



**Pan American
Health
Organization**



**World Health
Organization**
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE **Americas**

**16th SESSION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON PROGRAM, BUDGET, AND ADMINISTRATION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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FINAL REPORT

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FINAL REPORT

1. The 16th Session of the Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration of the Executive Committee of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was held from 23 to 25 March 2022. Owing to the circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the session was held online using a video conferencing platform. The session was attended by delegates of the following seven Members of the Subcommittee elected by the Executive Committee or designated by the Director: Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, and the United States of America. Delegates of Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay attended in an observer capacity.

Opening of the Session

2. Dr. Carissa Etienne (Director, Pan American Sanitary Bureau) opened the session and welcomed the delegates of the Members of the Subcommittee and of the Member States participating as observers. Highlighting some of the Organization's main achievements since the Subcommittee's previous session, she noted that PAHO had continued to play a leading role in the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, collaborating with the highest levels of government, subregional entities, non-State actors, and the United Nations and inter-American systems. Innovative approaches to communication had enabled it to expand its outreach to non-traditional partners and audiences. At the same time, work in many other areas had continued, including towards the targets set in the Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization 2020-2025, efforts to strengthen preparedness for outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory viruses, and emergency response to various natural disasters. Work on addressing social determinants of health and improving health equity had also advanced, as had efforts on the digital transformation of the health sector.

3. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) had continued to support countries in assessing and scaling up the capacity of their health systems and services to respond to the evolving COVID-19 situation and to implement new approaches to service delivery, including telemedicine, home care, and community-based care. Through the Organization's revolving procurement funds, the Bureau had supported countries in securing supplies of essential medicines, vaccines, and health technologies and in minimizing threats to and delays in supply chains. As of mid-March 2022, over 120 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been delivered to 33 countries that were participating in the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility. In response to concerns about the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau had intensified support to countries for capacity-building and for the development and implementation of mental health policies, plans, and laws. A high-level commission on mental health and COVID-19 was soon to be launched.

4. Although the diversion of resources for the COVID-19 response had strained the Bureau's capacity to respond to other demands for technical cooperation, it had successfully identified and designed alternative strategies and methodologies to support Member States. The Bureau had also reviewed its technical cooperation and administrative and business processes to ensure adaptability and incorporate lessons learned. Work done before the pandemic to improve connectivity and cybersecurity and upgrade computer technology had prepared it to continue operating during pandemic in fully remote fashion. Across the Region of the Americas, important innovations had been implemented and valuable lessons had been learned during the COVID-19 response. With a view to harnessing those innovations and lessons, the Bureau was undertaking an independent evaluation of the response to COVID-19 in the Region.

Procedural Matters

Election of Officers

5. The following Member States were elected to serve as officers of the Subcommittee for the 16th Session:

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|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>President:</i> | United States of America | (Ms. Adriana Gonzalez) |
| <i>Vice President:</i> | Panama | (Dr. Félix H. Correa) |
| <i>Rapporteur:</i> | Brazil | (Mr. Ciro Leal Martins da Cunha) |

6. The Director served as Secretary ex officio, and Ms. Mary Lou Valdez (Deputy Director, PASB) served as Technical Secretary.

Adoption of the Agenda and Program of Meetings (Documents SPBA16/1, Rev. 1, and SPBA16/WP/1)

7. The Subcommittee adopted the provisional agenda submitted by the Director (Document SPBA16/1, Rev. 1) without change. The Subcommittee also adopted a program of meetings (Document SPBA16/WP/1).

Program Policy Matters

Program Budget of the Pan American Health Organization 2022-2023: Proposed Amendments (Document SPBA16/2)

8. Mr. Rony Maza (Director, Department of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation, PASB) recalled that the PAHO Program Budget 2022-2023, which had been approved by the Directing Council in September 2021,¹ had included a budget allocation from the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Region of the Americas amounting to \$252.6 million²

¹ See *Official Document 363* (2021).

² Unless otherwise indicated, all monetary figures in this report are expressed in United States dollars.

for base programs. He also recalled that, pursuant to requests by Member States, the WHO program budget for 2022-2023 was being revised, and reported that an increase of \$25.7 million in the allocation to the Region of the Americas had been proposed, a 28% increase compared with the amount allocated under the 2020-2021 budget. Additional revisions were expected. The corresponding revisions to the PAHO Program Budget 2022-2023 would be presented to Member States following the 75th World Health Assembly, which would take place in May 2022.

9. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Outline of the End-of-biennium Assessment of the PAHO Program Budget 2020-2021/ First Interim Report on the Implementation of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (Document SPBA16/3)

10. Mr. Rony Maza (Director, Department of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation, PASB) introduced Document SPBA16/3, which described the content and proposed structure of the end-of-biennium assessment of the PAHO Program Budget 2020-2021, which would also serve as the first interim report on the implementation of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025. He pointed out that the assessment would offer a critical opportunity to take stock of the health gains, gaps, and challenges and lessons learned in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It would also serve to guide interventions during the current biennium as the Region continued to respond to the pandemic while implementing the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and the Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas 2018-2030.

11. The assessment would be a joint effort by Member States and the Bureau to measure progress with respect to the indicators defined in the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The Bureau expected to complete its part of the assessment by the end of March 2022 and would present its results to the Executive Committee at its 170th Session in June 2022. The joint assessment with Member States would take place between March and May. A draft interim report would be presented to the Executive Committee in June and the full results of the joint assessment would be presented to the 30th Pan American Sanitary Conference in September 2022.

12. In the discussion that followed, delegates expressed agreement with the proposal. They also agreed that the assessment would offer a valuable learning opportunity for both the Bureau and Member States and that it would enhance transparency and accountability and serve to guide the activities to be undertaken during the 2022-2023 biennium. It was pointed out that the Americas was the only WHO region that conducted such joint assessments, and both the Bureau and Member States were encouraged to share the assessment methodology as a good practice for strengthening governance.

