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B. SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Member States of relevant developments since the last report presented in 2017 with respect to public health-related agreements and resolutions within the framework of subregional integration processes of interest to the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

2. This report also covers the progress made in activities carried out as part of cooperation agreements between PAHO and subregional integration entities.

3. The framework for subregional technical cooperation is supported by Resolution CD45.R6 (1), 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 collaboration in integration processes in three subregions: Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

4. Through the signing of specific agreements and memorandums of understanding, PAHO currently provides technical cooperation to the subregional integration organizations mentioned below. This report includes tables showing the new developments and progress made in the implementation of priority resolutions emanating from these integration bodies, their relation to PAHO activities, and the measures that the Organization has supported.

a) Central America

- Central American Integration System (SICA): Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMISCA); Regional Intersectoral Forum for the Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic; Central American Economic Integration System (SIECA)
 - Mesoamerica Integration and Development Project (MIDP)
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b) Caribbean

- Caribbean Community (CARICOM): Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD); Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED)

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 11 (SGT 11)
- Union of South American Nations (UNASUR): South American Health Council
- Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)

Integration Entities in Central America

Central American Integration System (SICA)¹

5. PAHO/WHO provides technical cooperation to various entities (bodies, secretariats, and specialized institutions) of SICA. However, given the binding nature of the resolutions, this report focuses on the Council of Ministers of Health.

Council of Ministers of Health of Central America (COMISCA)

6. COMISCA is part of the political body of the Central American Integration System (SICA), whose purpose is to identify and prioritize regional health issues. COMISCA constitutes the main regional forum for analysis, deliberation, and presentation of proposals by the ministers of health. The last regular meeting of COMISCA was held in Panama on 5 December 2017. One day earlier, a cooperation agreement was signed by the Executive Secretariat of COMISCA and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), establishing the framework for cooperation and coordination to strengthen the joint activities of the two organizations. This cooperation agreement complements the provisions in the cooperation agreement between PAHO/WHO and the General Secretariat of SICA, signed in 1995.

7. The Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama (INCAP) is an Institution of the Central American Integration System specialized in food and nutrition. Founded on September 14, 1949, based in Guatemala and with offices in each of its other Member States: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican

¹ More information on SICA is available at: <http://www.sica.int/>.

Republic. Since its inception and until 2010 PAHO served as the administrator of INCAP and at the same time as participating member of the Directing and the Advisory Councils. Starting in 2010 the INCAP-PAHO relationship is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration; the current MOU ends in December, 2019. Every two years a biennial work plan responding to PAHO's Strategic Plan is prepared and implemented with PAHO's technical advice. During 2017 operational plans for the reduction of child and adolescent obesity, the accreditation of Baby friendly hospitals, update of the micronutrients deficiency prevention strategy and training on the criteria for the humanization of baby delivery and breast feeding, were included as part of the PAHO-INCAP work plan.

8. The INCAP Directing Council is the highest governance body of the Institute whose membership includes the Health Ministers of the eight Member States and the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. INCAP's mission is to support the efforts of Member States, providing technical cooperation to achieve and maintain Food and Nutrition Security of their populations, through its basic functions of research, information and communication, technical assistance, training and mobilization of human resources, and mobilization of financial and non-financial resources. INCAP's Directing Council met in April of 2018 in Panama where resolutions on breast feeding and food labeling were approved.

COMISCA	
XLVII Regular meeting of COMISCA, 5 December 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Approval of the proposal for the strengthening and financial sustainability of the COMISCA model for joint negotiation of drug prices and procurement, which includes the participation of non-SICA-member health institutions as users of this joint negotiation mechanism.	To a greater or lesser extent, all SICA member countries use the PAHO Strategic Fund to purchase medicines and PAHO maintains an open dialogue with the Executive Secretariat of COMISCA (SE-COMISCA) to identify opportunities for joint work. Furthermore, the countries receive continuous technical cooperation to manage supplies and estimate national needs in order to improve the planning and scheduling of purchases and avoid stock-outs. Close coordination with COMISCA is needed in order to create synergies and avoid duplication of efforts between the joint negotiation model and the PAHO Strategic Fund.
Review and analysis of the proposed regulations for front-of-package nutritional labeling, requesting that the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP) provide evidence and technical support for the process, and also requesting that SE-COMISCA monitor the coordination with the SICA Secretariat, the General	PAHO, through its participation in INCAP's Directing Council and Advisory Committee, and through the technical assistance provided at the country level, helps define standards for front-of-package nutritional labeling that is compatible with the commitments made by the SICA member countries to the Governing Bodies of PAHO and WHO.

