



XXI PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE

XXXIV REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Presented by Dr. Manuel Borgoño Domínguez (Chile), Chairman of the Executive Committee)

Article 4.F of the Constitution of the Pan American Health Organization requires the Conference to review, among other things, the annual report of the Chairman of the Executive Committee. In compliance with this constitutional mandate, the following report is presented on the proceedings of the 87th and 88th Meetings of the Executive Committee.

87th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The 87th Meeting of the Executive Committee immediately followed the closing of the XXVIII Meeting of the Directing Council, XXXIII Meeting of the Regional Committee of the World Health Organization for the Americas, on 1 October 1981 at the Headquarters building in Washington, D.C.

In the single plenary session, the Committee was joined by the Representatives of Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay, who had just been elected to membership on it in place of Guatemala, Peru, and the United States of America, whose mandates had expired.

The Representatives of all the other Members except Guyana were also present.

I had the signal honor of being elected Chairman, together with Dr. Joaquín Solís, of Nicaragua, who was elected Vice Chairman, and Mr. Donald Miller, of Jamaica, as Rapporteur. Of course, we enjoyed the effective and constant assistance of Dr. Héctor R. Acuña, our Director and Secretary ex officio of the Committee.

The Committee took note of the resolutions adopted in the just concluded XXVIII Meeting of the Directing Council; decided that the Committee on Long-Term Planning and Programming would meet immediately before its own 88th Meeting, to facilitate the proceedings thereof; designated the Dominican Republic a member of the Award Committee of the PAHO Award for Administration in substitution of Peru, whose term as a member of the Executive Committee had expired; named Nicaragua a member of the Standing Subcommittee on Inter-American Nongovernmental Organizations in substitution of Guatemala, whose term of office had expired; and designated Uruguay and Panama members of the Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning and Programming in substitution of Guatemala and the United States of America, whose terms of office on the Executive Committee had expired.

In addition, in its 87th Meeting the Executive Committee approved two resolutions. The purpose of the first was to authorize the Director to grant the joint and several guarantee of PAHO for all the financial obligations undertaken by the Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF) for the purchase of medical textbooks, in replacement of the old and more costly letter of credit guaranteeing a loan from the Inter-American Bank (IDB). The second resolution enabled the Committee to delegate to a subcommittee just established in the XXVIII Meeting of the Directing Council the power and authority needed to facilitate and speed up negotiations in connection with development of the Governor Shepherd building site.

88th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The 88th Meeting of the Executive Committee was held at the Headquarters building in Washington, D.C., from 23 to 30 June 1982.

The Meeting was attended by representatives of all the countries members of the Committee, namely Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Uruguay. Also in attendance were observers for the Governments of Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Peru, United States of America, and Venezuela, as well as for the Government of Spain.

Other observers represented the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and a nongovernmental organization, the Latin American Federation of the Pharmaceutical Industry.

On the matter of attendance at the sessions, it is worth noting the important fact that more Governments were represented by observers than there were members of the Committee, and that those observers were very active participants in the discussions of the items on the agenda, which might therefore make it advisable for the Executive Committee to examine its rules concerning the participation of observers in its proceedings.

The Meeting was opened at 9 a.m. on 23 June 1982 and, in the absence of the Vice Chairman, Dr. Joaquín Solís, and the Rapporteur, Mr. Donald Miller, who had been designated to those posts in the 87th Meeting, the Executive Committee elected in their stead the Representatives of the countries to which they belonged, to wit: Ms. Lea Guido (of Nicaragua) as Vice Chairman pro tempore, and Dr. Carmen Bowen-Wright (of Jamaica) as Rapporteur pro tempore.

Dr. Ramón Álvarez Gutiérrez (Mexico) was made a member of the Award Committee of the PAHO Award for Administration in replacement of the Representative of Argentina, who was barred from its deliberation by the fact that one of the candidates was from his country.

The Agenda (Item 2 of the Agenda) was adopted unanimously in the first plenary session.

Item 3 of the Agenda, "Request of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for Membership in the Pan American Health Organization," was welcomed by the Executive Committee which, on being apprised of it, unanimously approved Resolution I requesting the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference to admit the Government of that country to membership in the Organization.

Item 4 of the Agenda, "Request of the Government of Belize for Membership in the Pan American Health Organization," prompted a statement by the Observer for Guatemala, who presented an extensive historical account in support of the views of his Government in opposition to the admission of Belize to the Pan American Health Organization. He based his legal argument on, inter alia, Article VIII of the Charter of the Organization of American States, in which it is requested that no decision whatever be taken on requests for the admission of any political entity whose territory is in dispute.

