

**WORKING GROUP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON
STREAMLINING THE GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS OF PAHO**

CE/WGG2/SR/1

Summary record of the first meeting

Thursday, 23 March 2006

Chairman:

Nick Previsich

Canada

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m.

ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE SECOND MEETING

The CHAIRMAN welcomed participants and declared the meeting open.

ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CE/WGG2/1)

The agenda was adopted.

ITEM 3: REVIEW OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS ON THE WEB SITE

ITEM 4: REVIEW OF SUMMARY NOTES AND CLARIFICATION OF
POINTS ON DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING GROUP AT
THE FIRST MEETING

The CHAIRMAN said that in the absence of any comment he took it that the background documents and other material were satisfactory.

ITEM 5: CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES REQUIRING FURTHER

ATTENTION, AS FOLLOWS:

Item 5.1: Process of Election of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

The CHAIRMAN noted that since the Working Group's first meeting, Argentina, Canada, Cuba and Mexico had indicated positions on the web site.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba), referring to the process for electing the Director, said that in his opinion, the positions outlined in the documents on the website coincided in many ways, and that he concurred with the majority of the opinions expressed in the documents of Canada, Mexico, and Argentina. Concerning this process, he wished to make two comments. First, he noted, he had already made a proposal on the requirements that the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau should meet and that should be considered at the time of the election; this would definitely imply some adaptation of what was already being done in WHO. Thus, he reiterated his proposal that the following criteria be adopted for the election of the Director: that the individual have experience in questions of international and public health; that he be committed to the work or action of PAHO; that he have recognized senior administrative experience in public health; that he be sensitive to and respect cultural, social, and political differences; that he be medically fit; and that he have sufficient command of at least one of the working languages of the Executive Committee.

Secondly, he indicated that Canada's proposal to create a forum during the Executive Committee to hear the platforms of the nominees could do with a little more thought. Since there was the possibility that nominations might be made just as the Conference was beginning, he believed it would be better to hold the forum not during the Executive Committee but during the Pan American Sanitary Conference, even if the length of the Conference had to be extended a bit --something that also occurred in WHO.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) stated that two aspects were important in electing the Director: on the one hand, knowing the requirements for candidates, and on the other, knowing the election process itself. The speaker wished to be told what exactly the agreements and disagreements in the governance group were, in order to concentrate on the differences and be able to move forward, instead of revisiting points on which there was already a consensus.

The CHAIRMAN, drawing attention to the summary records of the first meeting, said that the Working Group had agreed that perspectives on a number of items should be posted on the web site with a view to further discussion at the second meeting. It had agreed items relating to the new composition of the Subcommittee on Planning and Programming (SPP) and the re-designation and dissolution of the Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development. At its second meeting, Working Group would be discussing further the election procedures for the Director, and possible new rules of procedure for the Governing Body process. Issues concerning nongovernmental organizations would also be taken up.

He invited the Working Group to consider the requirements or qualifications for the position of Director, using as a point of reference the criteria for the nomination and terms of office of the Director-General, set out in resolution EB97.R10 of the Executive Board of WHO, and the criteria for nomination of the Regional Director for Africa.

Dr. KEAN (Director, Governance, WHO) noted that in setting out in its resolution the broad qualifications expected of the Director-General, the Executive Board had, to a large extent, moved away from the medical qualifications required in the past, in favor of experience, commitment and leadership qualities. Replying to a question by

the CHAIRMAN, he said that WHO, like the rest of the United Nations common system, set no upper age limit or duration of appointment for Assistant Director-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels and above, although a good physical and mental condition in a more senior candidate would be important considerations.

Ms. DICKINSON (Canada) said that one vital criterion, missing from WHO's list but present in the African list, was proven managerial abilities, unless that was covered by WHO's second item, competency in organizational management. The requirements set out under that item in the African document, particularly the ability to set goals and objectives, foster teamwork, and develop a monitoring and evaluation process for the Organization's work, were consistent with PAHO's aims internally and, therefore, more relevant to PAHO than were WHO's criteria.

