

*executive committee of  
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN  
SANITARY  
ORGANIZATION

*working party of  
the regional committee*

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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Topic 15: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY ORGANIZATION AND  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Background

The need for a set of working principles and procedures to regulate relations between the Pan American Sanitary Organization and professional and technical non-governmental organizations became apparent at the V Meeting of the Directing Council. At that Meeting the Council entertained a direct application from a Pan American professional association for official recognition, which, after due consideration, that body extended to the association. <sup>1/</sup> The V Meeting of the Council was also attended by a number of Observers from non-governmental organizations which are already in formal relations with the World Health Organization. In view of these developments, the Executive Committee at its 15th Meeting resolved:

"To request the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to submit to the Executive Committee a study on relations with non-governmental organizations, taking also into account the policies followed by WHO in this regard."

Discussion

A. WHO Policy and Procedure

Article 71 of the WHO Constitution provides for the Organization to enter into relationships with non-governmental organizations by suitable arrangements, and with national organizations with the consent of the government concerned. The World Health Organization, in giving study to the question, recognized that non-governmental organizations have an important part to play in the field of health and that relations with such groups have potential value in promoting the world-wide application of the principles of the Constitution of WHO, and in particular in promoting informed opinion and active cooperation on the part of the public.

<sup>1/</sup> Resolution XVII, Final Report, V Meeting of Directing Council (1951)

The First World Health Assembly accordingly adopted: (1) certain criteria to be fulfilled by a non-governmental organization before it can become eligible for admission to relationship with WHO; (2) procedures regulating admission of organizations; and (3) privileges conferred by relationship with WHO. These working principles, as amended by the Third World Health Assembly, are set forth as Annex I of the present document.

A Standing Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has been established by the Executive Board to consider applications and information submitted by non-governmental organizations and to make recommendations. The Executive Board, after considering the recommendations of the Standing Committee, decides whether an organization is to be admitted into relations with WHO. In order to provide a factual basis for decisions, a questionnaire has been devised which organizations wishing to qualify for official relations with WHO are expected to complete in detail and submit to the Committee through the Secretariat, together with other relevant documents. This material is analyzed and processed by the Secretariat, and the Director-General forwards to all members of the Executive Board a summary of information concerning each organization to be considered, three months before the opening of the session at which the application is to be reviewed. An outline of this Summary Report of Non-Governmental Organizations is appended hereto. (Annex II).

The following non-governmental international organizations are listed as being in official relationship with WHO in the Annual Report of the Director-General for 1950: <sup>2/</sup>

Biometric Society (New Haven, Connecticut, USA)

Council for the Coordination of International Congresses of Medical Sciences (Brussels, Belgium)

Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (Washington, D.C., USA)

International Academy of Forensic and Social Medicine (Brussels, Belgium)

International Association for the Prevention of Blindness (Paris, France)

International Committee of the Red Cross (Geneva, Switzerland)

<sup>2/</sup> WHO Official Record No. 30, pages 160-161.

International Conference of Social Work (Columbus, Ohio, USA)  
International Council of Nurses (London, England)  
International Dental Federation (Brussels, Belgium)  
International Federation for Housing and Town Planning  
(Amsterdam, Netherlands)  
International Hospital Federation (London, England)  
International League against Rheumatism (London, England)  
International Leprosy Association (London, England)  
International Pharmaceutical Federation (Overschie, Netherlands)  
International Union against Cancer (Paris, France)  
International Union for Child Welfare (Geneva, Switzerland)  
International Union against Tuberculosis (Paris, France)  
International Union against Venereal Diseases (Paris, France)  
League of Red Cross Societies (Geneva, Swizerland)  
World Federation for Mental Health (London, England)  
World Federation of United Nations Associations (Geneva,  
Switzerland)  
World Medical Association (New York, USA)

It should be pointed out, however, that the Executive Board, at its Ninth Session, January 21-February 5, 1952, decided to reconsider completely the problem of official relations between WHO and non-governmental organizations, and postponed consideration of all pending applications from such groups. The Director-General was requested to submit a study of this question to the Board as soon as possible. That study, when completed, might also serve as a useful guide to the Pan American Sanitary Organization in its discussions of the matter.

