



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
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STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PASB STAFF ASSOCIATION

Introduction

1. The representative of the Staff Association (SA) at the 140th Session of the Executive Committee is pleased to report on the progress made in relations between staff and the Administration and to address current issues of interest to staff.
2. The Staff Association requests the attention and support of the Executive Committee regarding the issues addressed in the report that follows.
3. Above all, we wish to thank the Members of the Executive Committee of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) for their attention and interest in matters pertaining to the administration and management of human resources in PAHO/WHO and for facilitating the PAHO/WHO Staff Association's presentation of matters of key interest to the staff regarding current working conditions, pursuant to the provisions of the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service.
4. Through this document, we respectfully describe the achievements obtained in the joint effort between the Organization's staff, represented by the SA, and the Administration of PAHO/WHO. We report on the specific progress to date and follow up on some matters that were brought up in SA presentations in previous sessions of the Executive Committee.
5. In this document we specifically address: (a) the Ethics and Conflict Resolution System: achievements to date for its establishment and our recommendation for complementary action; (b) strengthening of staff recruitment and selection procedures and its link with human resources reform; (c) improvement of managerial capacities and administrative leadership and its direct impact on human resources management in

PAHO/WHO; and (d) 360° performance evaluation and the promotion of a participatory culture in leadership training.¹

6. The SA requests the Executive Committee of PAHO/WHO to consider, endorse, and promote the ideas, proposals, and recommendations contained in this document.

Integrity and Conflict Management System

7. PAHO/WHO has taken important steps through the establishment of the Integrity and Conflict Management System for implementing regulatory procedures, which will help to protect its workers. This system provides a procedural framework for linking the different entities and instruments that our staff members can avail themselves of to settle labor disputes when they arise. We believe that improvements in this system are needed to achieve coherent, orderly, and comprehensive coordination of the system's mechanisms and procedures, thus achieving a streamlined flow and avoiding overlapping and/or conflicts during the application of its procedures. The SA has carefully studied the system, and we are offering our contribution for the introduction of the improvements necessary to meet this objective.

8. We believe that with the creation of the Ethics Office, PAHO/WHO has taken an important step toward implementing the Code of Ethics and that its different components will indeed help to optimize the management and daily work of the Organization, enabling PAHO/WHO to effectively carry out its mission. We salute this great achievement. In addition, staff have been provided with an interactive training module on the application of the Code of Ethics; a hotline has been set up for the anonymous reporting of violations; and the website for the Ethics and Conflict Resolution System is under construction. These are important steps toward strengthening the culture of ethics in the Organization.

9. In regard to the Ombudsperson, he has completed his first year in office, and we believe that he has made a valuable qualitative contribution to conflict management within PAHO/WHO. In order to assure the quality of this service in PAHO/WHO, it is essential to guarantee the independence of this office in budgetary and programming terms. In order to achieve this objective, we are proposing and requesting that, given the new budgetary cycle (BPB 08-09) that is about to begin, the necessary steps be taken and

¹ System for evaluating performance and results, in which people other than the supervisor who know the person being evaluated participate ... It is a systematic way of eliciting opinions from different people about the performance of a particular employee in a department or organization, and makes it possible to use different ways to improve performance, maximizing the general performance of the enterprise. The expression derives from the concept of covering 360°, symbolically representing all the relevant links between an individual and his work environment. The expression 360° is also used to indicate when employees provide the supervisor with feedback on their own performance.” Translation from <http://www.dequate.com/infocentros/gerencia/rrhh/evaluacion360.htm>

changes made to ensure that the Ombudsman's Office enjoys autonomy and has responsibility in the planning, programming, and use of the financial resources. This post is high enough in the organizational hierarchy to be able to program its activities following the guidelines of the Organization. We furthermore propose that this request be extended to cover the Ethics Office. This would achieve the desired budgetary and programmatic independence for the two offices and would be reflected in the PAHO/WHO organizational chart through a dotted line for each under the Office of the Deputy Director, thereby underscoring that the Administration of PAHO/WHO is committed to their independent autonomous service and operation.