Ms. CAMPBELL (Barbados) said that the overall outline in the WHO would benefit from some additional detail from the African document. For PAHO's purposes, a candidate should be fluent in at least two of the four working languages and have a working knowledge of a third. She endorsed the suggestion that there should be specific reference to mental health.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) commented that PAHO was 100 years old and had a great deal of experience and its own human resources. So he wondered, with all due respect, whether it would not be a mistake to look to external models and organize PAHO along the same lines as WHO or other organizations. If PAHO was a known quantity with strengths, as well as weaknesses that one way or another needed to be corrected, knowing where it was going and what it had, then it was necessary to build the structure and then provide it with inputs. The speaker had the sense that they were

spending a lot of time looking outside, gathering information on models that were perhaps good but not adaptable, since PAHO was not a clone of WHO, even though the two organizations had similar objectives. PAHO represented WHO in the Americas but also had its own history and Constitution. Thus, he preferred to examine what it already had, how it saw itself, and how it could improve in terms of all the elements that could be reproduced. Finally, he agreed with the Delegate of Cuba that the forum should be held during the Conference, which was when all the Member States gathered and all could get to know the candidates, deliberate, and [the candidates could be] presented to all of PAHO.

Ms. BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that Africa's second criterion, a good understanding of and commitment to the WHO mission, would need some adjustment, bearing in mind PAHO's dual purpose as the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and as WHO's Regional Office for the Americas. With regard to the language requirement, she asked what the difference was between fluency and a working knowledge.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) said that, generally speaking, fluency was mother tongue or near equivalent, whereas working knowledge meant a high level of competence in a particular language. If language criteria were to be introduced, it was important to bear in mind that a general requirement, drafted in a flexible manner, would enable Member States to select a person with sufficient knowledge of two or even three languages, and would not disqualify anyone who might fail to meet a minimum language requirement.

Dr. GARCÍA (Deputy Director) observed that there was no general standard of medical fitness either within PAHO or Member States, and that medical examinations did not include psychological testing. A candidate would need to be sufficiently healthy to be able to carry out the duties of the post, as included in the African criteria. However, he wondered whether WHO's "good physical condition" covered disability.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) said that PAHO's medical examinations were usually carried out after a candidate had been selected, by a doctor chosen by the Organization. Medical fitness, as referred to in the African paper was a more general concept than the medical fitness threshold for international civil service requirements.

Dr. KEAN (Director, Governance, WHO) said that at the medical examinations at WHO had been carried out before the last elections. While there was no fitness standard as such, it had been considered important to look into any preexisting medical conditions, such as tertiary malaria, that would preclude travel to some parts of the world.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) said that in his opinion, the proposed candidate profile for the Director for Africa did not appear to call for experience in organizational management. A hospital director was certainly someone with experience in organizational management, but a Director of PAHO must have management skills and must also know the procedures of the Inter-American and United Nations agencies. This was a *sine qua non*. He must also possess knowledge about program follow-up, evaluation, and monitoring. That was key, for what was being proposed was a more accountable Organization, managed in pursuit of results. The other attribute of a Director

of PAHO that seemed essential to him was that he be someone who was not only sensitive to cultural, social, and political differences, but who was also familiar with the particular epidemiological characteristics [of the countries] and had a knowledge of comparative health systems. He would have to be familiar with financing systems and have specialized knowledge in this regard.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) pointed out that the objective of reviewing the issue of the election of the Director under the theme of governance was to try to see how the preexisting mechanisms could be modified to allow for greater flexibility, greater transparency, and greater inclusion when people wish to run for election. After studying the two documents in appendix 2 and the appendix on Africa, she could not see clearly how the criteria demanded of the candidate would be verified or evaluated. When it was stated that candidates should have solid technical and public health training and ample experience in international public health, how would that be evaluated? Through an undergraduate degree or the fact that the candidate had previously worked in some organization? Similarly, she felt that some of the criteria, such as age, academic background, and experience, bore further discussion. In her view, however, the last discussions focused on whether the candidate should be internal or external to PAHO, and from the summary records it could be concluded that the candidate could be from anywhere, as long as he met the requirements established for this purpose. In establishing those requirements, it was necessary to be broad enough so that people inside and outside could be nominated. For example, when they discussed managerial capacity and said that “The candidate should be able to administer a complex organization in the field of health,” that would require a highly analytical mind and the capacity to set clear goals and objectives, conceive appropriate programs for optimal use

of the Organization's general resources, and put an adequate process in place for monitoring and evaluating the work in the Region. Consequently, the ideal person would not necessarily be someone who had worked solely in the Organization. That was what the speaker was referring to when she said it was necessary to be broad enough for PAHO staff and people outside the Organization to offer themselves as candidates.

As to the question of age, she noted that if the United Nations already had criteria in this regard, it would be good to be governed by them. A more delicate matter that worried the speaker was how to measure whether the candidate was sensitive to cultural, social, and political differences. Would it be measured by the fact that the individual had worked in different parts of the Region or that he had devoted himself to championing the human rights of the different groups in the Region of the Americas?