13. Mr. Maza said that the joint assessment methodology had been shared with WHO. He thanked Member States in advance for their participation in the assessment and noted that further details on the process would be provided in the near future.

14. The Director noted that the Bureau and Member States had built the process of joint assessment together and that the Bureau was grateful for their engagement and collaboration, without which the process could not be completed. The Bureau was well aware that Member States were fully engaged in the COVID-19 response and planning for the future, but she appealed to them to join fully in the assessment, which would contribute to future budgets, planning, and technical cooperation.

15. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Engagement with non-State Actors (Document SPBA16/4)

16. Dr. Heidi Jiménez (Legal Counsel, PASB) introduced Document SPBA16/4, which detailed the steps taken by PAHO to implement the Framework of Engagement with non-State Actors (FENSA), adopted by the PAHO Directing Council in September 2016.³ She reported that, throughout 2021, the Bureau had continued to work closely with the WHO Secretariat to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to FENSA implementation.

17. In 2021, the Bureau had conducted over 300 standard due diligence and risk assessment reviews, as well as hundreds of simplified reviews of low-risk engagements. The number of reviews had increased significantly every year since 2016, and approximately 95% of all proposed engagements had been approved. Early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, PASB had recognized the need to review potential engagements with non-State actors in an expedited manner. As a result, the Director had authorized a simplified FENSA process in order to respond more rapidly to the COVID-19 pandemic, while ensuring that the Organization's integrity, independence, and reputation were preserved. Model COVID-19 agreements had also been developed to enable the Organization to receive financial and in-kind contributions more expeditiously.

18. The Organization had participated in a number of innovative collaborations with non-State actors during the year. For example, it had worked with social media platforms to disseminate PAHO messaging, promote vaccination, and counter health-related misinformation about COVID-19. It had also collaborated with non-State actors to support access to vaccines, purchase oxygen concentrators, scale up the use of antigen diagnostic tests, and implement public health projects to respond to the emergency, with a particular focus on indigenous communities and migrant populations. In an effort to enhance FENSA, the Bureau would continue to expand training across the Organization in 2022, including through the development of an online training course.

19. The Subcommittee welcomed the Bureau's continued close collaboration with the WHO Secretariat in the implementation of FENSA, with one delegate pointing out that FENSA not only protected PAHO, but also provided clear guidance to non-State actors on their interactions with the Organization. The resumption of training on FENSA was also welcomed. The importance of due diligence and risk assessment was emphasized. One delegate asked whether all new proposed engagements had undergone the same

³ See Document CD55/8, Rev. 1, and Resolution CD55.R3 (2016).

streamlined review process and whether the Bureau intended to evaluate lessons learned from the streamlined process and identify successes and challenges that might apply to engagement with non-State actors in the post-pandemic period. Another delegate stressed that it was important to devote as much time to due diligence as was needed to avoid risks to the Organization's independence, integrity, and reputation. The Bureau was asked to include details on the review process in the report to be presented to the Executive Committee, including the primary reasons for which engagement had not been recommended. It was also suggested that the report should include a list of the non-State actors that had contributed to the work of the Organization.

20. Additional information on the Bureau's capacity to sustain the current increased levels of engagement with non-State actors was requested. Information was also requested about the role played by the Ethics Office in mitigating risks to the Organization's reputation, particularly with regard to conflicts of interest, and whether the Office was involved in the development of FENSA training. In addition, the Bureau was asked to provide insight into the possible reasons for the decrease in the participation by representatives of non-State actors at Directing Council sessions.

21. In response, Dr. Jiménez said that the Bureau would be pleased to include more details on the review process in the report to be presented to the Executive Committee. She explained that in most cases, proposed engagements had been declined because the non-State actors involved had ties to the tobacco industry or had had other conflicts of interest, such as promoting unhealthy nutritional habits. Others had been found to be under investigation for fraud or had provided questionable data in their financial reports. In all cases, the Bureau weighed the risks and benefits of engagement and erred on the side of caution.

22. In order to meet the increased demand for review during the pandemic in the context of the Organization's static budget, the Bureau had developed various tools meant to reduce the number of consultations and facilitate work with non-State actors. It was also promoting FENSA training, including online training. The Bureau intended to evaluate the lessons learned from that process as soon as possible and would report the results to Member States. With regard to the role of the Ethics Office, she noted that the Office was concerned mainly with internal conflicts of interest and the conduct of PASB staff members, whereas FENSA addressed potential conflicts of interest with external actors. However, the Office of the Legal Counsel, which served as the FENSA focal point, coordinated closely with the Ethics Office if any issues related to the ethical conduct of PASB staff were identified in the course of due diligence reviews. Noting that the participation of non-State actors in the Directing Council sessions had remained consistent from 2020 to 2021, she suggested that such participation might have been somewhat lower than in earlier years owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the virtual meeting format.

23. The Director added that there had been a marked increase in engagement with non-State actors during the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that the Organization had become more adept at reaching out to a wider array of non-State actors, including those in the private sector, as such actors could enhance many PAHO programs to promote health

and well-being—for example through social media outreach. She confirmed that the Bureau would present an evaluation of the lessons learned from the streamlined review process in 2023. She also noted that the Office of the Legal Counsel had worked tirelessly to meet the increased demand for non-State actor engagements in the context of the pandemic, despite staffing challenges.

24. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Non-State Actors in Official Relations with PAHO (Document SPBA16/5)

25. Ms. Regina Campa (Advisor, Department of External Relations, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, PASB) recalled that official relations between PAHO and non-State actors were based on a three-year collaboration plan developed and agreed upon jointly by the non-State actor and the Bureau. The three-year plans were structured in accordance with the PAHO Strategic Plan and could not be primarily of a commercial or for-profit nature. She reported that one application had been received from a non-State actor seeking to enter into official relations with PAHO. In addition, seven non-State actors in official relations were due for their triennial review.

