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GENERAL STAFF MEETING
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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Let me welcome you to this staff meeting. When last we met I promised that I would have this discussion after the meeting of the Directing Council. This afternoon I wish to share with you some reflections of what has gone on in the last couple of months, give some overall impressions, talk about some of the challenges before us, and then bring to your attention some general administrative matters.

Let me start first with the Directing Council which is for us the most important event of our year. I will start by giving some general impressions of mine, overall impressions about the meeting itself, and what I have heard from the delegates who participated in the meeting. I have to tell you that I was really very pleased indeed with the Directing Council and let me tell you why.

First of all, I had the distinct impression, and this was transmitted to me by several of the ministers who participated and their assistants, as they too had the impression, that this was an effort of the whole Organization; that this was something in which the whole Organization took a lot of pride in and had put their best effort forward to ensure that it went well. I thought the preparation for the meeting was really excellent and, let me mention some very simple things, such as the state of the elevators, the corridors, the floors, and the building as a whole. I was very pleased at how we looked. Let me make some very special comments about the ladies who manned the reception desk. At least four or five of the ministers commented to me how helpful those persons were and how almost everything they wanted to get, they got on time. The only minor complaint I had was that this time we did not have a room for smoking, which I really took as a compliment and not as a criticism.

In spite of the short time we had to mount them, the displays were really of very high quality indeed. It was good that so many persons who were involved stayed with the displays to answer questions and to show the delegates what was there. I must thank you all, and I think we all should feel pleased at how the Directing Council turned out. All of us, chauffeurs, receptionists, "ayudantes," everyone. I thought it was an excellent effort.

I wish to go through with you some of the Resolutions of the Directing Council, as they all have implications for us. The first one had to do with the "Collection of Quota Contributions" and that had two aspects to it. One was the fact that one large country had to be subjected to Article 6B because of "non-payment of contributions." We have gone back and looked over the history of the

* **Pan American Health Organization, Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization.**

application of Article 6B in the Organization, and it is clear that up until about three or four years ago, it was observed more in breach than in fact. But, in the last three years, the Working Party on Article 6B has been much more realistic in its appraisal of what needs to be done. It was very distressing to me that a major country should have been subject to Article 6B, but I think that an Organization such as ours cannot function appropriately if our countries do not pay their contributions and do not make it manifest that they are willing to do so.

I had to comment very positively about the Member State and the efforts that the representative of that country had made. I know that the Minister himself and the person who was the delegate to the Directing Council had made heroic efforts to get payment of the Organization's quota, and it was very painful for me to see the resolution pass.

The second resolution related to the budget, and there are several aspects that merit comment. One was the participation of the Member States in the discussion. The level of that participation was really very gratifying, and I think this is, in part, due to the fact that they take the work of the Organization seriously, and in part also due to the fact that they are satisfied with the work that the Organization is doing. It was also because many of our staff in the countries and here in Headquarters had made a special effort to inform our Member States about the importance of the budget, not only in financial terms, but also in terms of what support to the Organization means.

The manifestation of support to the Organization is a clear evidence of what they think about the Organization. I have to tell you that one of the most emotional moments for me was when the delegate from Paraguay said that they had gone to their Congress and had voluntarily increased their quota to the Organization. This is the first occasion in my time here that has ever happened. The amount is not important, but the fact that in their Congress they had voted to voluntarily increase their contribution to the Organization is really a tremendous demonstration of solidarity with what the Organization really does. Obviously, I would hope that that kind of enthusiasm spreads and that the example of Paraguay is followed by other countries. Several ministers said they had never actually thought of doing something like this. I would hope that we would see this happening in the Organization, that some of the countries, because of the restrictions we face, agreeing voluntarily to increase their contribution.

It was unfortunate that the major contributor, the United States, voted against the budget. But, I want us to be clear why that happened, and I want to transmit to you what I am sure was the position of many of the important figures, both in the Department of Health and Human Services and the State Department about this. All of them, every person to whom we spoke, from the level of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to the level of the Ambassador in the State the Department, were all positive in their appreciation of (a) the work of the Organization, and (b) that this Organization is of strategic importance in health terms to the United States.