COMISCA	
XLVII Regular meeting of COMISCA, 5 December 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Secretariat of SIECA, INCAP, and the <i>pro tempore</i> chairs of COMISCA and the Council of Ministers for Central American Economic Integration (COMIECO).	
Approval of the joint approach to requesting Global Fund grants to combat HIV/AIDS in Central America and the Dominican Republic, in order to ensure cost-effective interventions.	The document on the joint approach was prepared with the technical support of PAHO/WHO, the Global Fund team, the Regional Coordination Mechanism (MCR), and strategic partners in the subregion. The document was harmonized in accordance with WHO health strategies and the PAHO Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections 2016-2021, and was validated by the SE-COMISCA/ MCR technical team. The joint approach complements the PAHO Plan of Action 2016-2021 by focusing on combination prevention. It will also help combat mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis, bringing the countries closer to the elimination of this type of transmission. The joint approach allows the countries of the Central American subregion to advance with standardized and harmonized criteria, identify gaps between countries and, finally, formulate strategies to close these gaps.
Approval of proposed strategic guidelines resulting from the First Regional Intersectoral Forum for the Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic, held in Panama on 24-25 October 2017, including health of migrants, healthy diet, environment (air, water, and soil; and control of antimicrobial resistance), and mental health, as follows: Formulation of a regional policy focused on the social determinants of health and human rights for an intersectoral approach to the health of migrants that includes sustainable financing and the promotion of solidarity among SICA members.	The recommendation to formulate a regional policy on the health of migrants provides the opportunity for PAHO to give technical cooperation within the framework of implementation of policy paper CD55/11, Rev.1 (Health of Migrants) and Resolution CD55.R13, adopted by the 55th Directing Council of PAHO, and to move forward in the implementation of the Declaration on Health and Migration in Mesoamerica.

COMISCA XLVII Regular meeting of COMISCA, 5 December 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
<p>Healthy diet: The summit of Heads of State and Government of the Region was requested to adopt the Policy on Food and Nutrition Security in Central America and the Dominican Republic 2012-2032, to formulate a legal framework for regional action for a healthy and sustainable diet throughout the life course, and to issue a regional declaration on the importance of promoting a sustainable healthy diet with an intersectoral approach throughout the Region.</p>	<p>The recommendation to adopt a policy on food and nutrition security offers the opportunity to work with the respective subregional entities, together with INCAP, in order to harmonize the various existing mandates at the regional and world levels and in Central America in particular.</p>
<p>Antimicrobial resistance: review and harmonization of strategies, plans, and programs in order to formulate an intersectoral regional plan to control antimicrobial resistance (PAHO/WHO, International Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health [RIOPPAH], United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], World Organization for Animal Health [OIE], and the health, environment, and agriculture sectors).</p>	<p>This recommendation creates the opportunity for PAHO/WHO technical cooperation on this subject, involving intersectoral coordination with different SICA entities to promote implementation of PAHO Resolution CD54.R15, Plan of Action on Antimicrobial Resistance and the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (Document WHA68.7), respectively.</p>
<p>Environmental health: it was recommended that a regional policy on water, sanitation, air, and soil be prepared, as well as the corresponding investment plan; integrated management of garbage and solid waste; management of the agrochemical substances and creation of regional strategic partnerships for the exchange of information on environmental indicators that have an impact on health.</p>	<p>The recommendation creates an opportunity for intersectoral work within SICA, with the Regional Technical Team for Water and Sanitation (ETRAS) and other technical units participating in the preparation of this policy.</p>

COMISCA	
XLVII Regular meeting of COMISCA, 5 December 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Mental health: It was requested that a regional mental health policy be developed to guide the implementation of regional strategies, plans, and programs, ensuring an approach that takes into account intersectoral and intercultural factors, human rights, gender, and social determinants.	PAHO supports the SICA member countries and entities of the integration mechanism in the implementation of mental health activities, including the reorganization of mental health services in primary care, adolescent health, data collection and analysis, and the recommendations arising from the XXVII, XXVIII, XXX, and XXXII Meeting of the Health Sector of Central America and the Dominican Republic (RESSCAD) ² on the subject. This creates an opportunity to implement the Plan of Action on Mental Health for 2015-2020 (Document CD53/8, Rev. 1) and also to ensure that the illicit drug problem is included in the health agenda of the countries of the Region and that this problem is defined as a public health issue in drug control policies.

Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project: Mesoamerican Public Health System³

9. The Mesoamerican Project is a mechanism developed by 10 Mesoamerican countries to strengthen regional integration and promote economic and social development in the participating countries. The objective is to improve conditions and human prosperity among the population. It was officially launched by the Presidents and Heads of State and Government at the Tenth Tuxtla Dialogue and Agreement Mechanism Summit, held in Tabasco, Mexico, on 27-28 June 2008.

Mesoamerican Public Health System (SMSP)

10. The purpose of the Mesoamerican Public Health System (SMSP) is to respond to the main common challenges in public health and to strengthen the national health systems through selected interventions and operational support of the Mesoamerican Institute of Public Health (IMSP), established on 3 July 2009. Costa Rica took the *pro tempore* chair in August 2017, during the Second Meeting of National Coordinators of the Mesoamerican Public Health System, held in Cali (Colombia), where the next steps were also defined in the process of restructuring of the SMSP. In June 2017, the SMSP was strengthened with: the establishment of a Mesoamerican Strategic Framework for Public Health; technical endorsement of the SMSP operational regulations, to be submitted for the approval of the Council of Ministers; mapping of the advances made in the implementation of national health plans; and a road map to manage the resources needed to finance SMSP activities. In September 2017, the VIII Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the SMSP was held in

² More information on RESSCAD is available at: <http://www.paho.org/resscad/>.

³ More information on the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project is available at: <http://www.proyectomesoamerica.org/>.

Washington, D.C., where the SMSP operational regulations were updated and the Mesoamerican Strategic Framework for Public Health was approved.

Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project: Mesoamerican Public Health System VIII Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the SMSP, 24 September 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Updating of the SMSP operational regulations	Updating the operational regulations strengthens SMSP's institutionality and lays the groundwork for its linkage with other international institutions and organizations, creating an opportunity to formalize the relationship between the Meeting of Ministers of Health of Mesoamerica and PAHO.
Approval of the Mesoamerican Strategic Framework for Public Health.	As a planning instrument, this framework will help to more clearly define the areas of collaboration between the Mesoamerican Public Health System and PAHO, in addition to those already defined in the Mesoamerican Master Plans.

Caribbean Integration Entities

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)⁴

11. The CARICOM Community (CARICOM), a grouping of 20 countries (15 Member States and five Associate Members), came into being in July 1973 with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which defines its structure, which consists of organs, bodies and institutions. The organs are the Conference of Heads of Government and the Ministerial Councils, which have responsibility for key policy areas and are the decision-making bodies of CARICOM. The CARICOM Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019, operationalizes its pillars: economic integration; foreign policy coordination; human and social development; and security.

12. The CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government meets twice a year: an inter-sessional meeting and a regular meeting. CARICOM convenes an annual Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), which is responsible for the promotion of health, education, and living and working conditions in the Caribbean Community. The chair rotates among the member countries every year. COHSOD meetings are traditionally held at PAHO Headquarters prior to the Pan American Sanitary Conference or the Directing Council.

13. PAHO's relationship with CARICOM is defined by a Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 1983. The PAHO Subregional Program Coordination Office is the Organization's main interlocutor with CARICOM; and through its technical cooperation, PAHO supports the development and implementation of the Caribbean Cooperation in Health, the functional cooperation strategy for health adopted by CARICOM Ministers of Health. The PAHO Subregional Cooperation Strategy for 2016-2019 is fully aligned with the CARICOM Caribbean Cooperation in Health strategy for 2016-2025.

⁴ More information on the CARICOM is available at: www.caricom.org.

