

54th DIRECTING COUNCIL

67th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS

Washington, D.C., USA, 28 September-2 October 2015

Provisional Agenda Item 7.6

CD54/INF/6
10 July 2015
Original: Spanish

C. SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

1. The purpose of this progress report is to inform the Member States of the progress made in the 2014-2015 biennium with regard to public health-related agreements and resolutions, in the framework of subregional integration processes, of interest to the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the various international cooperation agencies.
2. This report also covers the progress made in activities carried out as part of cooperation agreements between PAHO and subregional integration entities.

Background

3. The framework for subregional technical cooperation is supported by Resolution CD45.R6, adopted by the Directing Council in 2004. With the adoption of this resolution, subregional technical cooperation was included in the budget policy in order to promote the strengthening of PAHO's collaboration in integration processes in the three subregions: Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

Situation Analysis

4. Through the signing of specific agreements and memoranda of understanding, PAHO/WHO currently provides technical cooperation to the subregional integration processes mentioned below. This report includes a table showing the new developments and progress made in the implementation of priority resolutions emanating from these integration processes, their relation to PAHO activities, and the measures that the Organization has supported.
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a) Central America

- Central American Integration System (SICA): Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMISCA)
- Meeting of the Health Sector of Central America and Dominican Republic (RESSCAD)
- Mesoamerica Project

b) Caribbean

- Caribbean Community (CARICOM): Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD)

c) South America

- Andean Community: Andean Health Agency/Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS/CONHU)
- Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR): Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Working Subgroup on Health No. 11 (SGT 11)
- Union of South American Nations (UNASUR): South American Health Council
- Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)
- Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)

Integration Entities in Central America***Central American Integration System (SICA)-COMISCA¹***

COMISCA		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
42nd meeting of COMISCA (June 2015)	Resolution No. 11: Request for technical and financial support from technical cooperation agencies, especially the Pan American Health Organization, during the formulation of the COMISCA Health Plan 2016-2020.	Promotes harmonization with the PAHO Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and, within the framework of actions to strengthen subregional integration institutions, supports COMISCA in the evaluation of the Health Plan 2010-2015 and the formulation of the Health Plan for Central America 2016-2020.

¹ Link to consult information on SICA: <http://www.sica.int/>.

COMISCA		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
	Resolution No. 13: Regional Strategy on Drugs.	Support to the Subregional Technical Commission on Drugs (CTSM) in the preparation of the draft Regional Drug Strategy aligned with the WHO and PAHO frameworks.
	Resolution No. 15: Human Resources for Health.	Support to the Subregional Technical Commission on Human Resources for Health for the preparation of studies on physician and nurse mobility and for the catalogue of certification processes and mutual recognition of degrees among Central American countries.
Special Meeting of COMISCA (28 September 2014)	Resolution No. 4: Calling on international cooperation agencies to accompany and support the implementation of the Regional Health Policy 2015-2022.	The SICA Regional Health Policy, approved by COMISCA in September 2014, was presented to the Summit of the Presidents of SICA (held in Belize in December 2014) and approved at that meeting. The policy represents progress in the formulation of a subregional cooperation strategy.

*RESSCAD*²

RESSCAD		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Agreements of the XXX RESSCAD, held 17-18 October 2014 in San Salvador (El Salvador)	Agreement 3, numeral 6: on universal health coverage: request that PAHO provide technical cooperation to support the development of participatory processes aimed at establishing the national roadmap toward universal access to health and universal health coverage.	PAHO has provided technical and financial support for national consultations for the preparation of the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage. Nineteen countries and territories have finalized their national consultations. Central

² Link to consult information on RESSCAD: <http://www.paho.org/resscad/>.

RESSCAD		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
		American countries have made progress in the preparation of the roadmap to achieve universal access to health and universal health coverage.
	Agreement 4, numeral 3: on strengthening the national regulatory authorities: prepare cooperation agreement between SE-COMISCA, the national regulatory authorities, and PAHO, in order to strengthen the national regulatory authority in all countries.	On 27-28 November 2014, with the participation of staff members of the national drug regulatory authorities with experience in bioequivalence, a workshop was held to prepare the proposal for Central American technical regulation of bioequivalence; this will be presented to the Council of Ministers of Economy (COMIECO) in order to take the next step toward approval and implementation, since that entity issues all technical standards for drug quality and efficacy.
	Agreement 4, numeral 4: with the support of PAHO-SE-COMISCA, the Central American proposals for technical regulations on interchangeability, drug surveillance, and good storage and distribution practices will be coordinated with the national regulatory authorities so that SE-COMISCA can present them to SIECA in 2015.	The standards for good storage and distribution practices were presented in 2014 so that the corresponding technical regulations can be issued in the first half of 2015.
	Agreement 5, numeral 1: on communicable diseases (Chikungunya virus and Ebola virus disease): Revisit the recommendations of the IHR Emergency committee and the PAHO document on Ebola virus disease (September 2014). ³	PAHO/WHO mobilized a technical team to prepare the response to possible cases of Ebola virus disease in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the framework of the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005).
	Agreement 7: on the function of RESSCAD with respect to the SICA	The working group has been formed, consisting of PPT