The Director explained that the Constitution of PAHO contained no restriction of this kind, and he had a study prepared solely on the legal aspects of the admission of new members to PAHO, which was presented to the Executive Committee in its ninth plenary session. The Observer for Guatemala put on record that the Government of his country reserved the right to revert to the content of that document at a later time.

From the discussion on this item it was concluded that the Executive Committee regards PAHO as a technical agency with the health of the Americas as its object, and that the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference should admit Belize to membership in the Organization without going into political problems, which were more properly dealt with in other forums. Accordingly, the Committee unanimously approved its Resolution II.

On the subject of Item 5 of the Agenda, "Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Regional Strategies for Health for All by the Year 2000," the Secretariat presented a progress report and described the measures taken to implement the Plan of Action and the seminars held for that purpose. In the discussion of this item there was an interesting exchange of views on the best way to train key personnel in matters of the Regional Strategies and Plan of Action so as to catalyze action in the countries. In the end, the Committee confined itself to taking note of the report.

Item 6 of the Agenda, "Report of the Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning and Programming on the Study of the Financial and Budgetary Implications of the Regional Strategies and the Plan of Action for Attaining the Goal of Health for All by the Year 2000," was taken up by the Executive Committee in its ninth plenary session. This was a preliminary basic study by the Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning and Programming describing and summarizing the financial and budgetary implications of the Regional Strategies and Plan of Action. It was of enormous importance because what was involved was the capacity of the Member Governments and the Organization to attain the goal of health for all by the year 2000.

The Executive Committee approved Resolution XX which, in essence, recommends to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference that it urge Member Governments to allocate resources and to use them in the most effective manner in order to attain the goal of health for all by the year 2000, and requests the Director to endeavor to raise international funds for Regional Strategies and the Plan of Action.

The matter that took up most of the Executive Committee's fifth plenary session was the "Report of the Special Subcommittee on Women in Health and Development" (Item 7 of the Agenda). During the consideration of this item, the session was chaired by the Vice Chairman, Ms. Lea Guido, of Nicaragua. There was an interesting discussion, and those problems may be said to have been subjected to fairly thorough scrutiny. Perhaps the best summary of the discussion can be obtained by a careful reading of its outcome, Resolution VII, on "Women in Health and Development," approved in that session.

The preamble to this resolution reviews the background of the subject and refers to the report of the Special Subcommittee of the Executive Committee on Women in Health and Development, which had done meritorious work.

In the operative part of this resolution it is recommended to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference mainly that it recommend to the Member Governments the coordination in each country of intersectoral activities and data on women in health and development; improvement of the related statistical information so that progress can be evaluated; the formulation of policies responsive to the needs of women, and especially of mothers and their children; consideration of the special health needs of women without on that account creating programs focused solely on women; seeking the participation of women in health education activities; and offering women more opportunities for professional training. In the last part of the resolution the Director is requested to identify the problems of women and to promote awareness of them and of possible solutions for them; to continue his efforts to obtain extrabudgetary funds to support activities related to women in health and development; and to convene the Special Subcommittee immediately prior to the meeting of the Executive Committee and immediately following the meeting of the Directing Council or Sanitary Conference to follow up on appropriate decisions taken and to review new activities completed in the course of the year.

The Committee also approved the designation of Panama as a member of the Special Subcommittee on Women in Health and Development, to take the place of Mexico on expiration of that country's mandate in September 1982.

The Executive Committee was presented with three possible choices for the topic for the "Technical Discussions to be held in 1984 during the XXX Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO, XXXVI Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas" (Item 8 of the Agenda), as follows: 1) Inter- and intrasectoral coordination toward attainment of the goal of health for all by the year 2000; 2) Mobilization of resources for the attainment of health for all; and 3) Increasing the capacity of health services.

Following a discussion that brought out how very important all these topics were, it was decided to give preference to the third topic under a slightly modified title, as follows: "Increasing the operational capacity of the health services for the attainment of the goal of health for all by the year 2000." The resolution recommending selection of this topic to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference (Resolution VI) was unanimously approved by the Committee.

