



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



## 144th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 22-26 June 2009

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*Provisional Agenda Item 6.3*

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### STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PASB STAFF ASSOCIATION

1. The Staff Association (SA) wishes to thank the Members of the Executive Committee for their attention and interest in matters pertaining to the current working conditions for staff that are pursuant to the provisions of the international civil service. PAHO staff recognizes and appreciates the trust placed in them by the Governing Bodies of the Organization and reiterates our commitment to continue working to provide international cooperation in health and fulfill the mandates of the Organization in keeping with its Mission, Vision, and Values.

2. We are pleased to report on progress made in improving relations between the staff and the Administration to the 144th Session of the Executive Committee and to address current issues of interest to staff. In this regard, we wish also to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee, that this year the SA is celebrating 60 years since it was established in PAHO, and from that time very important progress was made in the Organization and in the conditions of work with the support and the contributions of the staff representatives.

3. Following are some of the most strategic issues on which the SA has been working in close collaboration with PAHO's Administration.

#### **PAHO'S HRM in Relation to the ICSC Framework**

4. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) adopted a Framework for Human Resources Management (HRM) in 2000,<sup>1</sup> in order to enable United Nations organizations to manage their human resources more effectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed at [http://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/ppd/hrmframe/icsc\\_hrm\\_eng.pdf](http://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/ppd/hrmframe/icsc_hrm_eng.pdf) on 15 August 2008.

5. The SA conducted an assessment of its application at PAHO in October 2008 based on the status of the strategies, policies, and plans of the Area of Human Resources Management (HRM).<sup>2</sup> Several aspects were examined: (a) compensation and benefits, (b) employment, (c) career management, (d) good governance, (e) human resources information and management, and (f) ethics and standards of conduct.

6. The reorganization of HRM in January 2008, based on the Strategic Assessment and Resource Alignment exercise has strengthened the Area and created teams that are consistent with the major components of the ICSC framework. While there is clear, measurable progress in the application of most of the ICSC framework components and sub-components at PAHO, there is still room for improvement and there are two areas where progress has been unsatisfactory and needs to be addressed.

7. The SA wishes to highlight the areas where progress has been made and make some suggestions for further improvement:

### ***Employment***

#### *Recruitment, placement and retention*

8. Within the framework of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) a comprehensive proposal has been discussed to organize the selection processes. Its purpose is to improve the timetable for convening selection committees and programming their activities in order to expedite the decision making process and ensure transparency in the review and validation of their recommendations vis-à-vis staff appointments. Under this proposal HRM will establish an Advisory Selection Panel of fixed duration and publicize its calendar of meetings to assist PAHO entities in the scheduling of their selection processes. All panel members will serve for a period of one year (which can be extended to two years) and be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

#### *Contractual arrangements*

9. During the last Administrator's meeting, HRM gave a presentation showing nineteen types of contractual arrangements currently in use and highlighting key differences in their application, such as appointment types, salary scales, and benefits. We have examined document SPBA3/12, Rev. 1 (Eng.) prepared by HRM and available in the Governing Bodies site and are looking forward to the implementation of a new contractual framework at PAHO. The new framework would consist of only three contract types: (a) fixed term, (b) continuing, and (c) temporary; and the proposed Staff Rule amendments are expected to fully align the benefits and entitlements of PAHO temporary staff with those of the UN common system.

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<sup>2</sup> The analysis was prepared by the SA standing committee.

### *Staff well-being*

10. Work/life balance is a key human resources theme across public and private sector organizations today. Many policies and programs within the UN system are geared to facilitating and improving work/life balance and staff well-being but are usually atomized and uncoordinated. In this regard, we wish to acknowledge the creation of the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee and Staff Well-Being Website at PAHO with the participation of the SA and staff from different locations. Work/life balance and staff well-being are becoming increasingly important in the attraction, recruitment, and especially the retention of staff across the UN.

### ***Career Management***

#### *Staff development and training*

11. We wish to acknowledge the role of the PAHO Learning Board, which responds to PAHO's Strategic Plan and is committed to aligning the Organization's learning opportunities with the strategic objectives included in the Plan. The SA is a member of the Board which has an advisory role to the Director and Executive Management, as well as an oversight role in the selection of projects and corporate learning programs to be funded by WHO Staff Development funds. Not all Staff and Managers are aware of the existence and/or have timely access to these funds and further efforts are needed in this regard.

#### *Performance management*

12. Within the framework of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) the plans and implementation phases for the new workflow of the electronic Performance Appraisal System (ePPES), which will apply to all PAHO offices, have been discussed. The new ePPES will be linked to the Biennial Working Plans as well.

#### *Awards and Recognition Program*

13. PAHO used to have two committees for these programs and the SA only participated in one of them. This year a single committee was established at Executive Management level with SA representation. We now have the opportunity to provide input in the awards selection process and the selection of candidates. We believe that after this experience some valuable lessons will be learned, which will enable the SA to provide valuable feedback for the next round.

## ***Good Governance***

### ***Role of staff representatives***

14. We are pleased to acknowledge the contributions to organizational corporate efforts by staff representatives in the joint Staff-Administration committees. However, there is room for greater recognition of the staff representative roles by some of the managers and to strengthen the level of communication between the Administration and the SA in order to achieve a more meaningful participation.

## **Integrity and Conflict Management System**

15. The SA wishes to recognize the changes made to the Board of Appeal's rules of procedure. At the same time we wish to point out that our internal judicial system still requires further improvements in order to guarantee, among other issues: (a) the principle of trial defense, (b) the right to a due process, (c) an abbreviated means of access to the system, and (d) the reaching of decisions within a reasonable time and timely responses to complaints presented by staff. There is clear need for more transparency, independence, and for the provision of reports in a timely manner.

16. We also wish to recognize that progress has been made in relation to the effective implementation of PAHO's Code of Ethical Principles and Conduct. It would be advisable to issue and implement the corresponding investigation protocol as soon as possible, in order to provide juridical security, the right to due process and a full exercise of the right to trial defense; issues that also affect the performance of the Grievance Panel.

17. Lastly, the SA wants to recognize the role of the Integrity Conflict Management System (ICMS) that is reviewing and updating processes for these instances and improving the coordination among them. In this regard, the effectiveness of the overall system needs to be evaluated in the near future.

## **Action by the Executive Committee**

18. The SA requests the Executive Committee to consider, endorse, and promote the proposals and recommendations contained in this report and welcomes greater involvement in the measures to protect the staff and staff working conditions.