B. Relations of the Pan American Sanitary Organization with Non-Governmental Organizations

Attention is drawn to the fact that certain non-governmental organizations, by virtue of their official relationship with WHO, are considered, under WHO rules to be also in formal relationship with the regional organizations of WHO. The applicable principle covering this situation reads as follows:

"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, and therefore no formal action by the regional committee is required." 3/

Accordingly, observers from nine of the organizations listed above were in attendance at the V Meeting of the Directing Council, which met also as the Regional Committee of WHO. These organizations were invited by the Director-General of WHO, following established procedure, to designate a representative of their American affiliates to attend the sessions of the Directing Council.

Article 23 of the Constitution of the Pan American Sanitary Organization provides that:

"The Directing Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation and cooperation with other organizations having interest in or relation to public health, and to this end may conclude special agreements with such organizations."

In view of the existing arrangements made by WHO with respect to its relations with non-governmental organizations and considering that the policies of the Pan American Sanitary Organization and WHO as expressed in their respective constitutions are substantially alike in this sphere, it may be desirable for the Directing Council to proceed to formulate a set of working principles and procedures which will harmonize with those of WHO. This approach would have the added advantage of providing a reasonably uniform pattern for organizations in the Americas to follow in their relations with both international health agencies.

3/ WHO Handbook of Basic Documents (3rd edition), p. 120.

Proposal

On this basis, the following draft statement is proposed for the consideration of the Executive Committee and the Directing Council:

WORKING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE ADMISSION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS INTO RELATIONS WITH THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY ORGANIZATION

I. Criteria to be fulfilled before a non-governmental organization becomes eligible to be considered for relationship with the Pan American Sanitary Organization under Article 23 of the Constitution

The following criteria should be met before a non-governmental organization can be regarded as eligible to be considered for relationship:

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 which is affiliated to an international non-governmental organization covering 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 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.

II. Procedure for admitting organizations into relationship with the Pan American Sanitary Organization.

1. The Executive Committee shall serve as a Standing Committee of the Directing Council on Non-Governmental Organizations. The Standing Committee shall consider information submitted by non-governmental organizations, voluntarily or by invitation, and shall make recommendations to the Directing Council; it may invite any such organization to speak before it in connection with the organization's application. Bearing in mind the desirability of ensuring valuable contributions to the work of the Pan American Sanitary Organization in terms both of quality and quantity, the Committee may recommend postponement of consideration or rejection of an application.
2. The government concerned shall be consulted with regard to possible approval of any national organization.
3. The Directing Council, after considering the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, shall decide whether an organization is to be admitted into relation with the Pan American Sanitary Organization.
4. Non-governmental organizations desiring to establish official relations with the Pan American Sanitary Organization, shall address their request and any documentary material pertaining thereto to the Directing Council through the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. The Director of the Bureau shall send to all members of the Standing Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations an adequate summary of the information concerning each application to be considered, at least two months before the Standing Committee convenes. Said summary of information shall at the same time be circulated to the members of the Directing Council.

5. The Director of the Bureau shall inform each organization of the Directing Council's decision on its application. The Director of the Bureau shall maintain a list of the organizations admitted into relation and this list and any amendments thereto shall be circulated to the Member Governments of the Pan American Sanitary Organization.
6. This list shall also be circulated to the Director-General of the World Health Organization, who may give it such further distribution as he deems desirable.
7. The Directing Council, through the Standing Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall review the list biennially and shall determine the desirability of maintaining relations with the organizations on the list.

III. Privileges conferred by relationship with the Pan American Sanitary Organization

1. The right to appoint a representative to participate, without right of vote, in the regular meetings of the Pan American Sanitary Organization or in conferences convened under its authority, on the following conditions:

Whenever the Pan American Sanitary Conference, the Directing Council, the Executive Committee or a conference convened under the authority of the Pan American Sanitary Organization, 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 the purposes of clarification.

2. Access to the non-confidential documentation of the regularly convoked meetings.
3. The right to submit a memorandum to the Director of the Bureau, who would determine the nature and scope of the circulation. In the event of a memorandum being submitted which the Director considers might be placed on the

agenda of the Pan American Sanitary Conference, the Directing Council, or the Executive Committee, such memorandum will be placed before the Executive Committee for possible inclusion in the Agenda of such Meeting.

The above principles and procedures conform to Article 23 of the PAHO Constitution, in that these would constitute the arrangements established by the Directing Council for relations with non-governmental organizations; they would be applied in lieu of special formal agreements with individual organizations admitted into relationship.