The Executive Committee concerned itself with a matter of greatest importance for health in the Americas: "Capitalization of the Revolving Fund of the Expanded Program on Immunization" (Item 9 of the Agenda). In its presentation of this topic, the Secretariat briefly reviewed the background of the Fund since its inception, and reported on its current status, with a capital of US\$2,328,976 thanks in part to various donations. The Committee was also told that a service charge had begun to be levied on operations through the Revolving Fund to compensate for possible exchange losses.

A very interesting discussion arose about the importance of this valuable mechanism for giving full effect to the purposes of the Expanded Program on Immunization. The speakers in this discussion referred to, among other things, a recent epidemic of poliomyelitis in Jamaica; the need to extend the Fund's operations to the acquisition of other products besides vaccines (for example, cold chain components); the possibilities of interesting international financing agencies in contributing to the Fund's capital; and the advisability of officially proposing the establishment of a regional advisory committee that the Director could consult at need. All were in agreement with the Director's proposal that he be authorized to transfer to the Revolving Fund any funds that might be available in the Reserve Account above a minimum balance of \$100,000 regarded as essential.

The Executive Committee approved Resolution XVI, which makes recommendations to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference for giving effect to the ideas put forward in the discussion.

In presenting the topic "Procurement of Critical Health Supplies" (Item 10 of the Agenda), the Secretariat reviewed the background to the matter, recalling that the idea of setting up a revolving fund for the procurement of supplies had been dropped and that instead the Director had been requested to study more carefully the establishment of a system for the dissemination of information on such supplies.

There was a wide-ranging discussion of numerous aspects, such as quality control, prices, supplies, the toxicity of some products, and the dissemination of information among countries. As an outcome of this discussion, which was joined by practically all the representatives of the Member Countries and the Observers, and of the later discussion in the sixth plenary session of the proposed text, the Committee in its eighth plenary session approved Resolution XV reiterating the need for a review of the legislation in the countries and that these furnish to the PASB information on the work they are doing; urging the Member Governments to make use of the existing mechanisms for collaboration so that all may benefit from the experience of each; and requesting the Director to initiate a pilot program for the provision of information on sources of supply and prices, and to reinforce the information service on the effectiveness and toxicity of the supplies.

In its second plenary session the Executive Committee considered the topic "Evaluation of the Pan American Center for Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences" (Item 11 of the Agenda). The discussion centered on the difficulties of all kinds being encountered by CEPIS, the budgetary and organizational aspects, and the technical problems, since some 2,000 new products were being brought on the market every year and it was not easy to learn quickly what their effects would be.

The outcome of this discussion was Resolution XI, in which the Executive Committee recommends to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference that, among other things, it request the Director to implement, as appropriate, the recommendations of the Evaluation Team, and to continue to seek extrabudgetary resources to further CEPIS's collaboration with the Member Governments. The resolution also recommends to the Conference that it request the Governments to contribute to the financing of CEPIS activities in their countries, and that they participate in setting up a network of centers collaborating with CEPIS.

Consideration of Item 12 of the agenda, "Study of the Functions of the Area Offices of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau," gave rise to a discussion in which a thorough examination was made of the self-audits already done, the first results of consultations with the Governments, and the budgetary constraints that had so far prevented the evaluation groups of the different Areas from meeting. With the help of the Representatives of Mexico and Guyana, the Rapporteur drafted a resolution that was approved by the Executive Committee in the sixth plenary session as Resolution VIII. This resolution requests that the evaluation process be continued and that the results of the self-audits already carried out be used as basic information for continuing the study with government participation.

Item 13 of the Agenda, "Governor Shepherd Building," was presented by Ms. Isabel Rosés Palacios (Chile), an architect who, as Chairman of the Working Group on the Governor Shepherd Building, reported on the work done and the results of the meeting held by that Group in September 1981. The Subcommittee of the Directing Council had also studied the situation in a meeting held at Headquarters in June 1982.

Because of developments on the local market, the sale of condominiums had become an excessively risky venture, and it is now easier to borrow for the construction of an office building, which the Organization could perhaps share with some non-profit institution and so minimize any financial loss to itself. The old project for a mixed office-condominium building is hence unfeasible and should be dropped. The changeability of

the market makes it necessary that the Director be vested with the authority to quickly take decisions that are most advantageous to the Organization, and to leave in abeyance the decision for a mixed-use building which the Directing Council had adopted in its XXVIII Meeting.

The Director will have to make a study of different options, for the situation could change again, and he will need authority to decide on the spot, though his decisions will be subject to subsequent review by the Subcommittee and the Executive Committee itself, as the Directing Council has already provided.