26. The Bureau had analyzed the application of the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute in accordance with FENSA and determined that it met the requirements for admission into official relations with PAHO. It therefore recommended that the Institute's application be approved. The Bureau also recommended the continuation of relations with six of the non-State actors due for triennial review and the discontinuation of official relations with one non-State actor, with which an agreed plan of work had not been identified.

27. The Subcommittee held a closed meeting in order to consider the recommendations on each non-State Actor. Having reviewed the confidential information provided by the Bureau, the Subcommittee decided to recommend to the Executive Committee that it approve the admission of the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute into official relations with PAHO and the continuation of official relations between PAHO and the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, the Inter-American Society of Cardiology, the Latin American Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, the Latin American Confederation of Clinical Biochemistry, the Mundo Sano Foundation, and the World Resources Institute Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. The Subcommittee also recommended the discontinuation of official relations with the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network.

28. The President announced that the Subcommittee's recommendations would be submitted to the 170th Session of the Executive Committee in the form of a proposed resolution.

Appointment of One Member to the Audit Committee of PAHO (Document SPBA16/6)

29. Dr. Heidi Jiménez (Legal Counsel, PASB) provided a brief overview of the work of the Audit Committee and drew attention to its Terms of Reference, which appeared as an annex to Document SPBA16/6. She noted that, under those Terms of Reference, the three members of the Audit Committee were elected by the Executive Committee and served no more than two full terms of three years each. As the term of office of one member would end in June 2022, it would be necessary for the Executive Committee to fill the upcoming vacancy at its 170th Session in June. In accordance with the process for identifying candidates for Audit Committee membership, the Director had updated the roster of qualified potential candidates to fill Audit Committee vacancies and developed a shortlist for consideration by the Subcommittee, which was asked to recommend a candidate to the Executive Committee. The relevant documentation on the candidates had been distributed to the Members of the Subcommittee.

30. The Subcommittee decided to establish a working group consisting of the delegates of Costa Rica, Jamaica, and the United States of America to review the list of candidates proposed by the Director. Subsequently, Mr. James P. Shuster (United States of America), Chair of the working group, reported that the working group had evaluated the four proposed candidates on the basis of the criteria for membership set out in Section 4 of the Terms of Reference and had selected five critical factors for ranking them. Each member of the group had ranked each of the candidates separately, the scores had then been consolidated and the individual results averaged. Mr. Alan Siegfried had been unanimously selected as the candidate to be recommended for appointment to the Audit Committee.

31. The Director expressed gratitude to Mr. Siegfried for his contributions during his first term on the Audit Committee and pledged that the Bureau would continue to work closely with the Audit Committee and address its recommendations promptly.

32. The Subcommittee endorsed the working group's recommendation. The President announced that the recommendation would be communicated to the Executive Committee.

Administrative and Financial Matters***Overview of the Financial Report of the Director for 2021 (Document SPBA16/7)***

33. Mr. Xavier Puente Chaudé (Director, Department of Financial Resources Management, PASB) presented the overview of the financial report of the Director for 2021, noting that the financial statements were still being audited by the Organization's External Auditor, the National Audit Office (NAO) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. He added that, for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NAO had indicated that it expected to complete its audit report near the end of April, rather than during the first half of April, as was customary. Mr. Puente Chaudé also noted that the financial report for 2021, like the report for 2020, reflected the Organization's activities during a difficult year, marked by the ongoing battle against the COVID-19 pandemic and

the impact of significant delays in the receipt of assessed contributions from Member States.

34. Highlighting the main trends with regard to revenue and expenditure, he reported that the unaudited preliminary figures showed that the Organization's total consolidated revenue in 2021 had amounted to \$1,794 million, a 34% increase with respect to 2020, due to substantial increases in revenue from procurement on behalf of Member States and extraordinary voluntary contributions for emergencies. Program budget revenue had grown from \$338.7 million in 2020 to \$362.4 million in 2021, owing to an increase in PAHO and WHO voluntary contributions. The growth in voluntary contributions, in turn, had been due to a sharp increase in contributions related to the COVID-19 emergency, which had totaled \$181 million in the 2020-2021 biennium compared with \$27 million in the 2018-2019 biennium. Procurement revenue had totaled \$1,349 million, the largest amount in the Organization's history. Procurement through the Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines (the Revolving Fund) had accounted for the largest share of procurement revenue, although revenue from the Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies (the Strategic Fund) had risen considerably in comparison with 2020 and earlier years as a result of growth in procurement of COVID-19 supplies.

35. Assessed contributions had remained unchanged for more than a decade, which in real terms meant that they had declined. Current-year assessed contributions collected in 2021 had totaled \$42.1 million, which was a slight improvement over 2020, but amounted to less than half of the committed amount as of 1 January 2021. A total of 22 Member States had paid their assessed contributions for 2021 in full, nine had made partial payments, and 11 had made no payments. The total balance outstanding at year's end had been \$74.8 million, which was less than in 2020, thanks to the collection of a slightly larger amount of prior years' assessed contributions. Nevertheless, the amount outstanding at the end of 2021 was nearly double the amount outstanding in the period 2015-2018 and three times the amount outstanding in 2011. The delays in payment of assessed contributions had, for the third year in a row, negatively impacted on the Bureau's ability to implement the Organization's program budget and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the delays, the Bureau had also been forced to use the entirety of the balance in the Working Capital Fund and to borrow from other unrestricted funds.

36. The unaudited preliminary figures showed that total consolidated expenditures for 2021 had amounted to \$1,785 million, in comparison with \$1,336 million in 2020. Purchases of supplies, commodities, and materials had accounted for the largest share of spending, virtually all of which had been related to procurement on behalf of Member States. Staff and other personnel costs had decreased from \$181.5 million in 2020 to \$153.5 million in 2021, while contractual services had increased from \$85.4 million to \$158.8 million, as a result of the hiring of consultants to assist in the response to the pandemic. Income during the 2020-2021 biennium had exceeded expenditure, leaving a budget surplus of approximately \$24.5 million for the biennium (see paragraphs 44 to 47 below). The surplus was attributable to the impact of the delays in the receipt of assessed contributions and the measures adopted to ensure liquidity for the Organization.

