

56th DIRECTING COUNCIL

70th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS

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Provisional Agenda Item 8.23-B

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B. FORTY-EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Background

1. This document presents the resolutions of relevance for the activities of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) adopted during the forty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held at its Washington, D.C. headquarters on 4-5 June 2018.¹
2. The meeting was attended by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS Member States and other official delegates, representatives of governments accredited as permanent observers, representatives of agencies in the inter-American system, including PAHO, and entities belonging to the Summit Implementation Review Group. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, H.E. Mr. Eladio Loizaga, was elected president of this regular session of the General Assembly.
3. There was no predefined theme for this assembly, given the expectation that much of the discussion in the plenaries would center around the situation in Venezuela.
4. The OAS Secretary General, Mr. Luis Almagro Lemes, presented the opening remarks, which focused on the values of freedom, democracy, and the importance of combating corruption.
5. Most of the recommendations and resolutions had been discussed and agreed upon earlier by the Permanent Council. The exceptions were a resolution on Venezuela and a declaration regarding the situation in Nicaragua. The items on which a consensus had not been reached and new items proposed by the Member States were discussed by the General Committee of the Assembly or in special working groups that met in parallel with the plenary sessions.

¹ The agenda, detailed documents, and resolutions can be consulted at: <http://www.oas.org/en/48ga/>.

6. The situation in Venezuela was addressed by many delegations during their opening statements, triggering outspoken discussions that lasted the entire meeting. The dynamic of the plenary sessions was characterized by statements from the delegates alternating with responses from the head of the Venezuelan delegation, Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Jorge Arreaza. Mr. Arreaza noted that the regional economic blockade and diplomatic isolation were causing hardship for Venezuela.

7. At the end of the Assembly, the member states passed a resolution (19 in favor, 4 against, and 11 abstentions) on the situation in Venezuela (AG/RES. 2929 [XLVIII-O/18]), which states that “an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional order of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has occurred.” Among other provisions, it calls upon the Government of Venezuela to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and to “implement epidemiological surveillance measures to prevent the aggravation of the humanitarian and public health crisis, particularly against the reappearance of diseases such as measles, malaria, and diphtheria.”

8. Following the vote on the resolution, the delegate from Venezuela took the floor for final remarks and specifically emphasized the health consequences of the economic blockade. By way of example, he pointed out that the measures had held up the procurement of 300,000 doses of insulin, antimalarials, cancer drugs, and vaccines that are procured through the PAHO Revolving Fund. He also mentioned that a vaccination campaign was currently ongoing, adding that Venezuela had received support from PAHO and that the Organization’s Director would be visiting Venezuela the following week to help promote the campaign.

9. Another resolution approved by the General Assembly, “Strengthening Multi-Sectoral Responses to the Crisis of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Americas,” was proposed by Barbados. The text had been drafted with PASB technical support following a joint high-level session of the OAS Permanent Council (PC) and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI). The meeting, organized by PASB, Barbados, and the OAS Secretariat, took place on 19 March 2018 and was attended by representatives of 30 member states.

10. The OAS General Assembly elected members to the following autonomous and/or decentralized bodies: the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Justice Studies Center of the Americas, the OAS Board of External Auditors, and the Administrative Tribunal.

11. A selected list of resolutions of interest to the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization and related to its work as the specialized health agency of the inter-American system is given in the table below.

12. The venue for the forty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly remained undecided because no proposals had been received from member states as of the end of the forty-eighth regular session.

Action by the Directing Council

13. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this report.

Table. Resolutions adopted by the forty-eighth regular session of the OAS General Assembly of relevance for PAHO activities

Resolutions of the OAS General Assembly	Linkage to PAHO activities
<p>AG/RES. 2915 (XLVIII-O/18)</p> <p>Coordination of Volunteers in the Hemisphere in Response to Disasters and the Fight Against Hunger and Poverty – White Helmets Initiative</p>	<p>Health Emergencies Department</p> <p>Health and Human Rights (Resolution CD50.R8 [2010]) (Document CD50/12 [2010])</p>
<p>AG/RES.2916 (XLVIII-O/18)</p> <p>Advancing Hemispheric Initiatives on Integral Development</p>	<p>Health Promotion and Social Determinants of Health Unit</p> <p>Health and Human Rights (Resolution CD50.R8 [2010])</p> <p>Establishment of SDG Alliance</p> <p>Policy on Ethnicity and Health (2017) (Resolution CSP29.R3)</p> <p>Health, Human Security, and Well-being (Resolution CD50.R16 [2010]) (Document CD50/17 [2010])</p>
<p>AG/RES. 2919 (XLVIII-O/18)</p> <p>Strengthening Multi-Sectoral Responses to the Crisis of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Americas</p>	<p>Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health Department</p> <p>Under PAHO and Barbados leadership, the Inter-American Task Force on Noncommunicable Diseases convened a joint high-level session of the OAS Permanent Council (PC) and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI). The resolution is an outcome of that initiative.</p>

Resolutions of the OAS General Assembly	Linkage to PAHO activities
<p>AG/RES. 2921 (XLVIII-O/18)</p> <p>Incorporating Multidimensional Criteria in Measuring Poverty and Development</p>	<p>Health Promotion and Social Determinants Unit</p> <p>Health and Human Rights (Resolution CD50.R8 [2010]) (Document CD50/12 [2010])</p>
<p>AG/RES. 2928 (XLVIII-O/18)</p> <p>Promotion and Protection of Human Rights</p>	<p>Health and Human Rights (Resolution CD50.R8 [2010]) (Document CD50/12 [2010])</p>
<p>AG/RES. 2929 (XLVIII-O/18)</p> <p>Resolution on the Situation in Venezuela</p>	<p>Health Emergencies Department</p> <p>Activities of the PAHO Revolving Fund and the PAHO Strategic Fund</p> <p>Health of Migrants (Resolution CD55.R13 [2016]) (Document CD55/11, Rev. 1 [2016])</p>
