PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

136th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 20-24 June 2005

PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU:
HUMAN RESOURCES — 2004-2005 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

Introduction

1.   The Pan American Health Organization/Regional Office of the Americas of the World Health Organization employs approximately 2,000 people under various types of contractual mechanisms. About 600 people are based at the Organization's Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and the remaining 1,400 people are assigned to offices located in 28 countries and nine specialized centers.

2.   To manage all aspects of the recruitment and contractual arrangements for these 2,000 people, the Organization has a dedicated department of Human Resources Management (HRM), which has a staffing complement of 34 people based at Headquarters. The structure of HRM consists of eight functional units, which provide specialized services in the areas of classification; recruitment; benefits and contract administration; temporary staffing; staff relations; national systems; staff development; and employee health and welfare.

3.   This report provides an overview of current priorities and activities in the management of PAHO's human resources. Priorities and activities during 2004-2005 promote the five values set forth under PAHO's Vision and Strategy, namely, Equity, Excellence, Solidarity, Respect, and Integrity. They are also consistent with PAHO's Roadmap for Institutional Transformation which has established the development of a PAHO Human Resources Strategy as a priority for the Organization. That strategy will seek to establish PAHO's human capital as its greatest resource and transform the Human Resources Management area into a full business partner.

4.   HRM's priorities for 2004-2005 are: to improve selection processes and recruitment; to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of PAHO's workforce; to promote internal equity and external competitiveness in classification and compensation; to provide a supportive work environment; and to improve the quality and usefulness of information.

Improving Selection and Recruitment

5.   The Organization has embarked on a project to transform its recruitment practices into a competency-based recruitment scheme. The project has been developed in three stages: Diagnosis of the current level of competencies and definition of standards; designing of assessment tools for recruitment; and development of assessment skills for recruiters.

6.   These phases involved identifying the specific competencies needed by the Organization's workforce to achieve the goals of the Organization, establishing a baseline of existing competencies in the Organization, and designing several tools (seven different competency-based interview guides and a psychometric questionnaire) to assess if candidates have the required competencies to successfully perform the duties of the post.

7.   Since the selection process in the framework of competencies requires not only skilled HR staff capable of using and interpreting the assessment instruments but also managers and supervisors with the appropriate interviewing skills, a competency-based interviewing training session was conducted at Headquarters in September and December 2004. In order to train people at the country level, a workshop also took place in Guatemala in March 2005 in which the focal points of the Spanish-speaking countries participated and learned how to use the interview guides customized for PAHO.

8.   A notable achievement in the selection process was the adoption of WHO's eRecruitment system. In September 2004, PAHO migrated from a proprietary automated recruiting system to a more sophisticated system developed by WHO. eRecruitment allows intranet-based applications to be efficiently submitted and reviewed. PAHO augmented eRecruitment through the use of SharePoint services, a cornerstone of the Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) Information Technology Services (ITS) collaborative strategy.

9.   The combination of these two capabilities has dramatically reduced HRM manual efforts previously required to review and present resumes to the hiring managers.

10.   In addition, a simplified format for the elaboration of professional post descriptions which incorporates job specific competencies has been implemented. HRM will be developing generic post descriptions for the most populous occupational groups within the Professional and General Service categories.

11.   Work has also been undertaken to actively review and enforce existing recruitment policies and procedures, including WHO's contractual reform initiative, and to educate staff on the proper use of temporary assignments. These efforts are intended to ensure a more transparent and competitive selection process, primarily for Short-Term Professional assignments. Various other improvements in the area of temporary staffing including testing of candidates and an expanded orientation for new staff are also being implemented.

Enhancing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of PAHO's Workforce

12.   Through its work with partners inside and outside the Organization, activities and resources are being linked to help build a creative and capable workforce that effectively

responds to country needs; shares and utilizes knowledge and uses new modalities for technical cooperation to meet those needs; uses new technologies to streamline and improve its way of working; and updates competencies as new challenges and realities arise.