37. In the discussion that followed, the Bureau was asked to comment on the possible reasons for the delays in payment of assessed contributions and on the steps it had taken to improve the collection rate. It was also asked to ensure that the financial report included details on expenditures for the year, including information on the areas most affected by the increases in spending and on the sources of funding for those increases. Information on expected expenditures and sources of funding in 2022 was also requested. Gratitude was expressed to those Member States that had met their financial obligations to the Organization in 2021, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

38. Mr. Puente Chaudé said that the financial report would include full details on both revenue and expenditure and would also provide comparisons with the figures for 2020 and earlier years. While the financial report would not include projections for 2022, that information was available in the Organization's program budget for 2022-2023. Regarding efforts to collect assessed contributions, he explained that the Bureau sent out periodic reminders informing Member States of the amounts due. The PAHO/WHO representatives also conveyed such information in their meetings with national health authorities. The Bureau did not normally seek any explanation for delays in payment, but some national authorities had indicated that the delays were related to internal procedures or other domestic matters.

39. The Director noted that the Organization had been obliged to deal with the pandemic at the same time that it was suffering a significant financial crisis that had resulted in staff reductions. It had therefore been necessary to engage consultants and other short-term staff to enable many activities to be carried out. The situation with regard to collection of assessed contributions had not improved, despite the Bureau's repeated appeals to Member States for prompt payment. The Bureau had therefore stepped up its efforts to mobilize voluntary contributions in order to be able to fund its work. It was grateful for the generosity of the donors that provided such contributions and to Member States for their efforts to ensure that the Region received a larger share of WHO voluntary contributions. Nevertheless, assessed contributions remained the pillar of the Organization's budget.

40. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Update on the Appointment of the External Auditor of PAHO for 2024-2025 and 2026-2027 (Document SPBA16/8)

41. Mr. Xavier Puente Chaudé (Director, Department of Financial Resources Management, PASB) recalled that the mandate of the current External Auditor was set to expire in 2023. In accordance with established procedures, the Bureau would initiate the process of requesting nominations from Member States, Participating States, and Associate Members for the position of External Auditor for the 2024-2025 and 2026-2027 bienniums. Mr. Puente Chaudé also noted that proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations of PAHO would change the provisions regarding the term limit of the External Auditor (see paragraphs 50 to 54 below).

42. The Director encouraged Member States to submit nominations to ensure that there was an adequate number of suitable candidates for the position of the External Auditor.

43. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Programming of the Budget Surplus (Document SPBA16/9)

44. Mr. Rony Maza (Director, Department of Planning, Budget and Evaluation, PASB) drew attention to Financial Regulation 4.6, under which any budget surplus was allocated to the Working Capital Fund whenever the balance in that Fund was below its approved level. Accordingly, upon completion of the audit of the 2021 financial statements, \$21.3 million of the estimated budget surplus of \$24.6 million would be moved to the Working Capital Fund. It was proposed that the remaining \$3.3 million be moved to the Master Capital Investment Fund, with \$2.3 going to the Real Estate Maintenance and Improvement Subfund and \$1 million to the Information Technology Subfund.

45. In the ensuing discussion, support was expressed for the proposed allocation of the budget surplus, with one delegate noting the importance of replenishing the Working Capital Fund to address the chronic delays in the payment of assessed contributions. The Bureau was asked to explain the reasons that accounted for the budget surplus in the document to be presented to the Executive Committee in June 2022.

46. Mr. Maza said that the document to be submitted to the Executive Committee would include more details on the budget surplus, which was largely the result of delays in the receipt of assessed contributions. He reaffirmed that some of the surplus would be used to replenish the Working Capital Fund, which had been used to mitigate the negative impacts of those delays.

47. The Subcommittee endorsed the proposed allocation of the budget surplus.

Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules of PAHO (Document SPBA16/10)

48. Mr. Xavier Puente Chaudé (Director, Department of Financial Resources Management, PASB) recalled that, in previous sessions of the Governing Bodies, various Member States had recommended stipulating a term limit for the appointment of PAHO's External Auditor in order to align with existing best practices in other international organizations. He noted that, historically, the Bureau had recommended the appointment of an External Auditor for two bienniums, with the option to extend for one additional biennium, resulting in a de facto limit of six years. The proposed amendment to Financial Regulation 14.1 stipulated an initial term limit of four years with the option to extend the mandate for two additional years, for a total term limit of six years, thereby aligning with both the Organization's previous practice and current international best practices.

49. In the ensuing discussion, one delegate noted that the proposed change aligned with the recommendations from the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit and welcomed

the incorporation of such best practices in financial management. Another delegate requested more information on the origin of the best practices mentioned, noting that, while the proposed change might improve objectivity, it could also be argued that an External Auditor with extensive knowledge of PAHO could provide more appropriate and relevant recommendations. A third delegate questioned the inclusion of the phrase “unless otherwise approved by the Conference or the Directing Council” in the proposed amendment, pointing out that such wording implied that the Governing Bodies might extend the appointment of the External Auditor beyond the six-year maximum term, contrary to international best practices.

50. Mr. Puente Chaudé explained that establishing term limits for auditors was considered a good practice by the United Nations and in the private sector. The typical term limit was long enough to allow auditors to gain an understanding of the organization but not so long that they might become complacent. A new auditor could examine the accounts from a fresh perspective, which could be to the Organization’s benefit. With regard to the possibility of extending the mandate of the External Auditor beyond six years, he recalled that there had been times in the past when no viable candidates for the position had been nominated. In such cases and under other exceptional circumstances, the most logical course of action would be to extend the term of the existing External Auditor.