But, they are faced with the situation in which, in a sense, their hands are tied. The money available in the State Department for payment of their quota to this Organization, is not what it was before and I am confident that those persons, the person from the State Department who voted against the budget, were doing this in a sense with a heavy heart, because it appeared to be making a statement about the Organization which, in fact, is counter to what has been said at every level of the government we have contacted. We have visited persons at all levels of this government in this

country and not one of them has ever said that they think that the Organization is not doing a good job and the Organization is not fulfilling its mandates, that the Organization is not well managed. I want you to get this clear, so we do not think in terms of good guys and bad guys. Our approach should be one of sadness that the situation is such that a major country is not in a position to do what I think a lot of its representatives would wish that it did.

The actual budget was approved with the 2.5% increase over 1994-1995. You will recall that I explained to you that the budget allocation that comes from Geneva remained at the 1994-1995 level. If you take that figure of the 1994-1995 level and add it to the 2.5% increase approved by our Member States, that represents only a 1.8% increase for the biennium.

Under normal circumstances, if all of our Member States paid their contributions, that would, in a sense, be manageable. In this Organization, we have always insisted that we should spend no more money than what we have, and we should not spend up to the "authorization level." So, we have to start out with some appreciation of what we are going to receive. If we receive all of the contributions from the other Member States, it is still probable that because of circumstances over which we have no control, the United States will not be able to pay its full quota contribution for 1996. The verdict is still out on what is going to be the budget available for international organizations in the State Department.

So we have to manage our budget for 1996 on the assumption that we will not receive 10%-15% of the quota of the United States for 1996. Now, 10% of the quota of the United States for 1996 represents, approximately, \$5 million. That is the reason why we have decided that it is better to manage the Organization cautiously than to assume, in a moment of euphoria, that we will have all of our funds. For that reason, I have indicated that our ceilings for 1996 will be 40% of the authorized figure. I do this out of an abundance of caution. If I am wrong and if the United States is able to pay its full quota, we will know in advance--we will know well enough in advance—to be able to adjust our ceilings upwards. But, it is better to be cautious now than to run into problems in 1997 when we may have to take more drastic measures.

I want it to be clear to you that the approval of the budget at the level indicated was excellent. It was excellent in financial terms, in terms of solidarity of the countries of the Organization, and it is something that is worthy of mention. It is something that we should feel proud about; we should feel pleased of that situation. But at the same time, given that expression of solidarity from the countries, we cannot be irresponsible and spend more than we think we are going to receive. I want us all to be clear about that. So, when you receive your ceilings at a 40%, I do not want anyone saying: "but the budget was approved at an increase. Why are we adopting these measures of restriction?"

I have mentioned that the implications are that 40% of our 1996-1997 will be the ceiling. And, in order to achieve a 2.5% increase in budget over 1994-1995, instead of the 5.8% that I produced for the Executive Committee, we, obviously, had to make some adjustments, and we had to suppress some staff positions. So, in the budget program that you see for 1996-1997, you will see that some staff positions have been suppressed. No actual staff member has been affected. We have not asked any person actually working for the Organization to leave because of the reduction of the budget. The budget that you see for 1996 has not affected any of your positions.

However, during the course of the execution of the 1996 budget, we have to be extremely cautious and I have, carefully guarded in my drawer, many of the requests for filling of posts that have been submitted to me over the last couple of months.

This also has some other implications for the Organization as a whole. One, we have to be looking with increasing care at those things that can be eliminated or reduced without affecting the efficiency of our technical cooperation. And as you go about preparing the APBs, I think it is the responsibility of us all to say every time we plan a major activity, "do we need to do this?" There are many things that are nice to do, but not everything is, in fact, necessary. When you present your APBs, don't leave it to the Director to say this or that is not necessary. I wish that when your APBs come to me, they contain those activities that all of you genuinely feel are necessary for our technical cooperation.

This also has another implication for us. We estimate that our extra-budgetary funds in 1994-1995 will be of the order of 50% of the total budget. This percentage has been increasing over the years. Given the possible restrictions we face, we have to be more aggressive in the search for extra-budgetary funds. But, with this search for extra-budgetary funds, comes an even greater responsibility to see that those funds that we acquire from extra-budgetary sources are executed properly. Let me make a parenthesis here. When I speak of the extra-budgetary funds being executed efficiently, I do not wish it to be felt in this house or by donors that we execute and manage extra-budgetary funds with any more care than we execute our normal, regular funds. If the day should ever come that we view the management of projects funded with non-regular funds as something with which we should take more care than the management of projects with regular funds, we are in a very bad situation and, I would not wish that to happen. Now, that's it for the budget.