13.   Consistent with the Director's initiative to respond better to country needs by reallocating technical staff to the field and strengthening staff in priority countries, there was an increase in the number of staff transfers and reassignments to the countries in 2004.

14.   In addition, the role of local staff at country level is being reviewed to ensure that engaging staff through current mechanisms (for example through agency contracts) continues to meet the technical and financial needs of the Organization. Once this review is complete, a manual dealing with this category of personnel will be developed to clarify the rules, practices and policies applicable to them.

15.   In consideration of pending staff retirements, efforts were initiated in 2004 to ensure that managers and supervisors initiate the hiring process for upcoming vacant posts at least nine months ahead of time. Special emphasis was placed on ensuring the availability of up-to-date post descriptions; the hiring of well-qualified, diverse individuals; and reducing the use of temporary staff against vacant posts.

16.   The Organization is working to create and enhance networks and partnerships between various Areas/Units within PAHO and various organizations outside PAHO. Recognized experts in PAHO are being asked to give direction and guidance on the content and focus of learning activities needed to advance the Organization in the achievement of its mission and goals. Outside PAHO, the Organization has been working in partnership with WHO and other international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the Inter American Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund in an effort to share knowledge and best practices related to organizational and staff development endeavors.

17.   The Organization has been responding to staff development and learning needs at the global, regional, subregional, and national levels. At the global level, it has been coordinating and implementing WHO corporate learning programs and activities. At the regional, subregional and national level, it will implement activities, developed jointly with Areas/Units/Country Offices and Centers, linked to learning needs related to PAHO's Five Strategic Priorities for Change.

18.   In 2004, all senior managers in PAHO began participating in WHO's Global Leadership and Management Development Program. To date, almost all senior managers have participated in the first phase of the program. The program goal is to increase

efficiency and accountability among senior staff and, in turn, improve overall technical performance. The program is intended to develop and enhance the core managerial and leadership competencies of senior staff throughout the Organization; to improve the effectiveness of managers and leaders using key management processes; and to increase the capability of managers and leaders to foster collaboration, team work and knowledge sharing. Phase two of the program will begin in June 2005.

19.   In addition, a Learning Board, composed of staff from diverse areas of the Organization and chaired by the Assistant Director, was established in 2004 to orient and advise the Organization on learning issues. This interdisciplinary Learning Board, including its advisor from the Change Management Unit, helped to identify PAHO's learning priorities and align the Biennial Program Budget (BPB) for 2006-2007 with the Organization's Five Strategic Priorities for Change.

20.   Following a staff survey of the Organization's paper-based Performance Planning and Evaluation System (PPES), a review was undertaken of PAHO's performance management processes in order to address problems related to the completion and filing of paper appraisal reports, confidentiality, compliance monitoring, and the lack of a mechanism for assessing PAHO-specific competencies. An electronic PPES is being developed that will address these concerns. A prototype of the new electronic PPES will be tested by several units and country offices before being rolled out to the entire Organization for use during the 2006 appraisal period.

Promoting Internal Equity and External Competitiveness in Classification and Compensation

21.   PAHO continues to respond to organizational changes brought about by the restructuring exercise started in 2003.

22.   The 2004-2005 Biennial Program Budget Review recommended the identification of country office core functions that need to be carried out by staff in UN posts. To this end, the Organization contracted the services of a consultant who conducted a study of core functions in country offices, in conjunction with a review of Administrative Officer posts in Representations and at Headquarters. The consultant's report and recommendations are presently under consideration by Management.

23.   HRM is ready to launch a common classification standard to evaluate posts which fall under local contractual agreements. With the implementation of this standard, the classification of local posts will be consistent across the country offices and centers.