³ Advancing toward a Regional Position on the International Health Regulations (Document [CD53/14](#)).

RESSCAD		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
	Regional Health Policy: PAHO/WHO technical cooperation for the working group (PPT RESSCAD, PPT CISSCAD, PPT FOCARD-PHC, and SE-COMISCA) to formulate the proposal for structure, organization, and governance of the health sector.	XXXI RESSCAD (Honduras), PPT XXIX (Guatemala), PPT XXX (El Salvador), PPT CISSCAD, PPT FOCARD-PHC, SE COMISCA, and PAHO. The proposal will be submitted for review in June 2015.

*Mesoamerica Project*⁴

Mesoamerica Project		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Mesoamerica Project	Agreement between PAHO and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID).	PAHO provides support in the preparation of the master plans for dengue, chikungunya, malaria, and road safety.

Caribbean Integration Entities

*CARICOM*⁵

5. The institutional council within CARICOM in which the ministers of health meet is the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD). COHSOD is responsible for the promotion of health, education, and living and working conditions in the Caribbean Community.

6. The ministers of health traditionally meet at PAHO Headquarters just before the Pan American Sanitary Conference or the Directing Council; the most recent meeting took place on 27-28 September 2014, in Washington, D.C., and was designated as a Special COHSOD.

7. On 4 November 2014, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) met in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) in the framework of the 17th Special Meeting. The heads of government addressed public health problems, focusing on the two public health challenges currently facing the community: Ebola virus disease and the outbreak of chikungunya virus.

⁴ Link to consult information on the Mesoamerica Project: http://www.proyectomesoamerica.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=229&Itemid=57.

⁵ Link to consult information on CARICOM: www.caricom.org.

CARICOM		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Special COHSOD, 27-28 September 2014	Prioritize areas of study and the inclusion of technical staff in cooperation activities: there was agreement on promoting greater cooperation between PAHO and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to help the Member States take innovative steps to respond to the new challenges.	
	The need for a policy on alcohol use in the Caribbean: maintain the reduction of harmful alcohol use as a public health priority in the Caribbean.	The Plan of Action to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol (approved by PAHO in 2011) was reviewed.
	Strengthen social protection and the prevention of violence-related injuries through implementation of a regional framework. Align the regional plan for the prevention of violence-related injuries with the CCH IV and the post-2015 development agenda.	
	Update the HIV treatment guidelines on the initiative to eliminate mother-to-child transmission: with PAHO support, promote the mobilization of resources to finance technical cooperation.	
	Approval was given for the project's content and for implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2013 by Argentina/ CARICOM-CARPHA/ PAHO.	
17th Special Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM (4 November 2014)	The heads of government emphasized that disease response should be a community effort and that no CARICOM Member State should fight these public health problems on its own. The Meeting approved the measures adopted to date by CARPHA, PAHO, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Secretariat, and the Government of Cuba, in order to establish and	The meeting resulted in a 10-point action plan to stop Ebola, which included the following components, among others: Establish a Regional Coordinating Mechanism on Ebola (RCME), chaired by CARPHA and including CARICOM and the secretariats of the OECS, IMPACS, and

CARICOM		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
	strengthen regional capacities to address Ebola virus disease. ⁶	<p>CDEMA; Cuba would also be invited to participate. The RCME will be directly responsible for preparing a comprehensive regional strategy to address preparedness for Ebola virus disease in collaboration with PAHO/WHO. PAHO/WHO, United Nations, and other development partners and contributors would also be invited to a meeting to be held within a month to increase the effectiveness of the collective response.</p> <p>Several CARICOM Member States were among the countries in which PAHO/WHO, in collaboration with CARPHA, conducted evaluations of preparedness for Ebola virus disease in the framework of the International Health Regulations (2005).</p> <p>PAHO/WHO also carried out technical cooperation activities with the Member States concerning integrated vector control measures for outbreaks of chikungunya virus.</p>
23rd Meeting of Chief Medical Officers, St. George's, Grenada, 22-23 June 2015	Adoption of a proposal by the CARICOM Secretariat to review Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH III) and identify mechanisms to involve stakeholders in CCH IV.	
	Review of the work of CARPHA.	PAHO has received the report on the first year of implementation of the PAHO-CARPHA work plan for the biennium 2014-2015.

