



*executive committee of
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



54th Meeting
Washington, D. C.
April 1966

Provisional Agenda Item 9

CE54/12 (Eng.)
26 March 1966
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DATE OF THE XVII PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE, XVIII MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE AMERICAS

Article 7, paragraph A, of the Constitution of the Pan American Health Organization provides that the Pan American Sanitary Conference will meet "on the date fixed by the Director of the Bureau in consultation with the Executive Committee". Furthermore, Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference provides that the Director of the Bureau shall convoke the Conference "not less than six months before the date fixed for the opening of the meeting". In implementation of these provisions the Director sent a cable on 3 March 1965 to the members of the Executive Committee to ascertain whether they considered the date of 26 September satisfactory for the opening of the XVII Pan American Sanitary Conference.

All the members of the Executive Committee replied in the affirmative and consequently notices of convocation were sent on 26 March to all Governments and to organizations entitled to be represented at the Conference.

It was stated, both in the cables and in the notices of convocation that the Conference was expected to last two or three weeks. In point of fact, the duration of the Conference, like that of any other meeting, depends on the number of agenda items to be dealt with, the way in which the meeting is organized, and the length of the discussions on the agenda items.

The XIV Pan American Sanitary Conference, which was held in Chile in 1954, from 7 to 22 October, examined 40 items in a period of 16 days. The XV Conference, which was held in San Juan de Puerto Rico from 21 September to 3 October 1958, dealt with 38 items in 12 days. The XVI Conference, which met in Minneapolis from 21 August to 3 September 1962, considered some 39 items in 14 days.

The provisional agenda of the Conference, which has been prepared by the Director and has to be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval, contains 39 items of considerable interest to the Governments of the Americas. There is no doubt that many of them will be the subject of considerable debate. Under the Constitution the Conference is the supreme authority of the Organization and among its functions is the establishment of the general guidelines to be followed; therefore, the decisions reached there can be of decisive importance not only in raising the level of health but also in raising the level of prosperity and well-being of the peoples of the Americas. Consequently the Director believes that it would not be advisable at this juncture to specify a period which may be insufficient to allow the Conference to properly consider all the matters that will be brought before it. In any event, it seems more appropriate for the Conference itself, having decided on its method of work, to reduce such period as may have been established to that considered sufficient to allow it to take such decisions as it may wish.

In the foregoing paragraph mention has been made of the method of organizing the meetings as one of the factors influencing the duration of the Conference. In that connection it is worth pointing out that the Executive Committee made a detailed examination of this matter at its 52nd Meeting and sent to the Directing Council a report on the organization of the Conference. In Resolution XXII the XVI Directing Council expressed agreement with the report of the Executive Committee and recommended that the Director retain "the same general structure as in earlier conferences, due regard being had to the suggestions made by the Governments about the organization and work of the main committees".

Pursuant to this recommendation the meeting will be organized in such a way as to allow its general structure to be maintained, but the Conference itself, as the supreme authority, can decide whether to adhere to the traditional pattern or to introduce into it changes aimed at expediting the dispatch of business.

In view of these considerations, with respect to both the number and the importance of the agenda items and the structure of the meeting, the Director believes that provisionally the Conference should run from 26 September to 15 October.