



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL

16th MEETING OF THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WOMEN, HEALTH, AND DEVELOPMENT

Washington, D.C., 27-29 March 1996

Provisional Agenda Item 7

MSD16/6 (Eng.)
11 March 1996
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROPOSAL FOR
RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE**

The functions of the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development have been broadly defined through resolutions of the PAHO Governing Bodies. The Subcommittee has not, to date, been guided by more explicit terms of reference. In view of the advances made by Member States and the Secretariat in the area of women, health, and development, and also in keeping with the continuing and new challenges that achieving gender equity in health entail, last year, at its 15th Meeting, the Subcommittee decided that at its 16th Meeting it would review its mandate and develop rules for the conduct of its meetings.

Subcommittee members are requested to consider the issues presented in order to be able to (1) make a recommendation to the Executive Committee concerning new terms of reference; and (2) adopt rules of procedure for meetings of the Subcommittee.

Background

The Special Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development was established by the Directing Council in September 1980 (CD27.R17), which resolved:

To recommend that a special subcommittee of the Executive Committee be established to examine, with the cooperation of PASB, the World Plan of Action proposed by the Copenhagen Conference [1980 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women] and develop a plan of implementation specifically oriented toward meeting the health needs of the Region and seeking solutions to the obstacles which interfered with the progress in the first half of the Decade, and that this plan, after review by the Member Governments, be presented to the 86th Meeting of the Executive Committee in June, 1981 (Paragraph 5).

The Directing Council also further recommended:

That the special subcommittee of the Executive Committee mentioned in paragraph 5 continue to monitor the progress made in the implementation of this Plan of Action and the achievement of the goals of the Decade (Paragraph 6).

The draft Five-Year Regional Plan of Action on Women, Health, and Development was prepared by PAHO technical staff and the Special Subcommittee and circulated to Member Governments and PAHO Country Offices. Comments received were incorporated into the revised version presented to the Executive Committee in June 1981. Based upon observations made by the delegates and observers at that meeting, another draft was prepared and presented to the XXVIII Meeting of the Directing Council in September 1981.

The Five-Year Plan recommended that the Special Subcommittee on Women in Health and Development of the Executive Committee meet at least once a year to review the progress and implementation of activities specified in the Five-Year Plan. An annual progress report was to be presented to the Directing Council.

The XXVIII Meeting of the Directing Council (September 1981) approved the Five-Year Plan of Action and resolved:

To increase the composition of the Special Subcommittee on Women in Health and Development [established by Resolution XVII of the XXVII Meeting of the Directing Council] to three members appointed for overlapping periods of three years, [and to] convene the Special Subcommittee of the Executive Committee on Women in Health and Development at least twice a year to monitor the progress made in implementing the Plan of Action and achieving its goals (CD28.R15).

Four years later, in September 1985, the XXXI Meeting of the Directing Council (CD31.R14) resolved to:

Convene the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development once a year to monitor progress, to propose solutions to problems identified and to promote concerted action on women, health and development (Paragraph 2,b). [Furthermore, it resolved] to recommend to the Executive Committee that it expand the membership of its Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development from three to five members for the purpose of broadening representation from the subregions of the Region of the Americas (Paragraph 3).

Present Situation

As is evident from the above background, the functions of the Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development have been broadly defined through resolutions of the PAHO Governing Bodies. The Subcommittee has not, to date, been guided by more explicit terms of reference. In view of the advances made by the Secretariat and its Member States in the area of women, health, and development, and also in keeping with the continuing and new challenges that achieving gender equity in health entail, last year, at its 15th Meeting, the Subcommittee decided that at its 16th Meeting it would review its mandate and develop rules of procedure for its meetings.

The Secretariat has developed new draft terms of reference (see Annex A) to be reviewed by the Subcommittee and submitted as a proposal to the Executive Committee for its consideration and approval. Also, since the Subcommittee has not in the past had rules of procedure for its meetings, the Secretariat has prepared draft rules of procedure for the members of the Subcommittee to review, comment upon, and adopt (see Annex B).