Ms. DICKINSON agreed with Costa Rica that the requirements needed to be broad. The process would in fact be a dual one: the criteria would be a guide for countries in nominating their candidates, and nominations would then be followed by the forum, where qualifications would be assessed and issues such as management skills and experience, language skills, cultural sensitivity, understanding of health systems, and financial mechanisms, could be evaluated during the presentation and question and answer session.

Mr. BAILÓN GONZÁLEZ (Mexico) coincided with the concerns and preoccupations of the Minister of Costa Rica, and continuing with the comment of Canada, believed that it was perhaps time to know exactly what it was they were looking for. One option was to establish very specific requirements, such as years of experience. They would have to agree that the requirements would be transparent and that the

decision to nominate a candidate would leave many others out. The requirements would serve as a screening process. The other option was to establish guidelines so that each country would use these criteria for selecting a candidate, and those same guidelines were what would enable them during the forum to evaluate and compare the various candidates. Taking it to the extreme, if the requirement was to have a master's degree in public health, then a candidate either had it or he didn't, and that would disqualify a great many people.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) concurred with the Delegates of Costa Rica and Mexico. Looking at the requirements contained in the Rules of Procedure of the Pan American Sanitary Conference, it was surprising at first, since in comparison with the requirements stipulated for the candidates for Director of WHO and Regional Director for Africa, they were extremely vague. Despite that vagueness, the Pan American Health Organization had managed to remain one of the better performing international organizations.

The speaker also voiced concern about how to measure the sensitivity of candidates and their capacity to resist pressure.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) said that the Working Group needed to decide whether to have a broader framework for the country nominations, with tighter screening at the next stage, or whether the screening should be tighter from the outset.

The CHAIRMAN wondered how candidates were assessed at WHO and whether the assessment process was an informal one or carried out by a committee.

Dr. KEAN (Director, Governance, WHO) replied that at the last elections, the list of criteria, list of nominations, and the CVs, that had already been sent out to all Board Members, had been presented to the Board, which had then drawn up a short list of five candidates. As he recalled, all candidates had met the criteria. Language skills were a recent consideration, the question having been whether more than one official language should be a requirement.

The CHAIRMAN, summing up, said that the characteristics that candidates should possess clearly needed further elaboration. He therefore suggested that a paper should be prepared for discussion the following day, taking into account the comments made and the legal input. In view of the more general approach preferred, he wondered whether the language requirement proposed by Barbados was not too strict.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) said that in the light of the Legal Counsel's explanation of language levels, her delegation would not press its proposal.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) said that the objective proposed by the Working Group was to try to improve the process for electing the Director. As the nomination of candidates for Director of PAHO is the purview of the countries, a series of nominating criteria could be established for the Member States. In his opinion, it could later be determined in the forum whether these criteria had been met.

Dr. GARCÍA (Deputy Director) said that while it would be possible to draft a paper for the following day, it would not be easy to be categorical about the characteristics, qualifications or qualities deemed desirable. There would be little point in making a Masters degree in Public Health a requirement, for example, when many

Member States offered no such course; equivalent experience or qualifications should be acceptable. The other aspect to be considered was how countries would measure potential candidates against PAHO's description or criteria.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) noted that was nearly impossible to completely eliminate subjectivity in the wording used to establish the selection criteria. He suggested that when nominating candidates, the Member States consider the quality displayed by the national professional who had exercised high-level functions with leadership and ample proficiency in public health activities and who had obtained his extensive experience in the international sphere.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) agreed with the Chairman's statement that the selection criteria needed more work and said that things should be made easier for Delegates who had never participated in an election, perhaps through a basic list that limited the number of candidates. To this end, she proposed that a group be established within the Executive Committee to initially screen the candidates, and in the event that there were more than five, there could be a checklist of some sort so that the Executive Committee could interview these individuals and see if they meet the requirements that had been established.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) wished to know how WHO obtained the short list of five candidates to begin the voting process.

Dr. KEAN (Director, Governance, WHO) said that in WHO's elections, countries had not necessarily nominated their own nationals. The candidacies were sent to the Director-General and forwarded to the Chairman of the Executive Board. The Board then

scrutinized the CVs and drew up a short list. In future, CVs would be sent out to all Member States. The process for establishing the short list was also used for the election of the Director-General, the candidate with the lowest number of votes dropping out first. Replying to a question by the CHAIRMAN, he said that the number of candidates to be short-listed was determined by the Board at the beginning of the process.