14. The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is an institution of the Caribbean Community (pursuant to Article 21 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas) established in 2011. The Twenty-Eighth Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July 2007 approved the integration of the five Caribbean Regional Health Institutions into a single Caribbean Public Health Agency. Two of the Regional Health Institutions, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) and the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) were administered by PAHO. PAHO's 50th Directing Council adopted Resolution CD50.R14 that requested PAHO to work with the CARICOM Secretariat to transfer the relevant functions and resources of CAREC and CFNI to CARPHA.

15. Since CARPHA's establishment in 2012, there exists a Framework Agreement between CARPHA and PAHO that defines the relationship between the two institutions. Under the Framework Agreement both CARPHA and PAHO jointly prepare biennial Plans of Work where PAHO provides financial support towards strategic objectives based on both parties' respective roles, responsibilities and objectives.

CARICOM	
38th Regular Meeting of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government, 4-6 July 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
<p>10th Anniversary of the First Summit of CARICOM Heads of Government on Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases and the Declaration of Port of Spain:</p> <p>Recognition of insufficient progress toward implementing the actions recommended in the Port of Spain Declaration.</p>	<p>PAHO supported the CARICOM Secretariat with a briefing paper on the status of NCDs in the Caribbean and achievement of progress towards global recommendations as an input to the Heads of Government meeting. As a result, Heads of Government recognized that the Community had not made sufficient progress towards implementing the actions recommended in the Port of Spain Declaration and recommended that Member States support policies which promote harm reduction, such as taxation of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary foods as a fiscal measure to support the health sector. Recommendations from Heads of Government has provided the needed impetus for accelerated intersectoral action, including work with the Caribbean Court of Justice on health and law related to sugar sweetened tax legislation. PAHO is supporting CARICOM to convene health and trade ministers to discuss trade related issues that impede progress towards the elimination of childhood obesity.</p> <p>In addition, the G20 Health Working Group focuses on "child overweight and obesity" as an area of particular interest and CARICOM has been invited by Argentina to the G20 Meetings.</p>

CARICOM	
33rd Meeting of COHSOD: Health, 23-24 September 2017	
<p>Caribbean Cooperation in Health IV (CCH IV): Framework for coordinated action on health in the Caribbean</p> <p>The COHSOD endorsed the expanded membership for the CCH IV steering committee and emphasized the importance of an implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation framework for CCHIV.</p>	<p>The PAHO Subregional Cooperation Strategy was developed and is fully aligned with the CCH IV and technical cooperation contributes to the CCH IV lines of action. The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) has the responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation framework of CCHIV. PAHO, as member of the CCH IV Secretariat provides technical cooperation for the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework and implementation plan, ensuring alignment with SDGs and regional mandates.</p>
<p>Noncommunicable diseases: Progress towards WHO's NCD targets</p> <p>COHSOD recognized: limited progress toward the global NCD targets and the time-bound commitments needed to transform health systems to respond effectively to the increased burden of NCDs, with special emphasis on primary health care. It also expressed support to implement the WHO Global Hearts Initiative as an innovative strategy to transform health systems and strengthen integrated NCD management.</p>	<p>PAHO provides financial and technical support to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to achieve aligned and coordinated action towards WHO's NCD Targets, including support towards the implementation of the WHO Global Hearts Initiative.</p> <p>CARPHA's "6-point policy package" on healthier food environments is a comprehensive, evidence, informed set of policies that has been validated by the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development. The CARPHA initiative is aligned with the WHO NCD Targets. The policies include: <i>a)</i> mandatory food labelling; <i>b)</i> nutritional standards and guidelines for schools; <i>c)</i> reduction in the marketing of unhealthy foods; <i>d)</i> fiscal and trade measures; <i>e)</i> product reformulation and work with manufacturers to reduce harmful ingredients such as fat, salt and sugar levels; and, <i>f)</i> promoting fruit and vegetable consumption.</p>
<p>Noncommunicable diseases: Report on Cooperation Among Countries in Health and Development (CCHD) between CARICOM and Chile.</p>	<p>The COHSOD recognized Chile's leadership in front-of-package labelling as a useful tool to address childhood obesity and the COHSOD approved the CCHD between CARICOM and Chile. As a result of the Chile and CARICOM CCHD, two CARICOM countries are in the process of submitting proposals for front-of-package labelling to the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED). CARICOM Institutions such as CARPHA, UWI, CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) are part of this initiative.</p>