⁶ Link to consult information on:
http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/press_releases_2014/pres243_14.jsp?null&prnf=1.

CARICOM		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
	Review of progress with respect to achievements related to the Declaration of Port-of-Spain on noncommunicable diseases.	A meeting of stakeholders on noncommunicable diseases was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 8-9 June 2015 to discuss the intensification of efforts to address noncommunicable diseases.
	In addition, issues related to the United Nations post-2015 Development Agenda, especially Goal 3, its targets, and the monitoring and evaluation framework, were discussed.	
	Also discussed were several priority matters for CARICOM stemming from the 68th World Health Assembly.	

Integration Entities in South America

*Andean Community (CAN)—Andean Health Agency/Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS-CONHU)*⁷

8. As part of the Andean Integration System of the Andean Community, the Andean Health Agency/Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS/CONHU) acts as executive secretariat for the Meeting of Ministers of Health of the Andean Area (REMSAA).⁸ PAHO participates in these meetings as the technical advisory agency on health. The most recent REMSAA was held in the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador), 26-27 March 2014. The XXXV REMSAA will be held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 21 September 2015.

ORAS-CONHU		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
REMSAA meeting of 27 March 2014	REMSAA resolution XXXIV/488: A request that the PAHO Strategic Fund, through the Executive Secretary of ORAS/CONHU, prequalify drugs identified in the countries as being hard to acquire due to their strategic and essential nature and their high cost.	In accordance with the Action Plan on Andean Drug Policy, in the second half of 2014 a proposal on drug access strategy was prepared, to be presented at the next REMSAA; the plan incorporates elements of

⁷ Link to consult information on ORAS-CONHU: <http://www.orasconhu.org/>.

⁸ Link to consult information on: <http://www.orasconhu.org/remsa/resoluciones-8/>.

ORAS-CONHU		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
		procurement through the Strategic Fund, consolidation of needs for hard-to-acquire and orphan drugs, prequalification of drugs, and encouragement for industry to manufacture hard-to-acquire drugs.
	REMSAA resolution XXXIV/490: Support for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Andean Intercultural Health Policy.	An action plan on intercultural health has been prepared. Its progress was reviewed at the meeting held on 30-31 March 2015 in Peru with the active participation of PAHO/WHO.
	REMSAA resolution XXXIV/491: Implementation of the Andean Policy on Disability.	The resolution promotes the use of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in the Andean countries in order to standardize concepts and criteria and align them with resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly and the Directing Council of PAHO/WHO.

Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR):⁹ Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Associated States (RMSMyEA) and Working Subgroup No.11 “Health” (SGT 11)

9. Health issues are addressed in Working Subgroup No. 11 (Health) and in the Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Associated States (the Meeting). The first of these is a technical body made up of representatives of the States Parties of MERCOSUR. Its main objective is the formulation and harmonization of common regulations in MERCOSUR in each area of jurisdiction. The main objective of the Meeting is to harmonize strategic policies linked with public health and align them with regional priorities, and developing plans and programs of action for their joint implementation. It has a Coordinating Committee and 12 Intergovernmental Commissions. The Member States rotate the pro tempore presidency every six months—Brazil held it in the first half of 2015 and Paraguay is holding it in the second half of 2015. Meetings are held in the

⁹ Link to consult information on MERCOSUR: <http://www.mercosur.int/>.

country that acts as president pro tempore. PAHO participates as the technical advisory agency on health.

