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*Health Planning
WHO - 1 programmes - MTP*

USE OF WHO MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAMMES FOR
PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME BUDGET
AT COUNTRY AND INTER-COUNTRY LEVELS



The following document responds to the need for a short summary indicating how WHO medium-term programmes can be used at the country and inter-country levels when preparing programme budgets. It was reviewed by the Programme Development Working Group at its second session, and its distribution to all WHO staff involved in programming and budgeting at country, regional and headquarters levels was recommended. Although preparation of the proposed programme budget for 1982-83 has largely been completed, the explanations contained in the following document could be used for the detailed plans of operation and their respective costings for 1982-83.

It will also be helpful in acquainting potential users more with these concepts in anticipation of the preparation of the medium-term programme related to the Seventh General Programme of Work and its subsequent programme budgets.

Geneva, 1 May 1980

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1. The development of the WHO Medium-Term Programmes⁽¹⁾ and Programme Budgets⁽²⁾ at country and inter-country levels is part of the continuing process of consultation between WHO and Member States. These country consultations, which have taken place over the last several years and which will continue in future, should now be used as the basis for the progressive development of WHO strategies, General Programmes of Work, Medium-Term Programmes and Programme Budget activities, at all levels of the organization, that best respond to and support national health strategies and plans of action leading towards "Health for all by the year 2000".

2. All WHO Medium-Term Programmes have been developed in a country perspective. However, Regional Medium-Term Programmes contain more information on country and inter-country activities and Global Medium-Term Programmes (all Regions and Headquarters) are usually in the form of an executive summary concentrating more on global and inter-regional activities. Both types of documents are utilized to carry out and monitor the Medium-Term Programmes at the various echelons where WHO activities are implemented.

3. WHO Medium-Term Programmes should be translated for practical application into three biennial programme budgets, the latter thus becoming the regulatory tool of the speed of implementation of the Medium-Term Programmes and one of the mechanisms for reviewing them. In this perspective it should be underlined that programme budgeting, viewed as an extension of medium-term programming, and as an integral part of WHO's continuing process of consultation with Member States for health development, affords a timely opportunity to evaluate⁽³⁾ the relevance, progress, efficiency and effectiveness of WHO technical cooperation and support programmes at all levels.

4. Consequently, the WHO Programme Coordinators or National WHO Programme Coordinators, when discussing with national authorities their

(1) For detailed information see Working Guidelines for WHO's Medium-Term Programming, PWG/3/15, Annex III

(2) For detailed information see Guidelines for Programme Budgets (82-83) PB/79/2

(3) For detailed information see Provisional Guidelines for Health Programme Evaluation HPC/DPE/78.1

budgetary requests for collaborative activities with WHO in the country should use, as a basis for discussions, Regional Medium-Term Programmes for country and inter-country activities, and possibly global ones for global and inter-regional activities, to draw the attention of the country to the medium and long-term directions already worked out between WHO and Member States.

5. Ideally national health plans/programmes, strategies or any other health information available in the country should be used as the basis for programme budget requests. They should also have been the basis for the elaboration of the Collaborative Medium-Term Programmes between countries and WHO. WHO Medium-Term Programming and WHO Programme Budgeting at the country level should thus reinforce each other towards the attainment of common objectives. The dialogue between the WHO Programme Coordinators or National WHO Programme Coordinators and national authorities would then concentrate at the time of Programme Budgeting at the country level on the following questions.

6. In most cases the Medium-Term Programmes have been arrived at collectively through individual or collective dialogue with countries; is the country individually in agreement with what has been agreed collectively in the Regional Medium-Term Programme? If this is the case, which part of the country and inter-country activities of the Medium-Term Programme will be selected for implementation and budgeting in the country and what other activities will be of interest to the country for collaboration at the inter-country level?

7. But it is only in theory that long-term and medium-term strategies remain relatively stable with time. In practice it is quite possible that the WHO country programme budget request will be out of step with the WHO Medium-Term Programme elaborated in consultation with countries. In this case, when a programme budget request or proposal falls outside the directions given in the Medium-Term Programme, special effort must be given to determining whether it is the country request that is inappropriate or whether it is WHO's programming perspective that is no longer relevant to the national situation. The question will then centre on the role of WHO in this country and on the need for changing the relevant parts of the Regional Medium-Term Programmes. The detection of inconsistency between country programme requests and the Regional Medium-Term Programme thus helps call attention to the need to reconsider the programme budget requests

or proposals, or to re-plan the WHO technical cooperation approach in the medium-term perspective.

8. It should be underlined that during the dialogue between WHO and the country on Programme Budgeting, it is not intended that the Medium-Term Programme document should be used to "sell" a specific programme budget activity. However, the Medium-Term Programme can be used as described above as a guidance on the direction of programme budget proposals as a means of fostering the adaptation to the countries' needs of WHO policies and programmes that have been worked out collectively.

9. Programme proposals at country level that have been validated through this process of consultation and analysis in the light of the national health strategy and plan of action and the Medium-Term Programme, should be agreed upon with the national authorities for inclusion in the draft Regional Programme Budget. They should be described in the narrative country programme statements supported by budgetary tables broken down at programme level, suitable for review by the Regional Committee.

10. Most Regional Medium-Term Programmes contain a well defined medium-term strategy and definition of inter-country programmes in support of programmes at country level. Where this is the case, the Regional Medium-Term Programme can be used as the starting point for more detailed programming and costing of inter-country activities for inclusion in the draft Regional Programme Budget. As with the country level component of Medium-Term Programmes, however, the inter-country programmes envisaged in the Regional Medium-Term Programme are not intended to be fixed at all time. They serve as a guide for programme budgeting, but there may be valid reasons, due to changed conditions or different support needs as defined by Member States, that justify modification of the inter-country programmes as originally perceived, followed by detailed elaboration of the inter-country programme budget proposals. The Regional Medium-Term Programme provides a useful basis for directing and modifying the inter-country programme and should be revised in turn if it is deemed necessary.

11. The Global Medium-Term Programmes do not contain sufficient country programme information to facilitate programme budgeting at country level. However, they do show the overall policies, directions and approaches of WHO programmes. In addition, they provide more specific information on inter-regional and global support activities. This being the case, they should be used at the country level in order to remind the country of policies that they have adopted collectively under the auspices of WHO and of the global programme implications of these policies. They should also be used as a means of reviewing the complementarity of global, inter-regional, and inter-country programme proposals.