24.   New initiatives are being introduced to streamline classification processes such as a new procedure for post reclassification review. In addition, the International Civil

Service Commission has launched a new methodology for classifying posts in the Professional Category. It is expected that PAHO will be ready to implement the new standard in the fall of 2005. A new format for Professional post descriptions is also being implemented that eliminates several elements contained in the old format, thus reducing the overall length of the post description from four to two pages. This new format focuses on job deliverables and the identification of competencies which reflect the competency model of the Organization and is designed to support the use of job profiles for recruitment purposes.

25.   With regard to issues of gender equity in the recruitment of staff, renewed efforts are being made to ensure a balance of qualified male and female staff at all grade levels throughout the Organization.   In addition, steps will be taken to ensure that managers and supervisors at Headquarters and in the country offices and centers are aware of these renewed efforts. Finally, the Organization is exploring various policies and practices that will foster work/life balance and serve to attract and maintain qualified staff of both sexes.

Providing a Supportive Work Environment

26.   The Health Unit, despite initial difficulties in obtaining the flu vaccine, was able to administer it to all PAHO employees located at Headquarters.

27.   In addition, various staff health policies have been or are being developed, including an HIV policy; a traveler's policy, including implementation of a travel management system, and a new policy regarding certified sick leave. A policy on nursing leave was recently issued and appropriate facilities for nursing mothers in PAHO have been provided.

28.   *PAHO's Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace* went into effect on 1 May, 2004. Since that time, the Organization has worked extensively to ensure that staff are aware of the policy and to develop and deliver the training program mandated under the policy to staff at Headquarters and in the country offices and centers. This training program focused not only on understanding the policy but also on the positive behaviors that support a respectful workplace where trust and excellence are exhibited by all staff.

29.   The Grievance Panel, created under the Organization's Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace, has been established. The Panel has been provided with training on the new policy and on investigative techniques and has begun working on pending formal complaints.

30.   The Organization has begun exploring the feasibility of conducting regular, organization-wide work group climate assessments in order to identify best practices and to address, early on, potential problems or conflicts within units and areas both in Headquarters and in the country offices and centers. A detailed proposal for such regular assessments is currently being prepared by an outside consultant.

31.   The Organization has also been working on a variety of important human resources proposals and policies including a Code of Conduct and work/life issues such as alternative work schedules, and telecommuting. In addition, the Organization has advertised for and is in the process of selecting an Ombudsperson to assist staff in resolving conflicts and concerns in the workplace. A temporary Ombudsperson is currently carrying out the duties of the post until a selection has been made.

Improving the Quality and Usefulness of Information

32.   HRM is expanding access to learning opportunities through the creation of online courses and the sharing of information electronically at both Headquarters and in the countries.

33.   To create an immediate impact on new staff learning, a six-stage induction process was developed to ensure that all persons entering the Organization have access at an appropriate stage to the information they need to properly perform their duties. A key component of this induction process is an online induction course, which provides new staff with relevant information about the Organization.

34.   To make information on *PAHO's Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment* accessible to all, including new staff at Headquarters and in the countries and centers, HRM has created a special webpage where all training information and an online training course on the topic can be found.

35.   HRM is committed to supporting the priority goals of the Organization by facilitating the administrative processes and properly managing the conditions of service of staff members, thus freeing them to concentrate on technical cooperation activities. During 2004 and continuing into this year, HRM has been working to improve the functioning and usefulness of its automated information systems and its web site.

36.   HRM is further committed to the creation of a human capital management strategy, and recognizes that efficiencies associated with improved processing and automated support are crucial. This involves:

- implementation of basic workflow functionality;
- evaluation of document management (paperless office) capabilities;

- improved data-to-information development;

- improved report generation for Executive Management (human capital management planning);

- establishment of capabilities found within fully integrated computer systems that accurately process the entitlements of staff members and provides trend analysis and data concerning the contracts and performance of staff members to managers in an effective manner.

37.   HRM has also undertaken a major effort to document policies, procedures, and processes and generate a completely new web site where such information is readily available to all people working in the Organization.

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