51. The Director felt that it was prudent to allow the Directing Council or the Pan American Sanitary Conference to extend the term of the External Auditor by two years when circumstances warranted an extension. For such action to be taken, however, the possibility of an extension must be stipulated in the Financial Regulations.

52. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Amendments to the Pan American Sanitary Bureau Staff Regulations and Rules (Document SPBA16/11)

53. Dr. Luz Marina Barillas (Director, Department of Human Resources Management, PASB) explained that the amendments to the PASB Staff Rules reflected recommendations made by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to the United Nations General Assembly in the light of experience and good human resources management practices. The amendments were made to maintain consistency in conditions of employment between PAHO and other organizations in the United Nations common system.

54. Following ICSC recommendations, the United Nations General Assembly had approved an increase of 0.92% to the base salary scale for the professional and higher categories, which would also apply to the posts of Director, Deputy Director, and Assistant Director of PASB. The increase had been implemented on a no-loss/no-gain basis, thus resulting in no change in net pay. The adjustment would have a financial impact of approximately \$494,000 per year for the United Nations system as a whole and of less than \$10,000 per year for PAHO. The United Nations General Assembly had also approved a recommendation by the ICSC to adjust the education grant benefit. That change would have a financial impact of approximately \$6.55 million per year for the United Nations

system as a whole; based on figures for 2021, the impact on PAHO was estimated at about \$255,000.

55. The Bureau had deemed it necessary to revise Staff Rule 420.2 and all related provisions in order to eliminate the terms “service appointment” and “career service appointment,” as such open-ended positions had not been offered since 1994. The Bureau had also made several editorial amendments to update terminology in several staff rules.

56. In the discussion that followed, a delegate drew attention to Resolution EB150.R8, adopted by the WHO Executive Board at its 150th Session, concerning the salaries of staff in ungraded posts, and requested that the document to be presented to the Executive Committee make reference to that resolution in order to reflect the collective decision-making process that took place at the World Health Assembly in connection with the personnel-related recommendations of the United Nations.

57. Dr. Barillas said that the document to be prepared for the Executive Committee would be revised as requested.

58. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Human Resources Management in the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (Document SPBA16/12)

59. Dr. Luz Marina Barillas (Director, Department of Human Resources Management, PASB), introducing the report on human resources management, noted that the Bureau personnel had shown an unwavering commitment to cooperation with Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mindful of its duty of care, the Bureau had instituted a number of measures to support staff during the pandemic, including teleworking arrangements, enhanced sick leave benefits and counselling services.

60. Summarizing the content of the report, Dr. Barillas said that in 2021 the Bureau had focused its efforts on high-priority activities aligned with the three pillars of its human resources strategy, the People Strategy 2.0: agility, functional optimization, and innovation. Regarding PASB staffing statistics, she reported that the Bureau had increased the number of contingent workers to 1,581 (67% of its total workforce). This represented an increase of 85.95% in the number of contingent workers since 2017. Consultants and other contingent workers had enabled PASB to respond to the needs of Member States during the emergency and had been essential for continuing operations. The Bureau recognized that reliance on such workers to deliver technical cooperation entailed risks; however, financial uncertainty had prevented it from entering into long-term commitments with new fixed-term staff.

61. In terms of gender parity, 51% of the workforce in fixed-term positions were women, and there had been a 9% increase in the number of women serving as heads of PAHO/WHO representative (PWR) offices. However, there had been no change in the number of women in P4 and P5 posts and a decrease of 1% in the number of women in P6,

D1, and D2 posts. Dr. Barillas reported that there had been five confirmed cases of wrongdoing involving professional staff in 2021, including one case of harassment; disciplinary and/or administrative actions had been taken in all cases.

62. In the Subcommittee's discussion of the report, delegates applauded the dedication and commitment of the PASB staff, who continued to collaborate with Member States, despite the ongoing challenges related to the pandemic. The Bureau's support for staff during the pandemic was also applauded. However, delegates expressed concern over the increase in the number of contingent workers. The Bureau was asked to comment on what plans were envisaged to achieve a better balance of fixed-term staff and contingent workers. Information was sought on the impact of teleworking during the pandemic in terms of overhead costs and productivity and on the extent to which teleworking might continue in the post-pandemic context. Delegates also requested more information about the findings of the skills and competencies gap analysis.

63. The Bureau was encouraged to continue working towards increasing the proportion of women in high-level positions, especially at grade D1. Delegates expressed concern over incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel working for the WHO emergencies program and requested information on how the WHO Management Response Plan on the matter was being implemented at the regional level. The screening of United Nations personnel for previous instances of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment was considered a positive step, but it was suggested that additional measures should be put in place to screen applicants without a history in the United Nations system.

64. The updated policy on consultants was welcomed, as was the revised policy on interns. With regard to the latter, it was pointed out that internships offered the Organization the possibility to benefit from the up-to-date abilities of young professionals. The decision to offer virtual internships, which would promote flexibility, accessibility, and inclusion, was commended.

65. Dr. Barillas thanked Member States for their recognition of the Organization's work during the pandemic. Regarding the balance between fixed-term and contingent workers, the Bureau recognized that fixed-term staff bore the responsibility for developing programs and providing technical cooperation, and had resumed hiring some fixed-term staff in the second half of 2021, when finances had improved somewhat. She stressed, however, that predictable financing was key to enabling the Bureau to rebalance the workforce and sustain a flow of talent that responded to the Organization's needs.

66. The Bureau continued striving to improve gender equality through the implementation of a new mentorship program and policies favoring a better work-life balance, among other measures. The Bureau had also significantly strengthened its policies on standards of conduct, particularly those relating to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. It was exploring a possible arrangement with the United Nations for screening job applicants who had no history of employment with the United Nations. A new teleworking policy, which would allow all staff to increase teleworking days, would go into effect after the COVID-19 emergency ended. She noted that the new policy had been

informed by a survey of staff and supervisors, which had determined that productivity had not decreased as a result of teleworking; indeed, in some cases, it had increased.