Mr. BAILÓN (Mexico) said that his country had also suggested in principle that a short list be drawn up, but that it had ultimately been decided that this criterion was not a good idea. However, he wanted to know what mechanism would be used to decide which candidates would be on that list.

The CHAIRMAN said that there were two different issues to be considered, the qualifications or criteria for a Director of PASB, on which a paper would be prepared in the light of the Group's discussions, and how a choice should be made between a number of candidates, for which there were two options: either countries would screen candidates before nomination, and subsequently elect one of them, or there could be a mechanism, like WHO's, whereby the Executive Committee, for example, screened and reviewed all candidacies, and drew up an election short list.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) reiterated that the criteria for nominating candidates were what was under discussion and that that, not the selection criteria, was the proper term. In the provisions governing the nomination of candidates, it was necessary to indicate that the Member States should only nominate one candidate, because when a Member State nominated a single candidate, surely it was the one it believed best qualified to be the Director of PAHO. He therefore proposed a provision stipulating that each Member State could designate only one candidate to represent it.

Likewise, he was of the opinion that the Pan American Sanitary Conference should consider all the candidates nominated, without making a short list. In WHO, the short list was made by the Executive Board, which already implied the application of a selection criterion. It was also the Executive Board that elected the Director, whose name would be submitted for final approval by the Assembly; however, in practice, it was the Executive Board that really elected the Director-General of WHO. In his view, the nomination process in PAHO should not be modified, and the Pan American Sanitary Conference should have the responsibility of electing the Director every five years in the presence of all the Member States.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) commented that, as far as he knew, there had always been four candidates at the most, but he wished to know whether there had ever been more.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) confessed that she did not know the answer to that question. She said that in her 15 years or so of experience in the Organization, there had been only one or two candidates at the time of the balloting.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) said that it was precisely for that reason that he wanted to know if there had ever been more than four candidates.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) explained that the candidates were always announced informally; no list was ever drawn up. The rules of procedure clearly stated that a list would not be drawn up and that it would be created when the candidates were nominated--that is, when the votes were cast. In her experience, each country nominated its candidate when the list was opened, before the vote; that is, when each

country nominates its candidate. She had never seen a list that exceeded two people and even recalled one occasion when there was a single candidate.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) noted that he had been present at all the elections except the first one, in which Dr. Horwitz was named Director of PAHO. He did not recall any occasion in which there had been more than four candidates. Much of the selection process is handled in the ministries of foreign affairs and not the Organization. The countries consult each other, and the list is whittled down until the day of the election, when with one, two, or three candidates remain. The question of more than one candidate per country was something else. There had never been more than one candidate per country in PAHO or any other international organization; in his opinion, it would be a little ridiculous for a country to nominate two candidates and be unable internally to make the final selection of a single candidate.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) made the point that it would also be necessary to consider what procedure should be followed in the case where a country withdrew a nomination, because it seemed to him that this in fact was going to occur and, he recalled, had already occurred during the last election. Just as there had been discussion of the procedure with respect to the number of months or weeks to the Executive Committee or the Pan American Sanitary Conference, it was necessary to determine whether the country should have to ratify the nomination just before the election.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Working Group appeared to agree that there should be criteria on which countries would base their nominations and screen their own candidates. Those criteria would in principle be the WHO criteria, adapted specifically for the Region of the Americas. There had been no opposition to Cuba's suggestion to

abandon the idea of a short list and instead consider all the candidates through the normal process, in accordance with the rules of the Governing Bodies and any further refinements that the Working Group might establish. The idea of one country one candidate also appeared to have been accepted. In the absence of any objection he took it that the Working Group agreed with his summing up and that criteria should be drafted on that basis for the following day.

It was so agreed.

Dr. VIZZOTTI (Argentina) said, for example, that if, hypothetically, there were 16 candidates on the date the Conference in September, this would not be conducive to a peaceful, orderly Conference. In his view, the dialogue between the Member States in the proposed forum would serve precisely to limit the list of candidates, so that each Member State would name the three or five candidates it considered had met the criteria for the post of Director. Thus, taking the opinion of all into account, the final short list would be drawn up.

The CHAIRMAN said that that would be determined by the electoral process itself. According to the rules, the top three candidates would go forward from the first ballot. Out of 10 candidates, therefore, seven would be eliminated at that stage.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) said that in such a situation, the short-listing would be tantamount to a mini election, and the number of candidates would be reduced in successive ballots, thus eliminating political arguments over short-listing.

Dr. VIZZOTTI (Argentina) remarked that his proposal did not seem to have been successful.