Situations may be foreseen, however, where it may be desirable for the Pan American Sanitary Organization to enter into operating relationships with certain organizations which call for arrangements of a reciprocal character. In those cases the Directing Council, under authority of Article 23, may, if it is deemed advisable, conclude special agreements with the organizations concerned, leaving the details of these arrangements to be developed by the Director of the Bureau.

In view of the recent developments in WHO, referred to above, with respect to the subject under discussion, the Executive Committee may wish to consider one of the two following alternative resolutions:

#### First Alternative

HAVING CONSIDERED the study submitted by the Director of the Bureau on relations with non-governmental organizations, which takes into account also the policies of WHO in this regard; and

NOTING the position which WHO Executive Board adopted at its Ninth Session with respect to official relations with such organizations;

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

RECOMMENDS to the Directing Council that it approve provisionally, the criteria, procedures and privileges pertaining to the admission of non-governmental organizations into relations with the Pan American Sanitary Organization as set forth in Document CE16/5; and

INSTRUCTS the Director of the Bureau to continue his study of this question and report further thereon to the Executive Committee when the WHO has clarified its policies on the subject.

#### Second Alternative

HAVING CONSIDERED the study submitted by the Director of the Bureau on relations with non-governmental organizations, which takes into account also the policies of WHO in this regard; and



NOTING that the WHO Executive Board, in its Ninth Session, decided to reconsider completely the problem of official relations between WHO and non-governmental organizations and has requested the Director-General to submit a study on this question to the Board;

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

DECIDES to instruct the Director of the Bureau to continue his study of this question and report further thereon to the Executive Committee at its 19th Meeting.

WORKING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE ADMISSION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATIONS INTO RELATIONS WITH WHO<sup>1/</sup>

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 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 list after consultation with, and with the consent of, the Member State

<sup>1/</sup>Text adopted by the First World Health Assembly (Off. Rec. World Hlth Org. 13, pages 96, 326) and amended by the Third World Health Assembly (Resolution WHA3.113, Off. Rec. World Hlth Org. 28, page 67).

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 connection 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 biennially and shall determine the desirability of maintaining relations with the organizations on the list.

## 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.

PRINCIPLES TO GOVERN RELATIONS BETWEEN WHO AND REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS<sup>1/</sup>

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, 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.

<sup>1/</sup>Text adopted by the Third World Health Assembly (Off. Rec. World Hlth Org. 28, page 67).

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Name of organization
2. Address of Headquarters
3. Addresses of all Branch or Regional Headquarters
4. Membership
  - (a) Total number of persons
  - (b) Do these persons pay directly or are the subscriptions paid by affiliated organizations?
  - (c) List affiliated organizations, giving their country, and the total number of persons belonging to each
  - (d) Note various types of membership, such as associate members, with numbers and pertinent facts
5. General purposes of the organization (Please give full details)
6. (a) What is the primary function of the organization and (b) secondary functions? Please reply in detail.
7. Is the organization sectional (e.g. political, religious or concerned particularly with any section of the population) in any way? If so, please give details.
8. (a) Does the organization advocate any special health measures or procedures? If so, what are these?
  - (b) Has the organization any special reservations as to treatment or health procedures? If so, what are these?
9. Can officially designated representatives speak authoritatively for the membership on matters concerned with the stated purposes of the organization? If so, on what subjects? If not, please clarify.

10. Specific interest with reference to the work of the World Health Organization
11. Officers. (Names and positions held, including the Chief Executive Officer or Secretary and other principal administrative officials. What is the total number of paid officer personnel? Please distinguish between those with the international organization and those with the national or local groups attached thereto).
12. Structure. (a) Policy making bodies such as Conference, Governing Body, Executive Committee. (b) frequency of meetings, with date of the last meeting of each. (c) voting procedure. (d) affiliation with other organizations, including international organizations.
13. Finances. (Annual budget and sources of income, noting portion received from membership dues). Please send copy of financial statements for past three years, if published separately from Annual Report.
14. History. (Date when founded, principal historical developments).
15. Activities. (A statement of the most important work accomplished).
16. Publications. (Name the regular publications, how often they appear, and their general nature. State what kind of special reports, etc., are issued, mentioning these of particular importance).
17. Documentation. (a) Please attach three copies of Constitution, charter or convention, and other informational material, including samples of types of literature published. (b) Please send a copy of each of the last three annual reports.