



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



# 43<sup>rd</sup> DIRECTING COUNCIL

## 53<sup>rd</sup> SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

*Washington, D.C., USA, 24-28 September 2001*

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*Provisional Agenda Item 4.13*

CD43/17 (Eng.)

17 July 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

### STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE PERIOD 2003-2007

#### 1. Background

The Secretariat has a long history of long-term planning and since 1984, quadrennial plans have been submitted to the Pan American Sanitary Conference. While at the beginning these were intended to be a plan for the Pan American Health Organization, incorporating goals and strategies for Member States and the Secretariat, the focus was changed in 1994, when the Strategic and Programmatic Orientations (SPO) were developed. The last two 4-year plans have been strategic frameworks specifically for the Secretariat's work.

At the beginning of his second term, Dr. George Alleyne, Director, indicated that one of his priorities was to improve the planning process within the Secretariat and make it more strategic. He proposed to explore how to include anticipatory (sometimes called futures or prospective) methods to improve the Organization's foresight. He subsequently charged the Office of Analysis and Strategic Planning (DAP) to review the experience with scenarios and other foresight work in PAHO and determine whether it was advantageous and feasible to integrate this into our strategic planning process.

In 1999, the Director commissioned a study to determine the extent to which the SPOs were guiding the work of the Secretariat, and this revealed that there was inadequate coherence between the SPOs, what was programmed, and the plans for improving the effectiveness of the Secretariat. In order to address this, the function of organizational development was formalized, and a post was created in DAP to support the institutionalization of this approach into our managerial process. In addition, the change

in the leadership of DAP, in 1999, provided the opportunity for assessment, within and outside DAP, as to what was needed to improve the planning process.

The views of DAP and a survey of managers supported the conclusion of the External Auditor's evaluation that AMPES "...meets, and in some key respects exceeds, best practice seen elsewhere within the UN system."<sup>1</sup>

## **2. The "New and Improved" Strategic Planning Process**

In designing the current strategic planning process, in addition to the results of the assessments, the Secretariat took into consideration the recommendations of recent exercises of collective thinking about the future of technical cooperation, in general, and of PAHO, in particular.<sup>2,3</sup> These exercises provided new insights that suggest that PAHO could benefit from rethinking the way it operates, by increasing its foresight, fostering collaborative leadership, and making the best use of technology and resources where they could yield the greatest gain. In order to turn insights into action, the Secretariat is committed to applying a strategic approach to planning.

While the process will produce a "Strategic Plan for the Secretariat" for the period 2003-2007, it is also intended to increase capacity for strategic thinking and management throughout the Secretariat and integrate organizational development. The approach selected incorporates the following:

- Clarification of the Secretariat's Values; sharing of its organizational Vision; and revisiting, if necessary, its Mission in light of the Values and Vision. Together, Values, Vision and Mission will clarify our aspirations, identify our intent, and create the pull through which the Secretariat will become more unified and focused.
- Focused analysis of past, current, and expected trends, positively challenging assumptions about the Secretariat, identifying internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats to the Vision and Mission.
- Selection of a set of strategic issues for the period, based on pre-defined criteria, and the definition of measurable objectives and strategies for each. These will center the energies and resources of the Secretariat (technical and managerial) on what it must address in order to achieve its Mission and move towards the Vision.

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<sup>1</sup> Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Pan American Health Organization, Report by the External Auditor, April 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Rethinking International Technical Cooperation in Health, Final Report of a Seminar held 27-29 Nov., 1995.

<sup>3</sup> *PAHO of the Future: an Institutional Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, September 1997, and Final Report: Scenarios for PAHO, 1998. *PAHO Alternative Scenarios*, 1999.

Having strategic issues means to select a focus for action. It does not mean that non-strategic activities will not be carried out.

- Design and execution of organizational development plans as well as technical cooperation projects.

### **3. Action by the Directing Council**

The Secretariat provided to the Executive Committee at its 128<sup>th</sup> Session an update on the achievements and the challenges being addressed. This item is only presented to the Directing Council for its information.