The CHAIRMAN, turning to the question of the forum, recalled that there had been agreement, at the Working Group's first session, that the forum should be part of the election process, enabling all candidates to speak publicly and answer questions, and enabling countries to make their choice of candidate. It had further been agreed that the forum would be held on the margins of the Executive Committee rather than the Pan American Sanitary Conference, where it would be both disruptive and time-consuming. As the Executive Committee's governing mechanism would make it difficult to accommodate the forum, it would be held either immediately before or after the Executive Committee. All countries would be invited to attend, either by sending a special representative or through their permanent representatives in Washington.

Ms. MOREL (Mexico) said it was necessary to establish an electoral process before naming candidates--a process in which dates have been set and, moreover, the envelopes or proposals can be sent to the Chairman of the Committee. She proposed that that session, called a special session, take place after the Executive Committee, and that the election be held during the Conference, so that the countries would have the opportunity to consider and better familiarize themselves with the candidates' platforms.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) believed that establishing this forum was a good idea, because before electing a candidate as Director it would make it possible to know what his platform is, how he thinks, how he is going to lead or steer the course of the Organization. This would contribute arguments beyond the résumé they may have reviewed or their knowledge about the candidate, such as his plan for how to steer the course internationally, which is important when deciding whom to vote for. He preferred, however, that the forum not be held during the Executive Committee, or before or after

the Executive Committee, but during the Conference itself where the election will be held, since holding it during the Executive Committee would limit the participation of the Member States somewhat.

On the other hand, the practice in WHO was to briefly extend the Executive Board in election years. In PAHO, when there was election, the Conference would last a little longer, as in the years when the budget is discussed. As this occurred every five years, he did not think it would be very difficult for the Member States to extend the Conference briefly for the election of the Director.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) agreed that the forum should be held during the Conference or perhaps, considering the Chairman's comments, the week before, taking a day or two prior to the Conference but ensuring that all the countries were present. He recalled that some years ago, perhaps 15, the Directing Council was two weeks long, and now it was only one. He therefore felt that holding a slightly longer session with two additional days, preferably the two days prior to the Conference, was not unjustified. Furthermore, he believed it highly appropriate to consider 45 minutes for the presentation and discussion.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that when Canada had suggested a forum, it had been aware that Ministers or their representatives would arrive at the Directing Council/Pan American Sanitary Conference with a fairly clear idea of the candidate they would be voting for. By that time, too, most candidates would have visited various countries and spoken with Ministers. The critical period was therefore the three months between the Executive Committee and the Conference, when candidates would be trying to gain support and countries would be trying to learn more about the individual candidates.

What value the forum would have if it were held immediately before the election was hard to say, but it would not be the broader democratic forum, involving countries and nongovernmental organizations in official relations, that it would be if it were held between the two major meetings.

Ms. DICKINSON (Canada) added that if the forum were to be held three months before the election, all Member States and/or their Ambassadors would be invited to take part; it would not be confined to Members of the Executive Committee. Nominations should be closed after the forum to allow the candidates who had gone through the nomination process and presented their platforms a proper three-month campaign period.

Ms. BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that the forum should either be held some months in advance of the Executive Committee, or on its margins, or even at an extraordinary meeting of Member States, and nominations closed just before the forum, so that Member States could assess the different candidates, discuss their impressions in their capitals, and decide who to support. At WHO, the presentations of the last five candidates had been followed by a question-and-answer session, questions having been submitted in advance so that the countries raising the questions were not identified, and the questions were not directed at any one individual. It had then been up to Member States to make their choice.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) said that her country supported a presentation by the candidates prior to the election. She considered it important to know the candidates' platforms and have time to study them and make a less-pressured decision. In her view, 45 minutes was sufficient for the presentation, with 15 minutes or

so for the discussion. She felt that all the countries should be invited to this meeting, which should be held shortly before the Executive Committee.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) felt that a special meeting with all the countries present would be necessary, although he differed with the Delegate of Costa Rica about the length of the discussions, since he did not believe that 15 minutes would be enough for the questions. There were 37 countries, and if each asked a question that took one minute, that would already be 37 minutes. Normally, in competitions of that sort, because it really was a competition, the time set aside for questions was at least double that allotted for the presentations. A 45-minute to 1-hour presentation by a candidate would be reasonable, with 1 or 2 hours for questions. There would be four candidates at most, so the entire process would take a day or two, or perhaps just a day would be sufficient. Finally, the speaker felt that the candidates' presentations should contain a statement, a reference to his experience, his vision of health in the international context, and an explanation of the platform that he proposed to implement if elected.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) supported the idea of a special forum to which all countries would be invited. Nominations should be closed before the forum. The questions, submitted in advance, should be asked by one person so that they could not be linked to any one country. Presentations should be limited to 15 minutes; one hour for the presentation and question-and-answer session would be sufficient. Transcriptions should then be made of the entire proceedings and sent to Member States for further analysis.