10. The SA also considers it necessary to optimize the internal justice system, specifically the operations of the PAHO/WHO Board of Appeal, by amending and updating the norms that govern it, an activity that should not involve a great deal of time and effort. We are convinced that the Board of Appeal can operate more efficiently and make a substantial contribution to improving the quality of internal processes. In this regard, the SA wishes to emphasize the importance of establishing clear standards and procedures for the investigation of grievances. It is essential to adopt protocols that ensure confidentiality and due process, with the ultimate goal of achieving a fair decision. The SA is prepared to assist in this task.

11. Finally, considering the Integrity and Conflict Management System as a whole, we wish to point out that, in view of its complexity and the number of actors and instruments involved, additional efforts should be made to offer PAHO/WHO staff a coherent, orderly, comprehensive mechanism with clear and equitable norms. The PAHO/WHO working group that is developing this system with the participation of the SA is committed to achieving an end product of the highest quality. However, we consider it essential for the optimal operation of this system that the actors involved in it join forces, respecting its independence and increasing objectivity and rationality in the handling of cases.

Strengthening of Staff Recruitment and Selection Procedures

12. The agenda of this session of the PAHO/WHO Executive Committee includes taking the necessary steps to introduce important changes in the Staff Rules to align PAHO/WHO with the efforts of the United Nations Common System to reform the contractual arrangements and conditions of service of the system's human resources (Contractual² Reform). The proposed Contractual Reform consists of introducing a single employment contract for personnel that would vary only in terms of the length of uninterrupted service. That is, the goal is to shift to three hiring modalities, differentiated only by the variable of their length: (a) continuous; (b) fixed-term; and (c) short-term. The SA recommends that, as part of the implementation process, when introducing these

² Ver <http://www.un.org/spanish/reforma/a60692c1.html>

PAHO/WHO staff rules to achieve alignment with the Contractual Reform, suitable monitoring and control systems be studied, identified, and incorporated into these modifications to ensure the proper use of the three types of contracts, thereby ensuring transparency, administrative responsibility, human resources planning, and equitable treatment for PAHO/WHO staff.

13. The SA believes that the hiring process at PAHO/WHO should be, at all times, transparent, objective, and aimed at attracting and retaining the best human resources that can be obtained in the labor market, thus making it possible to have first-rate staff members that will enable the Organization to efficiently carry out its mission. We therefore urge the Administration to pay particular attention to the staff recruitment and selection processes and especially within the framework of changes to the Staff Rules that will be presented during this Executive Committee's session. The SA reiterates its call for the use of competitive selection procedures throughout PAHO/WHO for temporary contracts, especially those recruited for six months or more.

14. Concerning selection of management staff, we consider it important to harmonize the procedures for the recruitment, nomination, and selection of staff to occupy management posts in PAHO/WHO according to the specific needs of the post. From a rapid study, we have observed that not all management posts that are currently occupied were filled after a competitive recruitment and selection process with the respective publication of the vacancy. One of the possibilities for filling these management posts is rotation, and another, lateral transfers—administrative actions provided for in the rules. We have an agreement with the Administration that a policy will be drafted that spells out the different methods for gaining access to these posts. The ultimate goal of the SA is to guarantee that everyone who is a staff member of PAHO/WHO is subject to the regular procedures established for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of personnel.

Improving Managerial Capacity and Administrative Leadership and its Direct Impact on Human Resources Management within PAHO/WHO

15. With a view to strengthening good relations among staff, which contributes to the achievement of PAHO/WHO's objectives, the SA considers the regular application and use of tools for providing feedback on their performance to staff members at every level. Regular application and use of these tools would promote a dynamic and culture of openness and receptiveness to constructive criticism, but primarily, would lead to the prevention of labor disputes within the Organization. Furthermore, the results obtained with the use of these instruments would contribute to a situation analysis and diagnosis of the work environment, thus helping to steer staff toward behavioral changes and the elimination of inappropriate practices in a proactive and participatory manner. PAHO/WHO managers need to develop and demonstrate real ability to lead their staff

under their charge, and we believe that such instruments will help to accomplish that. Far too often we see that leadership capacity is confused with the authoritarian discretionary use of power by PAHO/WHO managers, leading to resentment among subordinates, lack of motivation, and frustration with the implementation of organizational change.