Considerations to Guide the Review of the Terms of Reference

In preparation for the discussion of the terms of reference for the Subcommittee, it is necessary to provide its members with an overview of the goal, the objectives, the strategies, and current lines of action of the Women, Health, and Development Program (HDW). In this manner, the Subcommittee's discussion of the terms of reference will be carried out against the backdrop of the directions and lines of action of the Program.

The goal of the Women, Health, and Development Program is to promote and support initiatives that respond to the challenge of achieving gender equity in health and human development.

The Program has four objectives:

- (a) To strengthen the capacity of countries to formulate, implement, and evaluate health policies, programs, and projects in a manner that contributes to gender equity.
- (b) To support initiatives that contribute to the generation of scientifically sound information on (1) health conditions that are specific to women; (2) health conditions that are shared by men and women but have differential impact on the two sexes; and (3) the role of men and women in health work.
- (c) To strengthen the collaboration, in a spirit of reciprocal learning, between organizations that advocate gender equity and the public health sector in Member States.
- (d) To strengthen the capacity of the Pan American Health Organization to effectively catalyze gender-sensitive health policies and programs in Member States.

The Program includes professionals at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, D.C.; a subregional office in Central America, based in San José, Costa Rica; and a focal point in each PAHO Country Office. The Program works horizontally within the Organization, in keeping with the belief that a gender lens is needed to work in all areas of health and development. Equally important, it works across sectors, recognizing that the health of women is dependent upon a web of complex political, social, economic and cultural factors that are beyond the realm of the health sector. In all its efforts, the Program seeks alliances with other sectors, which include education, labor, and justice, to name a few.

The Program seeks to promote actions aimed at supporting and strengthening the influence that women can exercise in the shaping of democratic and healthy societies. Consequently, the Program involves women from Member States in the planning and execution of initiatives directed at improving their health conditions and social position. Ongoing linkages with women's groups as individual organizations and as networks of organizations undergird the work of the Program. Thus, all initiatives undertaken by the Program at the national and/or local level are planned and executed in partnership with the stakeholders themselves, women.

Beginning in 1994, the HDW Program designed gender, health, and development training seminars for PAHO staff at Headquarters and in the field offices. Training execution began in 1995 and is carried out by the Program staff for professionals within other programs of the Organization that are based in Washington, D.C., and in Country Representations. At the country level, the focal points, in collaboration with

Headquarters staff, conduct the sessions for PAHO staff as well as for national and international organizations based in the different countries.

The Program is spearheading or collaborating on initiatives in gender and health, with particular emphasis on (1) strengthening national capacity to develop and execute research; and (2) utilizing information to formulate gender sensitive policies and programs. Priority areas include:

- Impact of violence against women on health and development;
- Gender, tobacco, and health;
- Gender and communicable diseases;
- Impact of economic integration and health reform in the Americas on women's health;
- Development of information systems at the national and local levels that take into account gender differences in health conditions and health work.

The Program has mobilized extrabudgetary resources from international development cooperation agencies to carry out the following programs:

- Regional Initiative against Domestic Violence;
- The Health of Indigenous Women;
- Quality of Care from a Gender Perspective;
- Women and AIDS: A Gender Perspective;
- Strengthening Women's Organizations in the Area of Reproductive Health.

The Program has a bibliographic information data base (SIMUS) which today has 3,500 entries that are continuously updated and disseminated to countries. New entries are incorporated on an ongoing basis, and the system is widely used by persons within and outside the Organization.

The Program seeks collaborative linkages with other organizations of the UN system, the Inter-American system, multilateral and bilateral institutions, and NGOs that work at the regional and country level to address women, gender, and health issues.

The Program's donors are currently the Governments of Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and Spain, and the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Development Research Center (Canada), and the United Nations Population Fund.

Proposed Changes in Terms of Reference

In redrafting the terms of reference of the Subcommittee, the Secretariat has also included the following changes for the consideration of the Executive Committee:

- Dropped the word "Special" from the name of the Subcommittee;
- Established the same number of members for the Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development as are currently provided for the Subcommittee on Planning and Programming, that is:

. . . at seven Members: four to be elected by the Executive Committee for terms of office running concurrently with those of their membership in the Executive Committee and three to be named prior to each meeting of the Subcommittee by the Director in consultation with the chairman of the Executive Committee in the light of the specific topics for each meeting (CE92.R12, June 1984).