Mr. ABDOO (United States of America) observed that if an extraordinary session did not fit into ministerial schedules, other representatives would be sent. A meeting on

the margins of the Executive Committee would therefore be best. He endorsed the suggestion that a verbatim transcript, as opposed to an interpretation, of the proceedings should be sent to all Member States.

Mr. BAILÓN (Mexico) expressed his country's agreement with the idea of establishing a forum as part of the process for electing the "Director-General." However, it was necessary to decide when the forum would be held and set time limits for the presentation and discussion. In his opinion, this was a meeting of the greatest importance, held every five years, and beyond making a decision based on how to make things easier for the greatest possible number for ministers so that they could attend the meeting and also attend the Conference during a single trip to Washington, it was going to be difficult to reconcile the interests of all the countries. ... think then about what we should expect to happen after the forum. In his view, if it took place in June, not necessarily before or after the Executive Committee, there would be sufficient time, because the person who attended the Executive Committee might not be the same one that the Minister designated to attend the forum. Concerning time limits, the speaker voted to leave this open, since it was part of the electoral process, and the capacity or interest of each candidate in being exhaustive was precisely something that the countries should also consider when deciding their vote. Thus, each candidate should determine how much time he was going to speak, and there should be sufficient time for questions.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) felt that since they were proposing that the Organization adopt virtual methods, and those methods were being used extensively in many fields, it was necessary to consider having the forum make use of technology, since there were

ministers who would not be able to attend, and these technologies would enable them to participate and even offer their comments.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) commented that between the nomination of the candidates and the election, there should be the possibility of an exchange between the candidates and the countries. This would afford candidates the opportunity to make themselves known to the countries through their platform and address the concerns already voiced by them. They knew that prior to the election, candidates had often made the rounds, visiting some countries and talking with the authorities. And this was normal, logical, and foreseeable. However, in the speaker's opinion, during that time candidates' platforms should be examined in depth. Not only their political platform, but the technical arguments as well. It would be a good idea to have this happen between June and September, when the Conference is held; the conversation should take place in the Organization and be a little more personal, much more health-centric, and with a greater melding of political-strategic and technical aspects, because at the end of the day, while directing the Organization is a political job, it has a highly technical aspect.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) noted that there was a consensus that the forum should be held three months prior to the election, because it seemed that there were more elements to support this position than that of holding it during the Conference. The arguments were convincing, and the possibility of considering everything that had been heard and comparing the different positions would facilitate a better choice. Therefore, his country endorsed the proposal to hold it three months before and specifically suggested that it be held for a couple of days either immediately before or after the Executive Committee. He also believed that time limits must be set, both for a candidate's presentation and the question-and-answer period. The presentation should

last one-third of the time allotted for the question-and-answer period--that is, candidates would have from 15 minutes to a half hour for their presentation and from 30 to 60 minutes for questions and answers.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) expressed support for the two to one formula, with questions and answers getting twice as much time as presentations. There should be one list of questions that would be put to all candidates and, for the sake of transparency, all candidates should be given the same length of time.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) did not see why the forum should not be associated with the Conference. In his view, the fact that the discussions among the countries and candidates actually took place in the Conference, where all the Latin American countries were represented, was a positive thing. As to the idea of inviting the ministers to the Executive Committee, he felt that it departs a little from customary practice, because traditionally, the Executive Committee was not a meeting of ministers but of ministry advisers.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) noted that ministers do not attend the meetings of the World Health Assembly, and only four ministers from the Region were present at the last meeting of Latin America. The relationship with WHO was felt to be very remote. Virtually all the countries that participated in the Assembly, even for the election of the Director, were those that were already on the WHO Executive Board. Actually, the ministers of the Region attended the Assembly only when they felt that their presence was vital, which was not what occurred in actuality. In the past four years, the speaker had observed much more of a ministerial presence at the meetings of PAHO than at those of WHO; this was especially true for the representatives of Latin America.

That did not mean that we should declare independence from WHO, but it did underscore that while the ministers of the Region were part of the global system, they sometimes were not very involved in it, for a number of reasons.

Ms. BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that the Health Assembly had a global focus that made it difficult for countries to concentrate on regional issues at the same time. PAHO's own Executive Committee would provide a better opportunity, with the added advantage that most countries had ambassadors in Washington, either to PAHO or to the OAS.

