

HEALTH CANADA'S INPUT TO THE WORKING GROUP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON STREAMLINING THE GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS OF PAHO

The Election Process of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

During the first meeting of the Working Group of the Executive Committee on streamlining the governance mechanisms of PAHO in December 2005, it was noted that the Rules 56 and 57 of the Rules of Procedure of the Pan American Sanitary Conference which govern the election of the Director are far less precise than those of WHO, the Regional offices of WHO, the Interamerican Development Bank, the Organization of American States and IICA.

In this regard, the Health Canada proposes the following changes to render the pre- and post- election process of the Regional PAHO Director more explicit, transparent, and equitable for internal and external candidates. A chart summarizing the preferred approaches used by other international agencies for each of the items discussed below is also presented and placed on the web.

1. Job Description, with Explicit Nomination and Selection Criteria

A specific job description for the post of Director, together with the criteria for the nomination and selection of the Director, be developed for the Executive Committee and included in the call for nominations at least six months before the formal elections are due to take place. The responses containing the names and credentials of the candidates named by the countries should be sent to the Director General at least sixteen weeks prior to the Pan American Sanitary Conference in September.

2. Executive Committee Meeting as a Mechanism for Platform Presentations & Short Listing

An open forum in which each candidate is invited to present his or her platform outlining their vision, proposed policy priorities, and financial and programmatic thrusts for the Organization could take place on the margins of the Executive Committee meeting. The forum could also include a question and answer period to allow the Member States to actively participate and evaluate the candidates based upon the selection criteria. As such, this forum would provide a three-month period leading up to the Pan American Sanitary Conference in late September to allow the candidates to prepare for the vote. And to ensure that all Member or Observer Countries, as well as NGOs in official relations with PAHO can participate in the forum, the Ambassadors and/or designated country representatives, as well as the CEOs of the International NGOs will be invited to attend at their own country's or institution's expense (in accordance with Article 15 paragraph B of the PAHO constitution.)

3. *Deadline for nominations*

Consideration should be given to a “cut-off” date after which no further nominations would be permitted.

4. *Three-month leave of absence with pay for internal candidates*

With a view to ensuring an equitable and transparent playing field for all candidates, whether they be internal or external to the Organization, any internal PAHO candidate, including the incumbent Director who may be seeking re-election, should be granted leave with pay for the three-month period leading up to the election.

5. *Freeze on the use of discretionary funds prior to and after the elections*

To ensure that no funds from the Organization are used to favour any specific candidate, a reasonable time before and after the election (eg: 2 – 4 months) should be instituted in which the use of discretionary funds to the countries is limited.

6. *Secret vs. Open Ballot*

The actual election of the PAHO Regional Director should continue to be undertaken by secret ballot according to precedent.

7. *Job Descriptions for Cabinet*

The posts of Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Director of Administration that are filled by the newly-elected Director, in accordance with Article 21, paragraph B of the PAHO constitution, should have job descriptions and selection criteria for those posts.