67. The Director observed that staff were the greatest asset of any organization, but especially an organization that delivered technical cooperation. She paid tribute to the Bureau staff for their dedication in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing also to deliver technical cooperation in other areas. She pointed out that the staff had persisted even when their jobs were in jeopardy as a result of the financial crisis. She assured Member States that the Bureau was working assiduously to achieve gender balance. She stressed that the Bureau took sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment very seriously. A policy had been launched in the Region before the incidents involving WHO personnel, but it had been reviewed in light of the new WHO policy following those incidents. Additionally, the Bureau had a mandatory online training course and was exploring other avenues for raising awareness of the issue among staff.

68. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Update on the Master Capital Investment Fund (Document SPBA16/13)

69. Ms. María Teresa Angulo (Director, Department of General Services Operations, PASB) presented an update on the status of the Master Capital Investment Fund and its five subfunds. She noted that Document SPBA16/13 provided details on each subfund for 2021, including their net balances. As of 31 December 2021, the overall balance of the Master Capital Investment Fund had stood at \$17.9 million, while the balance in the Reserve for the Master Capital Investment Fund had been \$2 million.

70. She reported that the Real Estate Maintenance and Improvement Subfund had been utilized to cover expenses related to renovations and furniture for the building at 2121 Virginia Avenue and infrastructure projects at Headquarters. In 2021 the Bureau had embarked on a renovation project that would entail upgrades to the ventilation system and the outdated electrical system and renovations to the conference rooms on the second and tenth floors. As a result of the prioritization of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been limited spending for country offices. Under the Vehicle Replacement Fund, nine vehicles had been purchased. Under the Information Technology Subfund, the implementation of the electronic medical records system had been completed, and the PAHO web hosting services had been migrated. In addition, the Human Resources Strategy Subfund had supported the ongoing development and implementation of the Recruitment Module in the Workday human resources management system.

71. In the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that there had been a reduction in revenue but an increase in expenses in 2021 compared with 2020. The Bureau was asked to submit to the Executive Committee a proposal for planning expenditure under the various subfunds in order to promote a more strategic use of funds. The Bureau was also asked to provide the Executive Committee with a breakdown of expected expenses under the Real Estate Maintenance and Improvements Subfund for the work to be undertaken at the PAHO Headquarters building. In addition, in future updates, the Bureau was asked to

provide confirmation that the various renovation projects were proceeding on schedule and within budget.

72. Ms. Angulo said that she had taken note of the requests for additional information. She noted that the revenue of the Master Capital Investment Fund was determined by the Governing Bodies and included funds from budget and revenue surpluses. In 2021, there had been no new allocation of financial resources, which accounted for the apparent reduction.

73. The Director recalled that a real estate assessment survey had been conducted in 2014⁴ to develop a plan for the renovation of the Headquarters building, but much of the work remained to be completed. For example, it was difficult to regulate the temperature and filter out excessive noise on the second and tenth floors, as those two floors had not been renovated. The meeting rooms on the second floor also required urgent renovations. She confirmed that the Bureau would provide the information requested, but stressed that the renovations had long been planned and that some required urgent attention in order to ensure adequate working conditions for staff and suitable facilities for the holding of the Governing Bodies sessions.

74. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Report on the Status of the Emergency Loan from the Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines to the Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies (Document SPBA16/14)

75. Dr. James Fitzgerald (Director, Department of Health Systems and Services, PASB) recalled that the Executive Committee had adopted Resolution CESS1.R1 in May 2020, authorizing a short-term emergency loan of up to \$50 million on a rolling basis from the capital account of the Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines to the capital account of the Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies. Document SPBA16/14 provided information on the status of the emergency loan and on actions taken to facilitate Member States' access to critical COVID-19 supplies.

76. Dr. Fitzgerald reported that increased use of the Strategic Fund had resulted in a substantial increase in the amount of financial resources available in the Fund's capital account. Thanks to that increase, combined with improvements in logistics and demand planning, only two short-term internal emergency loans had been made from the capital account of the Revolving Fund to the capital account of the Strategic Fund during the 2020-2021 biennium. Those loans had enabled the procurement of emergency supplies of personal protective equipment and medicines for two countries. The loans had been repaid in a timely manner and had not had any negative impact on the availability of funds for the procurement of vaccines through the Revolving Fund. In order to continue to meet the demand for essential medicines and public health supplies, the internal emergency loan mechanism would remain in place until 31 December 2023, or the date when WHO

⁴ See Document CE156/24, Rev.1 (2015).

declared the end of the pandemic, whichever came first. The Bureau would continue to report to Member States on its use.

77. In the discussion that followed, delegates welcomed the Bureau's efforts to support Member States in obtaining critical supplies through the Strategic Fund during the pandemic. Delegates also applauded the steps taken to assist Member States in strengthening their supply chain management capacity through morbidity-based forecasting models, demand planning, and regional consolidation frameworks. It was emphasized that the technical cooperation functions of both the Revolving Fund and the Strategic Fund should be prioritized. While the ongoing need for the emergency loan mechanism was acknowledged, it was stressed that any loans from the capital account of the Revolving Fund should be reimbursed promptly. In that connection, the Bureau's commitment to transparency and fiscal responsibility was commended.

78. A delegate drew attention to various issues that had hindered COVID-19 vaccination efforts in his country, including problems with the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility and vaccine hesitancy and refusal. The delegate appealed to the Bureau for support in negotiating new terms with COVAX, including the possibility of using the Revolving Fund to support countries like his.