Mr. BAILÓN (Mexico) said that it was foreseeable that after the forum, there would be an opportunity for the candidates to visit countries to expand on their presentation and clear up any doubts. The other important thing that should take place between the time of the forum and the election was a conversation between the ministries of health and the ministries of foreign affairs, because was not good for these exchanges, negotiations, and agreements to occur prior to the forum. The governments should instruct the ministries of foreign affairs not to make any decisions about the vote beforehand, so that the forum can influence the decision and be a real part of the process. In his opinion, the forum should be held in Washington, not Geneva, although he did not care whether it was held before or after the Assembly; further discussion of the cut-off date for nominating candidates was necessary, if indeed they wanted to establish a cut-off, after which no country could submit a nomination.

The CHAIRMAN felt that it was unrealistic to expect countries to go to the expense of sending ministers to Washington for two days en route to Geneva, when they could send them just once to the Executive Committee.

Dr. de ARAÚJO FERREIRA (Brazil) said that for Brazil, at least, it would be a costly exercise, at some US\$ 10 000 per head for two days, as ministers never traveled alone. It would be better to time the forum to coincide with one of the two major meetings.

Dr. GARCÍA (Deputy Director) clarified that next year the Organization would have better technology, including SharePoint and other software, to hold forum discussions by videoconference. Concerning transcription of the questions and answers, he said that they would be sent to the countries in advance. In the document examined, the proposal was that the candidates have 45 minutes for their presentation, followed by a question-and-answer period. As to the date of the forum, he said that it was easy to change the date and that that would depend on what the countries decided. The earlier it was held, the less risk there would be of hurricanes, while the closer to summer, the more countries that would perhaps not be able to participate in the meeting.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) pointed out that prior to the last election for the Director of WHO, a videoconference was held in which some of the candidates participated virtually, because they could not go to Geneva. He felt it would be very useful to have this technology for the election of the Director of PAHO, since candidates could participate virtually and not have to be physically present; it would also facilitate the participation of prominent figures interested in the process.

Ms. DICKINSON (Canada) said that Canada strongly supported the growing consensus for a forum around the time of the Executive Committee in June, and the idea that a verbatim transcript of the proceedings should be sent to countries electronically. It

might not be entirely fair to set questions in advance. The closing date for nominations should either be one week before the forum or 75 days before the election.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) fully agreed with what had been said about the Executive Committee and believed it was an opportunity for the ministers to resume an active role in Governing Bodies such as the Committee. Since the result of the meeting was going to be a resolution, he proposed that it address the issue of whether regional or subregional ministerial forums could also offer space to the candidates; in this regard, he thought, for example, about the meeting of Ministers of MERCOSUR and Associated States, the meeting of Andean Ministers, and the meeting of Caribbean Ministers.

The CHAIRMAN said that the idea of candidates using the different regional and subregional ministerial meetings was a good one, provided that the appropriate invitations were issued, and the candidates were prepared to defray the costs.

Ms. BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that that again raised the question of setting a cut-off date for nominations to allow for preparation of the forum and take advantage of the various consultative opportunities: six months before the September meetings, in February or mid-March, seemed reasonable.

The CHAIRMAN said that there appeared to be consensus that the timing should be around the Executive Committee and that Member States should propose only one candidate, submitting the curriculum vitae and any other relevant documentation with the letter of nomination. The Working Group next needed to decide in the closing date for nominations and receipt of applications.

Mr. TOBAR (Argentina) recalled that in the document presented by his country, there was support for the position of Canada--that is, that four months would be a reasonable enough time to nominate the candidates, with time left to work,--i.e., to send the CVs to all the countries and to organize the forum.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) was opposed to having a closing date six months before the Conference.

Dr. SÁENZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) said that, since the election is in September and the forum would be held around June, she believed that nominations should be submitted between the months of March and May.

Ms. DICKINSON (Canada) wondered whether there was not some confusion between the call for nominations, which was six months before the Pan American Sanitary Conference, and the submission of candidacies from countries, which Canada had proposed should be 75 days before the Conference or approximately one week before the forum.