The last point I would make about this part of the Directing Council is the following: the budget was a very important item in the Directing Council. But, as I have had to say to several persons, it was not the only important part of the Directing Council, and we must not get so carried away with the importance of the budget that we do not think of some of the other things that took place in that week and are of equal importance.

Let me mention some. The next resolution had to deal with measles and the countries spoke of the elimination of measles in the Americas, reaffirming their support for the Plan of Action. The implications of this are tremendous. It is a commitment we have made, and it is a commitment we have to discharge. You will notice that the number of resolutions is smaller, and in part, this is because all of us, certainly those of us in the direction of the Organization are going to follow to the letter the resolutions of the Governing Bodies. They are not going to be just things that we put on the shelves and forget.

Another resolution that was really important for us was that having to do with AIDS. During the discussion on that resolution, I had to explain what is the situation with the U.N. AIDS Program. And although all of you may know this, I think it is important that I repeat it. I will begin with a comment I made to the delegate of the United States who spoke about the countries wishing to see the U.N. system function better together in relation to the program on AIDS. The first point I made,

I hope in as strong terms as possible, is that I do not wish to see in the Americas or in the world, the approach to major disease problems taken in a manner similar to what was done for AIDS. I believe that health problems are the primary responsibility of the health sector. This is not to negate inter-sectoral collaboration, inter-agency collaboration, etc., but if we are going to have a situation where every major health problem becomes the object of a multi-agency kind of approach, I do not see the point of having a health organization.

The second point I would make is that we have stated as emphatically as we can that this Organization will do everything possible to collaborate with the U.N. AIDS Program. Also, I pointed out, all of our countries are concerned that, with the gap between the cessation of the Global Program on AIDS and the beginning of the U.N. Program on AIDS, their programs will suffer. As a result of the mandate from the Presidents, we are attempting to mount a regional activity in AIDS which we hope will be complementary to the U.N. Program. This has been a very uncertain time for the staff, and I have to apologize, in a sense, to many of the staff for this.

I think we have made super-human efforts to incorporate the vast majority of the general service staff employed in the AIDS program into other posts in the Organization, and I wish it were possible to say that everyone has been incorporated. We have also established some posts to incorporate some professional staff within our regular budget. We are making every representation to see that some of our subregional professionals in AIDS have the optimum chance of being employed by the U.N. AIDS program when it comes on stream.

The other resolution that was passed and sparked a lot of interest was the discussion on the "New Emerging and Reemerging Diseases." I am not going to repeat the discussion, but the enthusiasm for the countries to work together to address these problems was most clear. Dengue, was one of the problems mentioned specifically. What I tried to point out to the Member Governments is that, though I accept the enthusiasm and the challenge, we must look at the possible cost of controlling *Aedes aegypti*. We have spoken in terms of a program over four or five years for Central America that would cost about US\$ 140 million, and that is not the kind of money that most of our countries have. So, although we are going to move forward and provide the technical support for the elaboration for this plan, I will hope that our countries are going to look seriously at the cost implications of any such plan.

I was very pleased with the demonstration of what PAHO is doing to make itself known in the Americas and the rest of the world. This, obviously, is something that will grow, but again, I must point out that the success of having various persons in various places knowing about PAHO does not depend only on one unit. It depends on the collaboration of us all. It depends on having us all accept the responsibility to put reliable information into that medium. It cannot be left only to one person, and it cannot be left only to one group of persons. Once we embark on this kind of initiative, all of us are going to be held responsible for the quality of the information about the Organization that gets into the ether.

The meeting of the Directing Council did not finish with these resolutions. There was a meeting on Health Sector Reform which perhaps exceeded my expectations. Let's say it lived up to my dreams. I have to compliment the persons who were responsible for most of the arrangements and although it is invidious to single out a person, Dr. Teruel was the person mainly responsible for

seeing that many of the things got done. It was a manifestation of the interagency collaboration that can take place. It was also a manifestation of the interest of the countries in this particular topic. I was also pleased with the advances made by the small in-house working group on health sector reform comprised of Dr. Paganini, Dr. Vieira, Dr. López-Acuña, and Dr. Teruel, supported by the participation of our representations.