In the ninth plenary session the Executive Committee approved Resolution XIX, which embodies these conclusions.

The Committee heard a detailed report of the Director on "Resolutions of the Thirty-fifth World Health Assembly of Interest to the Executive Committee" (Item 14 of the Agenda). This report elicited a variety of interesting comments, though the Committee was not called upon to adopt any resolution.

In regard to the "Request of the Latin American Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (ALIFAR) for the Establishment of Official Relations with the Pan American Health Organization" (Item 15 of the Agenda), the Executive Committee granted the request in its Resolution V.

On the topic "Criteria and Guidelines of the Pan American Health Organization for the 1984-1985 Biennium and Provisional Budgetary Projections of the World Health Organization for the Region of the Americas for the 1984-1985 Biennium" (Item 16 of the Agenda), the Executive Committee was told that the topic had been studied by its Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning and Programming, which had made some changes in the description of the PAHO Classified List of Programs and had proposed the approval of a resolution that would require the Director, in proposed programs and budgets presented by him, to allocate at least 35 per cent of the PAHO/WHO regular budget to country programs.

In the discussion of this topic, guidelines were suggested for activities in which economies could be sought so that the aforementioned proportion of the regular budget could be allocated to country programs; it was said that the countries could participate, through the Subcommittee on Long-Term Planning and Programming and their representatives on the Governing Bodies, in making the proposed program and budget reflect the real needs of their populations; gradual harmonization of the budget classification system with that of WHO and its Seventh General Program of Work was well received; and observations were made about the future participation of the Subcommittee in drawing up the budgets.

Resolution XVII, recommending to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference the adoption of a resolution reflecting the conclusions of that discussion, was approved in the eighth plenary session.

In regard to the budgetary projections of the World Health Organization for the Region of the Americas for the 1984-1985 biennium, the discussion brought out the tentative status of the appropriation by the Director-General of WHO of \$50,843,000 to the Region of the Americas, owing to the fact that the World Health Assembly had not yet adopted any resolution on the matter. That is somewhat less than 10 per cent of the WHO budget, and some speakers did not rule out the possibility of an attempt to obtain a greater allocation for the Region, whose countries contributed about 37 per cent of the WHO budget.

Finally, in the tenth plenary session the Executive Committee approved Resolution XXII recommending to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference that it note the tentative allocation made by the Director-General of WHO to support the PAHO/WHO regular provisional program.

The "Report on the Collection of Quota Contributions" (Item 17 of the Agenda) gave rise to a discussion of the possibility of amending the Financial Regulations so that in the application of its provisions the impression would not be given that no payments had been made in the last year by Governments for which plans had been approved for the progressive settlement of arrears accumulated by preceding governments. It was finally decided to adopt the simpler course, suggested by the Director, of itemizing in the reports to the Governing Bodies on the collection of quota contributions the payments made each year by countries in arrears, even if the Regulations require that their payments be changed to earlier fiscal years. The Director was also asked to present to the Executive Committee a study of how to bring the rules applied in this area in PAHO into line with those of WHO. The resolution to this effect (Resolution IX) was approved by the Executive Committee in its sixth plenary session.

Under Item 18 of the Agenda, "Financial Report of the Director and Report of the External Auditor for the Biennium 1980-1981," the Secretariat made a detailed presentation of the Organization's accounts from 1 January 1980 to 31 December 1981, including those of the Caribbean Epidemiology Center, the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP) and the Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF), and, as a special addendum, a schedule of extrabudgetary funds. The various points on these accounts in the Report of the External Auditor were also discussed in detail.

In addition, the Secretariat answered a number of questions asked during the discussion, among which it may be worth noting the interest evinced by those present in the flexible application of a 13 per cent charge for support costs of programs financed by grants. The various matters were discussed in detail, and the outcome was approval of Resolution X, in which the Executive Committee takes note of the reports, transmits them to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference, commends the Director for having maintained a sound financial situation, and thanks the External Auditor for his work.

The Executive Committee heard a presentation on the conditions for bestowal of the "PAHO Award for Administration" and the report of the Award Committee (Item 19 of the Agenda), and resolved to transmit to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference a recommendation that the Award be conferred on Dr. Julio César Mérida de León, of Guatemala (Resolution XII).