Mr. BAILÓN (Mexico) wished to clarify that the call for nominations is an official announcement of the Organization to arouse the interest of the countries, and he wondered why any importance is given to it when everyone knew that if the call were not issued, the election would be held in September in any case.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) explained that a call for nominations was not found in the rules of the Organization and that the current rules specifically stated that a candidate could be nominated in the moments just before the election. However, all agencies issued an official call declaring the election "open." In

some agencies, the secretariat issued the call, while in others, it was the chairman of one of the Governing Bodies; this should be done sufficiently ahead of time for the countries to put an internal process in place to decide who would be nominated. In some agencies, the time between the call for nominations and nomination of candidates was three months, and in others, four. There should be a cut-off point for this process to give the Organization enough time to convene the forum, translate the documents received, and distribute them to all the countries. The Chairman of the Executive Committee could be the person in charge of coordinating the process.

Mr. BAILÓN (Mexico) felt that the formal aspect of the call for nominations was important but said that the countries' internal process for deciding whether to nominate candidate so-and-so began, of course, long before the call. They were two different processes. The speaker brought up a problem: the invitation was in March, while his country had made a proposal to make April the cut-off date, leaving only a very small window between the call for nominations and the cut-off date.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) maintained that, considering the Legal Adviser's pertinent clarification, it would be prudent to establish a cut-off date for the nomination of candidates; he proposed that the call take place six months prior to the Conference and that it be issued by the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. Thus, the Executive Committee would receive the candidates' CVs and all the documentation from the Member States sufficiently ahead of time. In his opinion, six months would be a reasonable amount of time. May would be the cut-off date for submitting nominations; this would make it possible to prepare all the documentation,

and after a three-week period, to decide who would participate in the forum, which would be held the third week in June.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) asked who would be responsible for sending out the call for nominations and the other work involved and how and when the packages would be sent out to countries.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) replied that while the Secretariat would do all the necessary work such as translation and dispatch and receipt of communications, the documents themselves would have to be channeled through the Chairman of the Executive Committee. The call would be announced by the Director, on behalf of the Secretariat, and the process then coordinated by the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Dr. SAÉNZ MADRIGAL (Costa Rica) suggested that the call for nominations be issued on 1 March; that way, they would have a full three months--that is, March, April, and May.

Ms. DICKINSON (Canada) called for a reply to the second question by Barbados. The Working Group would have to decide whether the packages, containing applications, curricula vitae and other documents, should be sent out to countries as the documents arrived, or together, once nominations had closed, and by what method.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) asked whether the call for nominations should include details such as the cut-off dates, guidelines for countries for the selection of candidates, and a description of the election process, including the forum, and the time for the posting of packages. Countries would need all that information.

The CHAIRMAN, replying to a question by the Ms. BLACKWOOD (United States of America), said that according to the Secretariat, two weeks would be needed to put the nominations together and prepare for the forum.

Dr. KEAN (Director, Governance, WHO) explained that the procedure at WHO was for nominations to be received two months before the opening date of the Board and dispatched to Member States one month before, allowing one month, therefore, for the necessary work. The problems that would inevitably be encountered, largely resulting from countries' failure to observe the guidelines that were sent out with the call, were time-consuming. It was perhaps over-optimistic, therefore, to allow only two weeks; a month might be more realistic, particularly if there were a lot of candidates.

Dr. GARCÍA (Deputy Director) said that as the time factor would be critical, the guidelines sent out to countries would need to be absolutely clear on all aspects of the process.

Dr. St. JOHN (Barbados) said that it was important to specify in the guidelines a maximum length for the curriculum vitae.

The CHAIRMAN, summing up, said that three dates would be set: first, the cut-off date for the call for nominations, which would be 1 March, as proposed by Costa Rica, six months before the election; secondly, the closing date for candidacies, which would be 1 May, four months before the election, as proposed by the United States; and thirdly, the date of the forum, which would take place on the margins of the Executive Committee, that was traditionally held in the second half of June.

Dr. JIMENEZ (Area Manager, Legal Affairs) said that it would also be advisable to set a date by which the Secretariat would have to make documentation available to Member States, bearing in mind the need to translate the CVs and other documents into all four languages. It might also be advisable to consider how those documents should be structured.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that candidates in the past two elections had set up their own web sites as electoral platforms. It might be possible, therefore, simply to refer Members of the Executive Committee and other Member States to those web sites.

Dr. ST. JOHN (Barbados) said that that should be in addition to the items that candidates would be required to submit, so that the applications retained some uniformity.

Dr. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) stated that in his opinion, it would be important to specify what basic information would be required from each candidate, and afterwards, if candidates wished to add further information, it could be published on a website.

The CHAIRMAN endorsed that view. However, the Secretariat should not be responsible for the translation, circulation and posting on the web site of all the information that candidates might wish to publicize, in addition to what the process required. A note should accordingly be included with the rest of the information sent out to countries.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 12:49 p.m.