79. Dr. Fitzgerald said that the Bureau had deployed the necessary performance management tools to improve the operations of the Strategic Fund, optimize the utilization of the Fund's capital account, and thereby make use of the emergency loan provision only when absolutely necessary. The Bureau's work with Member States to improve demand forecasting had also helped to optimize the Fund's operations. He acknowledged the concerns expressed regarding the COVAX Facility and access to vaccines and assured Member States that the Bureau would continue to work with them to address those issues. He also noted that there had been no significant delays in the delivery of available vaccines through the Revolving Fund, which was the procurement entity for the COVAX Facility in the Region.

80. The Director affirmed that the Strategic Fund and the Revolving Fund were important mechanisms for the provision of technical cooperation. She agreed that the performance of the COVAX Facility had been disappointing, and assured Member States that the Bureau would continue working with them to resolve the problems they had encountered with the Facility. It would also work with Member States to tackle other issues that were hindering vaccination efforts, including vaccine hesitancy and the accessibility of vaccination facilities, which, according to survey data, were sometimes located too far from rural and other vulnerable populations. She also noted that the Bureau had already secured agreements with several of the major COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers for direct purchase of the vaccine for distribution through the Revolving Fund.

81. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Matters for Information***Process for the Election of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and Nomination of the Regional Director of the World Health Organization for the Americas (Document SPBA16/INF/1)***

82. Dr. Heidi Jiménez (Legal Counsel, PASB) outlined the procedure and rules for the election of a new Director, noting that the election would take place during the 30th Pan American Sanitary Conference in September 2022 and that the name of the person elected would subsequently be submitted to the Executive Board of WHO for appointment as the Regional Director of WHO for the Americas. The term of the new Director would commence on 1 February 2023. On 1 March 2022, all Member States, Participating States, and Associate Members had been invited to submit nominations. The nomination period would close on 1 May 2022, and by 1 June all nominations received would have been compiled, translated into the Organization's four official languages, and forwarded by the President of the Executive Committee to Member States, Participating States, and Associate Members.

83. Nominees would be invited to make a presentation during a candidates' forum, to be held during the week of 20 to 24 June 2022, alongside the 170th Session of the Executive Committee. Delegates of all Member States, Participating States, and Associate Members would be able to participate in the forum, either in person or via video link. Details of the procedure and rules governing the election of the Director, including the rules applicable to PAHO staff and internal candidates, were provided in the annexes to Document SPBA16/INF/1 and were also available on the election website set up by the Bureau.⁵

84. In the ensuing discussion, delegates expressed thanks to the current Director for her strong leadership, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and underlined the importance of electing a new Director with the requisite public health expertise and management skills to continue leading the pandemic response and to guide the Organization and the Region through the post-pandemic recovery period, while also working to enhance the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of the Organization. It was also emphasized that the next Director should possess ample experience in international health and knowledge of both the United Nations and the inter-American systems and that she or he should demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the cultural, social, political, and economic diversity of the countries of the Region. The need to ensure that the nominating process and the candidates' forum were conducted with transparency, independence, and impartiality was also stressed. Member States were encouraged to give due consideration to gender equality and ethnic diversity criteria when nominating candidates.

⁵ See <https://www.paho.org/en/election-director-pan-american-sanitary-bureau>.

85. The Director, noting that the election of the new Director was exclusively a responsibility of Member States, assured the Subcommittee that the Bureau staff had been made aware of their obligation to remain neutral and impartial.

86. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Report on Strategic Issues between PAHO and WHO (Document SPBA16/INF/2)

87. Mr. Rony Maza (Director, Department of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation, PASB) introduced the report, noting that the report focused on leadership and governance issues and accountability and transparency. It provided updates on the work being undertaken to strengthen WHO preparedness and response to health emergencies, the proposed two-year extension of the 13th General Programme of Work of WHO and the proposed revisions to the WHO program budget 2022-2023, and the work of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of WHO. Mr. Maza reported that the Bureau was actively supporting all those processes.

88. With regard to transparency and accountability, the report provided updates on the financing and implementation of the WHO program budget 2020-2021 and on the Region's participation in the end-of-biennium assessment of that program budget. Mr. Maza commended PAHO Member States for their continued advocacy for an equitable distribution of WHO funds, which had resulted in an increased allocation to the Americas. Nevertheless, gaps remained, and he therefore encouraged Member States to continue making their views known in the ongoing discussions in Geneva.

89. The Subcommittee welcomed the report, which was seen as evidence of the important work that the Region continued to do to improve governance, transparency, and accountability. Delegates expressed appreciation to the Bureau for its efforts to facilitate participation by PAHO Member States in the global discussions on sustainable financing and on emergency preparedness and response. It was pointed out, however, that the time difference made it difficult for national health authorities in the Americas to participate remotely in discussions taking place in Geneva. The Bureau was asked to continue working with the WHO Secretariat to find virtual working arrangements that would be equitable for participants in all regions. The Bureau was also encouraged to continue organizing regional consultations on the issues under discussion at the global level in order to foster more proactive participation by the countries of the Region.

90. With regard to the work aimed at improving WHO's preparedness and response to health emergencies, one delegate noted that her Government had proposed a set of targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) and expressed the hope that other Member States would support those amendments. Another delegate underscored the need for alignment between PAHO and WHO in order to be better able to prevent, prepare for, and respond to future pandemic threats.

91. It was noted that, while there had been an increase in the WHO budgetary allocation to the Region, the Americas continued to receive the smallest share of the WHO

budget and, furthermore, did not generally receive its full allocation. The gap between the amount allocated and the amount received in 2020-2021 was considered particularly noteworthy, given that the WHO budget had been funded at over 100%. The Bureau was asked to comment on the possible reasons for that discrepancy. With regard to the discussions on sustainable financing, it was stressed that governance, accountability, and transparency reforms must be part of any proposal. It was also emphasized that proposals should not only call for an increase in financing, but should also indicate the manner in which the funds would be allocated and the benefits to be derived. Several delegates highlighted the importance of prioritization. The Bureau was asked to indicate what exchanges had taken place with the WHO Secretariat to reflect regional discussions on priority-setting and whether the regional approach to thematic priority-setting and joint evaluation had been shared with WHO Headquarters and the other WHO regions.