These issues will be brought up for discussion at the 16th Meeting of the Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development, and the Secretariat requests Subcommittee members to consider them and be prepared to contribute to the deliberations.

Annexes

DRAFT

Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development

Terms of Reference

1. Nature

The Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development is an auxiliary advisory body of the Executive Committee.

2. Functions

The Subcommittee has the following functions:

2.1 To advise the Executive Committee regarding matters referred to it by that body, or on its own initiative, regarding:

- the PAHO Women, Health, and Development Program;
- health of women and the situation of women in health work;
- a gender perspective in health planning and programming;
- the empowerment of women and benefits for health;
- actions that could be undertaken by the Member States to improve the health and situation of women;
- actions that could be undertaken by PAHO to improve the health and situation of women.

2.2 To advise the Executive Committee and, through it, the Directing Council and the Pan American Sanitary Conference, and the Director, on the impact on women of policy set at those levels.

2.3 To discharge any other function assigned to it by the Executive Committee.

2.4 To report annually to the June meeting of the Executive Committee on its deliberations and to present its concerns and recommendations for action by the Executive Committee.

3. Membership and Attendance

3.1 *Members*

The Subcommittee shall consist of seven Member Governments: four to be elected by the Executive Committee for terms of office running concurrently with those of their membership in the Executive Committee and three to be named prior to each meeting of the Subcommittee by the Director in consultation with the Chairman of the Executive Committee, in light of the specific topics to be considered at each meeting. Each of the elected Member Governments shall be entitled to designate one representative to the Subcommittee. Each representative may be accompanied by up to two alternates.

The names of representatives and alternates shall be communicated to the Director of PASB not less than 15 days before the opening of the meeting.

The expenses of representatives to meetings of the Subcommittee shall be paid by PAHO in accordance with the rules and regulations governing such expenses. The expenses of alternates shall be paid by the Member Government concerned.

3.2 *Observers*

Governments not represented on the Subcommittee and invited institutions may, at their own expense, send observers, who may participate in the proceedings of the Subcommittee.

4. Meetings

The Subcommittee shall meet annually before the June meeting of the Executive Committee.

Meetings of the Subcommittee shall be held at the Headquarters of PAHO on dates established by the Director in consultation with the Executive Committee.

Unless the Subcommittee decides otherwise, the sessions shall be public.

5. Changes in the Subcommittee

The Executive Committee shall, from time to time, make special reviews of the work of the Subcommittee.

The nature, composition, functions, and existence of the Subcommittee may be modified or terminated by a resolution of the Executive Committee.

DRAFT

Subcommittee on Women, Health, and Development

Rules of Procedure for Meetings

1. Notice of Convocation

Notices convening the Subcommittee shall be sent by the Director of PASB at least 60 days before the commencement of the meeting.

2. Agenda and Documentation

The Director of PASB shall prepare the provisional agenda of meetings of the Subcommittee and include all items required by the Executive Committee, the Subcommittee, and the Secretariat. It shall be dispatched with the notice of convocation.

Working documents shall be prepared by the Secretariat and sent to the representatives of members of the Subcommittee at least 21 days in advance of the meeting.

The Subcommittee shall adopt its own agenda and in so doing may make such additions or modifications to the provisional agenda as it sees fit, except to those items placed on it by the Executive Committee.

3. Officers

3.1 *Election of Officers*

The Subcommittee shall choose from among its members a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected.

3.2 *Chair pro tempore*

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall serve as Chair pro tempore.

4. Working Languages

The working languages of the Subcommittee shall be English and Spanish.

5. Conduct of the Meeting

5.1 *Quorum*

The presence of the representatives of four members of the Subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of a session.

5.2 *Procedures*

Meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the present Rules of Procedure. Questions of interpretation of these Rules shall be decided by the Chair.

6. Secretariat Responsibilities

The Director of PASB shall serve as Secretary *ex officio* of all meetings of the Subcommittee, and the Coordinator of the Program on Women, Health, and Development shall serve as Technical Secretary.

The Director of PASB shall provide and supervise all personnel and be responsible for all arrangements needed for meetings of the Subcommittee.

7. Amendments to the Rules

These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the Subcommittee.