360° Performance Evaluation and Promoting a Participatory Culture in Leadership Training

16. In addition to the regular use of instruments that permit feedback between PAHO/WHO staff, administrative leadership training should be complemented with an efficient, objective performance evaluation system. In this regard, SA reiterates its request to set up a 360° performance evaluation system at every level. Implementation of this system, currently used in other international organizations, would be a valuable complement to the efforts to improve administrative leadership and would help to guide leadership training activities in an ongoing, participatory manner, especially in areas linked with human resources management.

17. For adequate operation of the 360° performance evaluation system, the SA considers it of utmost importance to identify and appropriately spell out the leadership competencies listed in post vacancy descriptions/announcements. For example, the leadership competencies required for the PAHO/WHO Representative posts in the Member States must necessarily be different from those required for the area manager or unit chief posts at Headquarters. Differences in the functions in each case call for leadership competencies. Failure to correct this situation would lead to the appointment of human resources that do not meet the real requirements of the management posts, and when the time comes to evaluate their performance, the results would be unsatisfactory. Thus, there should always be a direct connection and consistency between leadership competency requirements and the evaluation to which the staff member who occupies the management post will be subject.

18. Finally, with a view to fostering trust among staff and encouraging it to participate in the internal processes of PAHO/WHO, we are calling on managers in the Representative Offices to promote the right to free association and promote respect for the mission of the SA and its elected delegates. We furthermore urge the Representative Offices to adopt good practices in relations between the PAHO/WHO Administration and the SA in terms of consultation processes, as is the case at Headquarters, consistent with the spirit of cooperation and joint efforts within the United Nations system.

Conclusions

19. Our working relationships with the Administration in the matters that we have mentioned are sustained, active, and constructive. We are certain that we make a

contribution to improving working conditions for PAHO/WHO staff and thus to the quality of the technical cooperation provided. In this regard, our dialogue with PAHO Management is framed within the guiding principles that govern relations with the staff.

20. Concerning the matters addressed in this document, the SA respectfully requests the Executive Committee of PAHO/WHO to make comments and recommendations and offer guidance to the Administration of PAHO/WHO, particularly in the following areas:

- Introduction of improvements in the Integrity and Conflict Management System to achieve coherent, orderly, and comprehensive coordination of the mechanisms and processes that comprise it, thereby achieving clear and equitable norms.
- Adoption of the measures necessary for enabling the Office of the Ombudsperson and Ethics Officer to exercise autonomy in programming for use of the financial resources that will enable them to execute their biennial work program.
- Optimization of the internal justice system, specifically the operations of the PAHO/WHO Board of Appeal, through the modification and updating of the regulations that govern it.
- Ensuring the use of competitive selection procedures for temporary hiring throughout PAHO/WHO, especially for contracts of six months or more.
- Harmonization of procedures for the recruitment, nomination, and appointment of staff to fill management posts to guarantee that all posts are subject to the regular procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff.
- Adoption and promotion of the regular use of instruments for providing PAHO/WHO staff with feedback on their performance to promote a dynamic and culture of openness and receptiveness to constructive criticism and prevent labor disputes.
- Adoption of a 360° performance evaluation system at every level to complement the administrative leadership training.
- Identification and appropriate definition of the required leadership competencies listed in the descriptions/announcements for post vacancies, ensuring their consistency with the performance evaluation to which the staff member will be subject in the future.
- Promotion of the right to free association and facilitating respect for the mission of the SA and its elected delegates.

21. PAHO/WHO staff recognize and appreciate the trust placed in them by the Governing Bodies and reiterate the commitment of the Organization's staff to continue working to provide international technical cooperation in health and fulfill the mandates of PAHO/WHO. We are confident that the Executive Committee will continue guiding our actions for improvement of the International Civil Service.