92. In response, Mr. Maza affirmed that, while the situation with regard to financing from WHO had improved, the Americas remained the region that received the smallest amount. The main explanation for the discrepancy, according to the information received from the WHO Secretariat, was that many voluntary contributions were earmarked for other regions or countries. He reiterated the Bureau's thanks to the Member States that continued to advocate for a larger WHO allocation to the Region.

93. He confirmed that the Bureau had shared the regional priority-setting and joint assessment methodologies with the WHO Secretariat. It had also held discussions with the Chair of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing regarding how the Region's experiences could be put to use. The Bureau would facilitate a regional briefing on sustainable financing with a view to ensuring that the views of the countries of the Americas were heard. It would also continue to provide documentation and organize regional briefings on the various other matters under discussion at WHO. At the same time, it would continue to urge the WHO Secretariat to schedule meetings at times that would be more convenient for participants in the Americas.

94. Responding to comments about health emergencies, Dr. Ciro Ugarte (Director, Department of Health Emergencies, PASB) agreed that there was a need for greater participation by ministers of health and other national officials in the negotiations under way on strengthening WHO preparedness and response to health emergencies. The Bureau had held informational meetings and prepared documentation with a view to promoting regional involvement, but direct participation from national capitals was crucial. He assured Member States that there was total functional alignment between PAHO and WHO with regard to emergency preparedness and response. Nevertheless, PAHO had its own procedures, which were the fruit of lessons learned from many years of experience in responding to emergencies. That experience had enabled the Americas to be the first WHO region to issue an epidemiological alert regarding SARS-CoV-2 and to mount an immediate response.

95. The Director agreed that it was critical for national health authorities to participate actively in consultation and negotiation processes occurring prior to sessions of the WHO

Governing Bodies. She thanked Member States for their persistence in endeavoring to ensure an equitable distribution of WHO resources.

96. The Subcommittee took note of the report.

Draft Provisional Agenda for the 170th Session of the Executive Committee (Document SPBA16/INF/3)

97. Ms. Mônica Zaccarelli Davoli (Senior Advisor, Governing Bodies Office, PASB) presented the draft provisional agenda for the 170th Session of the Executive Committee, which reflected revisions made to the list of topics examined during the 169th Session of the Executive Committee in 2021.⁶ The agenda included four policies and one strategy, which reflected Member States' requests to focus on strategic issues. It also included the customary items considered by the Executive Committee at its June sessions and a set of final and progress reports mandated by previously adopted resolutions.

98. The Director noted that the program policy matters focused on strategic topics related to recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, building back better, and securing a better future. She also noted that the Bureau was seeking contributions from experts and Member States in the development of the policy papers on those topics.

99. The Subcommittee endorsed the provisional agenda.

Other Matters

100. During the 16th Session of the Subcommittee on Program, Budget and Administration no other matters were discussed.

Closure of the Session

101. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the 16th Session of the Subcommittee closed.

Annexes

⁶ See Document CE169/11 (2021).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the President of the Sixteenth Session of the Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration, Delegate of the United States of America, and the Secretary ex officio, Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, sign the present Final Report in the English language.

DONE in Washington D.C., United States of America, this 25th day of March in the year two thousand twenty-two. The Secretary shall deposit the original signed document in the Archives of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. The Final Report will be published on the website of the Pan American Health Organization once approved by the President.

Adriana Gonzalez
President of the 16th Session
of the Subcommittee on Program, Budget,
and Administration
Delegate of the United States of America

Carissa F. Etienne
Secretary ex officio of the 16th Session
of the Subcommittee on Program, Budget,
and Administration
Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

AGENDA

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 - 2. PROCEDURAL MATTERS**
 - 2.1 Election of Officers
 - 2.2 Adoption of the Agenda
 - 3. PROGRAM POLICY MATTERS**
 - 3.1 Program Budget of the Pan American Health Organization 2022-2023: Proposed Amendments
 - 3.2 Outline of the End-of-biennium Assessment of the PAHO Program Budget 2020-2021/First Interim Report on the Implementation of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025
 - 3.3 Engagement with non-State Actors
 - 3.4 Non-State Actors in Official Relations with PAHO
 - 3.5 Appointment of One Member to the Audit Committee of PAHO
 - 4. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**
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 - 4.2 Update on the Appointment of the External Auditor of PAHO for 2024-2025 and 2026-2027
 - 4.3 Programming of the Budget Surplus
 - 4.4 Amendments to Financial Regulations and Financial Rules of PAHO
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 - 4.6 Human Resources Management in the Pan American Sanitary Bureau
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4. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS (*cont.*)

- 4.7 Update on the Master Capital Investment Fund
- 4.8 Report on the Status of the Emergency Loan from the Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines to the Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies

5. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

- 5.1 Process for the Election of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and Nomination of the Regional Director of the World Health Organization for the Americas
- 5.2 Report on Strategic Issues between PAHO and WHO
- 5.3 Draft Provisional Agenda for the 170th Session of the Executive Committee

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7. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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| SPBA16/2 | Program Budget of the Pan American Health Organization 2022-2023: Proposed Amendments |
| SPBA16/3 | Outline of the End-of-biennium Assessment of the PAHO Program Budget 2020-2021/First Interim Report on the Implementation of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020-2025 |
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Information Documents

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| SPBA16/INF/1 | Process for the Election of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and Nomination of the Regional Director of the World Health Organization for the Americas |
| SPBA16/INF/2 | Report on Strategic Issues between PAHO and WHO |
| SPBA16/INF/3 | Draft Provisional Agenda for the 170th Session of the Executive Committee |

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