CARICOM	
33rd Meeting of COHSOD: Health, 23-24 September 2017	
Strategy and Plan of Action for the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Congenital Syphilis (Resolution CD50.R12) indicates that the basic conditions for eliminating the two diseases are within reach of the countries. In 2017, six countries and territories ⁵ received validation of the elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV and syphilis.	The COHSOD report includes a decision point to encourage remaining countries to complete reports for submission to the validation committee. The COHSOD decision point provides the opportunity for continued and strengthened technical cooperation to the remaining countries in the Caribbean that plan to apply for validation.
Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) (Resolution WHA65.23): An update on the status of IHR core capacities was presented to Ministers. The COHSOD acknowledged the increase in State Party membership to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to develop capacities to deal with radionuclear events. The COHSOD urged State Parties to pursue a multi-sectoral approach, including the Ministry of Finance to plan for the IHR. State Parties were also urged to finalize and commence implementation of their national action plans on antimicrobial resistance, in accordance with Resolution CD54.R15 Plan of Action on Antimicrobial Resistance.	<p>The decision points provide the opportunity to continue technical cooperation to State Parties to strengthen IHR core capacities, particularly in areas such as chemical events and facilitating membership to the IAEA.</p> <p>PAHO helped countries develop action plans on antimicrobial resistance, in accordance with Resolution CD54.R15. The COHSOD decision provides the opportunity to further support Member States to finalize the AMR plans and begin implementation.</p>
Health financing and Universal access to health and universal health coverage: CARICOM Member States agreed to consider a high-level dialogue on improving efficiency in health service delivery and sustainable financing that will improve the resilience of health systems (in line with Resolution CD55.R8 on Resilient Health Systems).	PAHO is supporting the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) working group to review current health financing arrangements and conducting case studies on health financing and health service delivery models for universal health coverage. There is an opportunity for the results of the review and case studies to contribute to a policy dialogue on health financing with Ministers of Finance. The COHSOD decision and the OECS working group provide the platform to present the results of these efforts to the OECS Heads of Government and then expand to CARICOM Heads of Government.
Human resources for universal health: Ministers were presented with the consultation process taken to develop a Caribbean roadmap on human resources for	The Caribbean Roadmap on Human Resources for Universal Health provides an opportunity to support Caribbean countries to align their HRH plans with the PAHO Strategy on Human

⁵ Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and St Kitts and Nevis.

CARICOM	
33rd Meeting of COHSOD: Health, 23-24 September 2017	
universal health. Ministers recognized the need to support actions of countries to strengthen human resources for health and endorsed in principle the priorities agreed by Member States to implement the roadmap.	Resources for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage (CSP29/10). PAHO is responding to Member States by conducting a survey on migration of health workers in the Caribbean to provide Member States with an analysis of the issues impacting the health workforce. The results of this study will be integrated into the Caribbean Roadmap on Human Resources for Universal Health.

South American Integration Entities

Andean Community (CAN): Andean Health Agency–Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS-CONHU)⁶

16. In the Andean Integration System, 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).⁷ PAHO participates in these meetings as the technical advisory agency on health. An umbrella memorandum of understanding was signed between PAHO and ORAS-CONHU on 16 March 2017. PAHO's Subregional Program for South America is the Organization's main interlocutor with ORAS-CONHU and, through its technical cooperation, it supports the development and implementation of its recently approved strategic plan for health integration. The PAHO subregional cooperation strategy for South America for 2019-2022 is completely in accordance with the ORAS-CONHU strategic plan for health integration for 2018-2022. The XXXI Special Meeting of Ministers of Health of the Andean Area was held in Lima on 15 February 2018.

ORAS-CONHU	
XXXI REMSAA. Lima, 15 February 2018	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Approval of the Andean Health Agency's 2018-2022 strategic plan and review of its annual operating plan for 2018	PAHO is working with ORAS-CONHU to identify measures and joint activities within the respective programmatic frameworks of PAHO and ORAS. Areas of joint effort have been defined and prioritized in accordance with the PAHO Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and PAHO's subregional cooperation strategy for South America.

