



*executive committee of
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



92nd Meeting
Washington, D.C.
June 1984

Provisional Agenda Item 15

CE92/16, ADD. I (Eng.)
25 June 1984
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

LONG-TERM PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING SUBCOMMITTEE

Introduction

During the meeting of the Long-term Planning Subcommittee in April 1984, there arose the need to review the Subcommittee's functions within the framework of the management approaches of the new Administration of the Pan American Health Organization.

Within the basic principles of the "Management Strategy for the Optimal Use of the PAHO/WHO Resources in Direct Support of Member Countries," the need for more active participation by Member Countries in their relationship with the Organization is emphasized. They are the primary actors in the definition of national needs and priorities and, together with the Organization, in the design of the country program so that it responds to those needs in the context of both national and regional priorities. Together with the Organization, they have co-equal responsibility in the administration of the Organization's cooperation and in assuring the efficient use of country program resources within their national frontiers. That increased participation at the country level by the Governments also should serve as a stimulus for their increased involvement in the critical readjustment of the Organization's regional programs of technical cooperation. Ultimately, it is the Government's responsibility to translate the collective decisions of the Governing Bodies into commitments and concrete actions in each country.

Those decisions impose mutual obligations on the Secretariat and on the countries to put into practice individually the agreements which have been adopted collectively. The Secretariat--as the executive branch of the Governing Bodies--and the countries share the responsibility to assure that the measures which are taken at the country level are compatible with regional policies and priorities.

The Member Countries participate in the conduct of the Organization through diverse official and unofficial interactions. The new emphasis of the management strategy is to spark more active participation by the Member Countries. In meetings of the Executive Committee, the Directing Council and the Pan American Sanitary Conference, the Member Countries participate actively in the formulation of policies and in the examination of the Organization's program. This permits each country's interests and needs to be reflected more rapidly in policy and program changes, and in the way the Organization uses its resources within the countries.

Planning, programming and budgeting for technical cooperation constitute a continuous process with integrated short-, medium- and long-term cycles. The medium-term planning process takes place at the country level within the context of the long-term plans approved by the Governing Bodies, the joint examination of country and regional needs and the specific resolutions of the Governing Bodies. The changing short- and medium-term demands of countries should be the major determinants in a continuing process of readjustment of regional programs, which also implies greater flexibility in budget execution based on the results of joint analysis by PAHO and the Member Governments.

In relation to these considerations, the need for a closer involvement of the countries in certain aspects of planning, programming and budgeting of technical cooperation was recognized. With the objective of obtaining this more effective involvement, the Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning expressed a desire to review its functions and submit its views to the Executive Committee.

Background

The Subcommittee was created by resolution of the Executive Committee in June 1979 (CE83.R13). At that time, it was evaluating the Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas and considering the regional contribution needed to achieve the goal of health for all in the year 2000. In that context, it recognized the responsibility of the Governing Bodies and of the Member Governments for long-term planning and programming. The Subcommittee initially was comprised of Canada, Chile and Guatemala. In 1980 it examined, modified and expanded the document "Regional Strategies for Health for All in the Year 2000," which subsequently was adopted by the Directing Council (CD27.R20) in that same year.

The Subcommittee, comprised of Chile, United States of America, Guatemala and Mexico, met again in April 1981 to review in detail the Plan of Action prepared by the Director to implement the Regional Strategies. The Plan of Action, with modifications, adjustments and suggestions made by the Subcommittee, was approved by the Executive Committee (CE81.R19) and by the Directing Council (CD28.R11).

In accord with the instructions of the 86th Meeting of the Executive Committee, the Subcommittee, comprised of Chile, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay, met in June 1982 to examine the "Basic Document on the Financial and Budgetary Implications of the Regional Strategies and the Plan of Action." At that time, the Subcommittee studied the document and formulated recommendations on the criteria and standards for the planning of the budget for 1984-1985 and the proposed provisional budgeting of WHO for the Region of the Americas for 1984-1985.

The Subcommittee was not convoked in 1983; however, the number of members was expanded to five: Canada, Cuba, United States of America, Panama and Uruguay. With these members, the Subcommittee met in April of this year and considered an 8-point agenda which resulted in the report presented to the Executive Committee.

Members

The resolution which established the Subcommittee (CE82.R13) in June 1979, did not establish a fixed number of members. Since the Executive Committee is comprised of nine members, it appears that the Subcommittee's current size of five members is adequate to represent the full Committee and to provide a sufficient contrast of opinions and perceptions in the examination of the topics submitted for its consideration.

Since it is a Subcommittee of the Executive Committee, its members have been selected from among the members of the Executive Committee, and their tenure has corresponded to their membership on the Executive Committee. This practice appears to be the most appropriate since the Subcommittee is a tributary of the Executive Committee. When there is a need to fill a vacancy because of the completion of an Executive Committee member's term and, therefore, its participation in the Subcommittee, a new member would be chosen from among the countries serving on the Executive Committee.

Meetings

With the objective of maximizing the participation of governments in Long-term Planning and Programming, it appears desirable for the Subcommittee to meet twice a year. One of the meetings will be scheduled prior to the Executive Committee meeting normally held in June-July and a second, following the second Executive Committee Meeting which occurs immediately after the Directing Council in September-October. The first Subcommittee Meeting of the year should also occur following the WHO Executive Board meeting and prior to the World Health Assembly.

It is suggested that PAHO Headquarters continue as the site for the meeting because of its convenience in terms of ready access to all the information and staff responsible for coordinating the different programs. Only in exceptional cases and for some specific topic, the Subcommittee might decide to meet elsewhere.

The duration of the Subcommittee meetings, as has been the experience in the last four years, should not be less than two or three days with a decision left to the discretion of the Subcommittee's president whether to expand or reduce this time period in light of the work of the Subcommittee.

Functions

The Subcommittee itself, in its last meeting, reached a conclusion that it should maintain its strictly advisory character to the Executive Committee, defining its functions principally in assisting the Executive Committee in its analysis of important and strategic medium and long-term issues. Second, the Subcommittee also could advise the Director on matters related to the conduct of the Organization. In general terms, the following are the principal purposes of the Subcommittee:

- i) Analysis of the planning and programming methods and process for medium- and long-term activities;
- ii) Analysis of information systems, for management of PAHO/WHO's technical cooperation with the countries, including monitoring and evaluation;
- iii) Analysis of the socioeconomic framework and conditions and of their repercussions on the health sector;
- iv) Analysis of PAHO budget processes and of the background and basis for their formulation;
- v) Study of aspects related to the policies and overall directions of the administrative systems of the Organization, particularly involving the planning and development of human resources;
- vi) Analysis, formulation and evaluation of special programs;
- vii) Other functions as assigned by the Executive Committee.

In light of the positive contribution that the Subcommittee has been making during the last five years, and recognizing that a still greater involvement would result in added benefits to the activities of the Organization, the Executive Committee is requested to give its consideration to the recommendations contained in this report.