

WHO-Programmes - medium-term programming
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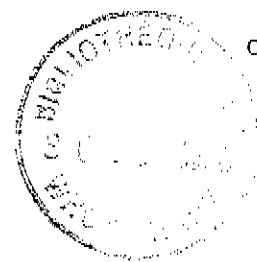
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COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS FOR WHO MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAMMING

1. Introduction

It is clear that in order to formulate realistic WHO Medium-Term Programmes maximum use should be made of programme information at country level and, ideally, on the outcome of country health programming where it has taken place. In other cases, it is necessary to open "negotiations" with countries on the type of collaboration they intend to request from the Organization on a medium-term basis.

These country consultations or negotiations should not only be undertaken prior to the elaboration of a medium-term programme but also during the elaboration of the medium-term programme and certainly at regular intervals afterwards or when events occurring after the development of the medium-term programme introduce the need for a revision of the programme.

Hopefully, the increasing participation of nationals to all programming meetings and programming efforts will give to WHO Medium-Term Programming a larger sense of the needs at country level.

2. Consultation with countries during the programming process

It is obvious that according to the structure of each region, to the number of countries comprising the region and to other factors, the type of country consultation will vary from one regional office to the other, and also probably from one type of programme to the other. As a preliminary suggestion an attempt has been made to list a few of the types of country consultations actually used on various occasions:

2.1 Country profiles

Once country profiles will have been elaborated in collaboration with countries i.e. prepared by the nationals after consultation with the WR and other WHO field staff in the country, they could be one of the bases for Medium-Term Programming. Such a profile when regularly up-dated should provide relevant information for WHO's collaborative efforts in the country.

2.2 Consultation through the WR

The WR having been previously briefed and/or trained at the regional office and/or at headquarters, will meet with the Government and with the persons concerned with the specific programme area to discuss the intentions of the country within the next six years regarding its collaboration with WHO for this specific programme.

2.3 Country visits

In regions where it is feasible, the regional adviser for a specific programme area can visit each country of a region to have extensive discussions with the Government and the persons concerned with the programme area.

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2.4 Regional or sub-regional meetings

The regional office may call a meeting of the persons responsible in each country for the programme area to discuss the elaboration of the WHO programme in this area. Such a meeting will comprise national staff, WHO staff at all levels and possibly experts.

2.5 Sampling of opinion

The regional office may select a few typical countries on a sub-regional basis and the regional adviser may visit them. The result of these visits could be taken as a sample of the opinion of similar countries for the elaboration of the regional contribution to WHO medium-term programming.

These processes, as such, will tend to disappear as more regular programmatic contacts are made with countries and regular channels or methods of negotiations with countries are elaborated. Ideally, programme contacts on any of the programming areas of the Sixth General Programme of Work should be made with countries at regular intervals either for the elaboration of medium-term programmes (or the Seventh General Programme of Work) or for the updating of these programmes. The contacts can be specific programme meetings as exist already in certain regions or could be part of a session of regional committees, etc.

The five types of country consultations mentioned above in different mixes should all give an indication of what the Governments may want in each country or a region. However, there may still be some inherent difficulties for a regional office in view of the number of countries comprising the region and/or staff problems. A posteriori consultations can be useful in certain situations.

3. Consultation of a country a posteriori (after the elaboration of a medium-term programme)

In some regions, some general regional programming would already have been done, as is the case with the region of the Americas with the Ten Year Health Plan. In all regions the Sixth General Programme of Work can be taken as a global basis for the elaboration of medium-term programmes. Once these programmes have been developed according to the guidelines for WHO Medium-Term Programming they can be circulated to all persons concerned in each country of a region for further discussion as a catalogue of the collaborative programmes the Organization may offer to the countries in a particular field. As mentioned by the regional committee of the Western Pacific Region they should be used as a basis upon which to build projects of collaboration.

4. Interlocutors of the Organization in country consultations

Emphasis should be put on the fact that in the development of most medium-term programmes, one sole interlocutor is not sufficient to give the proper technical and policy perspectives to the WHO programme. Part of a country consultation should be the identification of a proper level of interlocutors in the country and the mix of interlocutors so as to have at the same time a political opinion and a technical opinion in order to put the subject back in its national perspective and not from the WHO point of view.

5. Conclusion

Regular channels of communications or negotiations with countries on the elaboration and revision of medium-term programmes have to be found or set up. Until then, country consultation will remain a very expensive part of the medium-term programming process. However, it should be emphasized that country consultation will serve in the long run not only the purposes of medium-term programming and its cost should be taken as provisional and not as a cost remaining permanently in the expenditure necessary for medium-term programming.