For its consideration of Item 20 of the Agenda, "Amendments to the Staff Rules," the members of the Committee heard two presentations. First, the Secretariat explained that the intent of the proposed amendments was merely to bring those Rules into line with provisions adopted in WHO and throughout the United Nations system, and thereby to give compliance to Resolution XIX of the 59th Meeting of the Executive Committee. The views of the Staff Association were then presented by its Chairman, who cited a number of specific areas of concern, the most important being the proposed approval of a new provision, Staff Rule 610.5, under which the salary of staff members could be withheld for periods of "unauthorized absence," which term was left ill-defined. Because of this, the Staff Association wished any decision to be postponed until the ambiguity surrounding the term could be dispelled.

The extensive discussion that ensued covered practically every aspect of the harmony that must prevail in staff relations within the Organization. It emerged that decisions in these matters rest with the Executive Committee. The Director pointed out that he was already required to apply the new provisions to staff hired with funds under the WHO budget, and this made it difficult to apply different rules to the personnel paid out of the PAHO regular budget.

In the end, the view prevailed that all proposed amendments were confirmed except Staff Rule 610.5, the language of which was to be clarified as quickly as possible through the existing consultation machinery, and a working group was established consisting of the Representatives of Uruguay and Panama who, in conjunction with the Rapporteur, were to draw up a resolution to this effect. Following a new discussion in which some changes were made in the text, this resolution (XVIII) was approved in the ninth plenary session.

The Executive Committee approved an "Amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Committee" (Item 21 of the Agenda) to make its voting procedure the same as that of the Directing Council. Resolution XIII to this effect was approved in the eighth plenary session.

For the same reasons, the Executive Committee decided to recommend to the XXI Conference that it approve the "Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Pan American Sanitary Conference" (Item 22 of the Agenda), and accordingly approved Resolution XIV in the eighth plenary session.

Under Item 23 of the agenda, Resolution III was approved authorizing the Director to convoke the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference, XXXIV Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas, to meet at the Headquarters building in Washington, D.C., from 20 to 29 September 1982. Concerning the "Provisional Agenda of the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference, XXXIV Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas" (Item 24 of the Agenda), the Executive Committee approved Resolution IV adopting the agenda proposed by the Director with the addition of two items: "Blood Transfusion Services" and "Telecommunications for Mass Public Education," at the suggestion of the Observer for Canada.

In the second plenary session, the Committee took up Item 25 of the Agenda, "Representation of the Executive Committee at the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference, XXXIV Meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas." To accompany the Chairman of the Executive Committee and work with him on the task of informing the participants in the Conference on all matters of interest to them in connection with the scope and content of the Committee's resolutions and recommendations, it was decided to designate two persons: Dr. Walter Chin (Guyana) and Dr. Oscar H. González Carrizo (Argentina). It was also decided that if either of these Representatives were unable to attend the sessions of the Conference, a substitute would be designated by the Chairman himself.

In the discussion of this topic, several Members favored a change in the current procedure for the presentation of topics to the sessions of the Directing Council and the Conference, in order to avoid the duplications that arise when the Secretariat, on the one hand, and a representative of the Executive Committee, on the other, each makes a presentation on the same subject. It was recalled that the practice in the Assembly at WHO was for the representatives of the Executive Board to report first, and then for staff of the Secretariat to supplement that report if it proved necessary.

Under "Other Business" (Item 26 of the Agenda), an Observer called the attention of the Committee to the subject of the "Embargo on Supplies of Importance to Health." Following an extensive discussion of this topic and the proposed resolution presented by the Representative of Nicaragua, the Executive Committee approved by consensus a resolution on general aspects of the matter (Resolution XXIII).

Also under "Other Business," the Executive Committee had to consider a "Request for Official Relations with the Pan American Health Organization presented by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)." The Executive Committee was informed on the background to the case and that the Director supported the application; it approved Resolution XXI recommending to the XXI Pan American Sanitary Conference that it welcome the Inter-American Commission of Women into official relations with PAHO with rights of participation in discussions of the issue of women in health and development.

The Executive Committee also heard interesting Secretariat reports on Aedes aegypti and dengue; on the research program resulting from the First Pan American Conference on Health Research Policy, held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 25 to 30 April 1982; and on sexually-transmitted diseases. These reports did not result in the taking of any decisions by the Executive Committee, but the last of them, the one on sexually-transmitted diseases, elicited a fair number of statements by participants on the situations in their countries and underscoring the importance of the problems cited.

The Executive Committee was also apprised of the nationwide emergency created by the tropical storm "Alleta" in Nicaragua. There was an interesting exchange of views among Representatives and Observers on the effectiveness of aid operations.