⁶ More information on ORAS/CONHU is available at: <http://www.orasconhu.org>.

⁷ More information on REMSAA resolutions is available at: <http://www.orasconhu.org/reuniones-ordinarias>

ORAS-CONHU	
Meeting of Ministers and Secretaries of Health on “Contribution of regional integration in the Americas: Toward the goal of ending tuberculosis”, 15 February 2018, Lima	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
The commitment to end tuberculosis in the Region was reaffirmed. There was an analysis of ways to ensure the sustainability of the project to strengthen the tuberculosis laboratory network in the Region of the Americas, administered by ORAS-CONHU and financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.	PAHO contributed considerably to the development of this project and supports its execution. This declaration offers an opportunity for PAHO to identify the best strategy to support this phase of implementation through adequate coordination with the regional tuberculosis program. This will make it possible to implement WHO Resolution WHA67.1, <i>Global strategy and targets for tuberculosis prevention, care and control after 2015</i> , and PAHO Resolution CD54.R10, Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis.

Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR):⁸ Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Working Subgroup 11, on Health (SGT 11)

17. Working Subgroup 11 on Health addressed health issues during the Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Associated States. The Working Subgroup 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 within 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, as well as to develop plans and programs of action for their joint implementation. The Member States rotate the *pro tempore* presidency every six months. Brazil held the *pro tempore* presidency in the second half of 2017. Meetings are held in the country that holds the *pro tempore* presidency. PAHO participates as the technical advisory agency on health. An umbrella memorandum of understanding was signed between PAHO and MERCOSUR on 11 June 2015. PAHO’s Subregional Program for South America is the Organization’s main interlocutor with MERCOSUR and, through its technical cooperation, it supports development and implementation of the thematic areas contained in the memorandum of understanding. PAHO’s subregional cooperation strategy for South America for 2019-2022 is entirely coherent with the thematic areas defined in the memorandum of understanding. The XLI Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR was held in Foz de Iguazú (Brazil) on 7 December 2017. At this meeting, the *pro tempore* presidency was transferred to Paraguay. The next meeting will be held on 15 June 2018 in Paraguay.

⁸ More information on MERCOSUR is available at: <http://www.mercosur.int>.

MERCOSUR	
XLI Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR, 7 December 2017	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Sexual and reproductive health and its inclusion in primary health care in the MERCOSUR countries.	This is an area of subregional coordination in which PAHO collaborates with ORAS-CONHU and UNASUR. It is also an area of possible cooperation with MERCOSUR and among the subregions (e.g. with SICA). This agreement is synergized with the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, approved by the Governing Bodies of PAHO/WHO in 2014, through Resolution CD53.R14.
Rigorous regulation of advertising of alcoholic beverages, and control of their sale and consumption	This agreement offers PAHO the opportunity to move forward in the implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2012-2025, approved by the Pan American Sanitary Conference in 2012 (Document CSP28/9, Rev. 1), at the subregional level, through the corresponding work plan, as well as the potential for engaging in intersectoral action.
Participation of health-related entities in the registry, control, and regulation of agrochemical products	This agreement offers PAHO the opportunity to move forward in the implementation of the Mar del Plata Declaration of Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas (HEMA meeting, Mar del Plata, Argentina, 2005) at the subregional level, as well as its inclusion in the health agenda through other integration mechanisms. There is high potential for cooperation in the South American and the Central American subregions on this subject.
Adoption of policies aimed at the gradual elimination of trans fats in the MERCOSUR countries	PAHO's work plan contains this line of action to implement the Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2012-2025, approved by the PAHO Pan American Sanitary Conference (Document CSP28/9, Rev. 1), within the framework of its work with MERCOSUR and other integration mechanisms. This agreement strengthens and promotes this PAHO activity at the subregional level and increases the opportunity to undertake intersectoral action.
Restructuring of MERCOSUR's intergovernmental commissions (ICs)	PAHO has taken note of this restructuring, which has led to the reduction of ICs and the inclusion of their agendas in other already existing ICs. PAHO will conduct an analysis of this new structure in order to guide the work and respond better to institutional mandates.

*Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)*⁹

18. UNASUR has a South American Council on Health (CSS), made up of the Coordinating Committee, the Technical Secretariat, five technical groups, six networks, and the South American Institute of Governance in Health (ISAGS). The Technical Secretariat, consisting of representatives from three Member States (the Member holding the current pro tempore presidency and the Members holding the past and future pro tempore presidencies), convenes and supports the Council's meetings. The presidency of the CSS corresponds to the minister of health of the same country that occupies the pro tempore presidency of UNASUR. The pro tempore presidency of UNASUR is held successively by each Member State, in alphabetical order, for one-year periods. Argentina held the pro tempore presidency from 18 April 2017 to 17 April 2018 and was succeeded by Plurinational State of Bolivia. UNASUR Member States have not reached consensus regarding its Secretary General. The pro tempore president is responsible for coordinating the activities of all entities and directing the Technical Secretariat. The last meeting of the CSS took place on 24 September 2017 in Washington, D.C., prior to the 29th Pan American Sanitary Conference.

UNASUR	
Meeting of the South American Health Council of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), 24 September 2017, Washington, D. C.	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Human resources for health: Agreement to implement the policy guidelines on human resources for health for the South American region and recognition of the opportunities for synergy with PAHO, ORAS, and ACTO on this subject	PAHO is working with the respective organs of UNASUR (ISAGS, Technical Group for the Development and Management of Human Resources in Health, Network of Technical Schools in Health, and Network of Public Health Schools of CSS/UNASUR) to implement policies on human resources for health in the South American region. This allows for implementation of the Strategy for Human Resources for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, adopted in 2017 (Document CSP29/10 and Resolution CSP29.R15).
Network of National Health Institutes: Approval was given for the project <i>Methodological development and regional strategies for monitoring the impact of environmental changes on the occurrence of health emergencies.</i>	PAHO is working to prepare the health component of national plans for adaptation to climate change, in accordance with the Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change (Document CD51/6, Rev.1), approved by the 51st Directing Council in 2011. This project will be taken into account in the implementation of this line of work. It also has potential use for other subregional plans and for collaboration between South American and subregional integration mechanisms.

⁹ More information on UNASUR is available at: www.unasursg.org.

UNASUR Meeting of the South American Health Council of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), 24 September 2017, Washington, D. C.	
PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Health disaster risk management network (GRIDS): Approval to update the South American health disaster risk management plan.	This resolution presents an opportunity to deepen PAHO's work, at the subregional level, to implement the Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2016-2021 (Document CD55/17, Rev. 1) adopted by the 55th Directing Council of PAHO. Furthermore, it permits the convergence of agendas and synergies with ORAS-CONHU on this issue.
Front-of-package labeling of processed food: Confirmation of the desirability and commitment to continue to strengthen healthy food policies in South America, including innovative strategies for front-of-package labeling of processed food.	This resolution offers an opportunity for PAHO to continue implementing the Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2012-2025 (Document CSP28/9, Rev. 1), adopted by the Pan American Sanitary Conference. This has been underway at the regional and country levels, but on this occasion it will be done at the subregional level, offering the opportunity for collaboration between South American integration mechanisms.

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)

19. Within the framework of the Amazon Strategic Cooperation Agenda for 2010-2018, PAHO/WHO carries out technical cooperation with the Permanent Secretariat of ACTO through health coordination activities. The memorandum of understanding on cooperation was renewed in June 2017, defining cooperation in accordance with the Agenda's strategic lines for regional health management and knowledge management. PAHO's subregional program for South America is the Organization's main interlocutor with the Permanent Secretariat of ACTO and, through its technical cooperation, it supports the development and implementation of the Agenda's health-related components. PAHO's subregional cooperation strategy for South America for 2019-2022 is fully coherent with the health-related components of the ACTO agenda.

Action by the Executive Committee

20. The Executive Committee is invited to take note of this report and make the comments it deems pertinent.

References

1. Pan American Health Organization. Regional Program Budget Policy [Internet]. 45th Directing Council of PAHO, 56th session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas; 27 September to 1 October 2004; Washington, DC. Washington, DC: PAHO; 2004 (Resolution CD45.R6) [cited 2017 April 10]. Available from: <http://www1.paho.org/english/gov/cd/CD45.r6-e.pdf>.