MERCOSUR		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
XXXVII Regular Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Associated States, held on 11 June 2015	Ministerial Declaration on the need to prioritize implementation of the MERCOSUR donation and transplant registry (DONASUR) in the States Parties and Associated States.	Strengthening DONASUR is a subregional priority, and the declaration expresses this position. It also requests PAHO support for this implementation process.
	MERCOSUR/RMS/Agreement No. 01/15: MERCOSUR-UNASUR complementarity and coordination in bodies and forums that address health issues.	Considering PAHO/WHO's interaction with MERCOSUR and UNASUR, the execution of this agreement is especially important for ensuring more effective and strategic work and collaboration between these integration agencies and PAHO/WHO to promote health.
	MERCOSUR/RMS/Agreement No. 03/15: Recommendation on policies and regulatory measures for obesity prevention and control.	The agreement recommends promoting and establishing policies and regulatory measures for obesity prevention and control, in line with the agreements of WHO, PAHO, and the Plan of Action for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Adolescents. This agreement includes actions taken individually by countries and puts them on the subregional agenda.
	MERCOSUR/RMS/Agreement No. 04/15: Economic and social costs associated with tobacco.	The agreement identifies mechanisms to guarantee the economic and financial sustainability of national tobacco control policies, in line with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the recommendations of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention.

MERCOSUR		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
	Declaration of the Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR to approve the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between MERCOSUR and PAHO.	With the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Director of PAHO and the Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR on 11 June 2015, the Ministers declared their interest in adopting resolution GMC No.18/15. This agreement is important for PAHO/WHO's work with MERCOSUR.

*Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)*¹⁰

10. UNASUR's South American Health Council (CSS) is made up of a Coordinating Committee, a Technical Secretariat, and five technical groups. The Technical Secretariat, consisting of the president pro tempore and representatives of two countries (past and future presidents pro tempore), convenes and supports the Council's meetings. In December 2014, Uruguay became president pro tempore for a period of one year. The next meeting of the South American Health Council will be held on 11 September 2015 in Montevideo.

UNASUR		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Declaration of the South American Health Council: Preparedness and response to Ebola virus disease and cooperation with African countries (2 December 2014)	Agreement No.1: Task the Coordinating Committee of the South American Health Council to prepare, within 60 days, a Framework for UNASUR Cooperation consistent with the PAHO/WHO Strategic Plan, in order to strengthen national and regional capabilities aimed at preventing and combatting Ebola virus disease as an event of international concern, or any extraordinary event of a similar nature, including the key elements of epidemiological surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, clinical treatment, and risk communication.	PAHO/WHO mobilized a technical team for preparedness in the response to possible cases of Ebola virus disease in Latin America and the Caribbean, within the framework of the International Health Regulations (RSI, 2005).

¹⁰ Link to consult information on the South American Health Council: www.unasursg.org.

*Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA-TCP)*¹¹

11. The Alliance was founded in Havana, Cuba, on 14 December 2004, through an agreement between Venezuela and Cuba.

ALBA-TCP		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Resolution of the Special Summit of 20 October 2014 in Havana (Cuba) on the response to the threat of Ebola virus disease	Numeral 18: Task the Ministers of Health of the countries of ALBA-TCP to prepare an action plan in light of the proposals of the technical meeting of specialists and administrators, and to immediately implement them in coordination with PAHO/WHO. It was agreed that the plan should be presented for consideration by the Heads of State and of Government of ALBA-TCP.	PAHO/WHO mobilized a technical team for preparedness in the response to possible cases of Ebola virus disease in Latin America and the Caribbean, within the framework of the International Health Regulations (RSI, 2005).

*Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)*¹²

12. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), signed in July 1978 by Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela, is the legal instrument that recognizes the transborder nature of the Amazon region. In 1995, the Amazon countries decided to strengthen the Amazon Cooperation Treaty institutionally with the creation of a Permanent Secretariat as a legal entity. The decision was implemented in 1998, with the approval of the Protocol of Amendment to the ACT, which officially instituted the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) as the mechanism responsible for enhancing and strengthening cooperation processes developed in the context of the Treaty.

13. Within the framework of the new Strategic Agenda 2012-2020, PAHO/WHO carries out technical cooperation activities with the Permanent Secretariat of ACTO, through its Coordinating Office for Health.

Proposal

14. Identify, in each subregion, the common priorities among the integration processes in which PAHO could provide technical cooperation, in order to avoid duplication of effort and to maximize the use of technical and financial resources.

15. Establish an information and monitoring system on an easy-to-access platform that enables the Member States and PAHO to monitor compliance with the resolutions,

¹¹ Link to consult information on ALBA: www.portalalba.org.

¹² Link to consult information on OTCA: <http://otca.info/portal/index.php?p=index>.

agreements, and memoranda signed by the Organization and the subregional integration processes.

Action by the Directing Council

16. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this report and to formulate the recommendations it deems relevant.

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