.

Sept.-Oct. 1965 OD 66, 89

Nongovernmental organizations with pending applications for admission to official relations with PAHO:

1. Pan American Medical Women's Alliance
2. Society for NeuroScience
3. Federación Latinoamericana de la Industria Farmacéutica (FIFARMA)
4. Federación Panamericana Pro-Donación Voluntaria de Sangre
5. Southern Health Foundation, Inc.
6. Asociación Mexicana de Hospitales
7. Federación Latinoamericana de Hospitales
8. Inter-American Council of Psychiatric Associations