The final meeting of the week on Health, the Environment and Sustainable Human Development was organized by Engineer Otterstetter's division. That also went very well indeed, and it was very gratifying to find that at the end of the program, after eight days of continuous work, the hall was almost full of persons. President Figueres' address was electrifying, and very few times do we hear a president so enthusiastic about a particular area in health.

I think that the events of the eight days were a tremendous strain on all the staff and again, let me thank you for having borne up so well.

Let me spend a few minutes talking about the immediate prospects for the rest of the year and beyond. One of the urgencies now and for the rest of the year is the preparation of the APB program for 1996. I have to make an apology to those who have to work extra hard to meet the deadlines we have set. This is so because of the uncertainty there was about what would happen at the Directing Council as regards to our budget. We could only send you the appropriate ceilings for making your projections after the meetings.

In December, there will be the meeting of the managers, and Dr. Roses has prepared a very innovative approach to that meeting which we are sure will go quite well. The Subcommittee on Planning and Programming will take place at the end of November, and there will be a special meeting to discuss how we think about and manage technical cooperation. These are some of the immediate work activities that are going to occupy you.

I wish now to comment with regard to some administrative matters. We need to look for ways to improve the efficiency of what we do, and I am going to ask Mr. Tracy to put in place a suggestion box that those of you who have ideas on how we can do things better might give your suggestions. This has been tried before, but the success depends on the seriousness with which the staff takes it. If the staff does not take it seriously and use it only as a mechanism for griping, then it is a waste of time and we will abandon it. But, if you take it seriously and you suggest things that could be done to improve our work, I think that all of us will benefit.

There are two other specific aspects that I wish to address. One is telephone calls, especially long-distance ones. It seems almost silly to say to a group of responsible persons working in an organization like this that abuse of the telephone is not in keeping with good professional conduct. But, it bears repeating. Our telephones are not for personal use, and if I find instances where there is abuse of the telephones for personal calls, it will be regarded as a very serious breach of conduct.

We budget a certain amount every year for long-distance telephone calls, and I was alarmed to get the figures as to the rate of expenditure this year. I had hoped, that once there were other methods of communication in place—fax, e:Mail, etc.—there would be a reduction in use of

telephone calls. We are increasing our use of long-distance telephone calls; I can't understand why, and the first thing I am going to do is to challenge you to correct it.

Last year, we spent about \$40,000-\$50,000 for electronic mail. Our projection this year is for \$140,000. That cannot go on. There is obviously a genuine need for us to communicate, and as I said at the beginning of my term, we are going to have to find methods of more facile communication. On the other hand, there is an often flippant use of e:Mail. Some of the mail that I get on my computer really does not belong in this Organization and, again, I have to challenge you to restrict the use of e:Mail to the work of the Organization and not any titbit that we wish to share with our colleagues and friends around the Organization. I have a standard practice not to read anything that comes to me with everybody's name on the screen, because I have discovered that much of it is the equivalent of "junk mail," and whereas at home we can throw junk mail into the garbage, junk mail on cc:Mail costs us money and we cannot afford that.

The other matter I wish to address as a matter of collective responsibility is the use of time. In large organizations, people tend to think of resources as physical or financial and do not often think of the human resources that are equally valuable. When any staff member, either I, the technical or general service, takes leave and does not record it, or pays visits outside the organization, or comes late and does not record it as a part of their leave, he or she is doing something that is not right.

If any of you do indulge in these practices, I ask you to cease and desist, because such breaches of professional conduct will not be taken lightly. That is not the kind of behavior that I expect from persons who work in the Pan American Health Organization. I cannot and will not point fingers; it is a matter of individual responsibility. As my staff will tell you, I set the example and I expect all of us to set the example to one another to be as careful with the use of our time as we are careful with the use of the dollars of the Organization; they are both equally precious.

I wish now to speak of this building. Having made a decision not to move from here, we have had various studies done of this building, and we are going to have to introduce some modifications that will be costly. We will have to replace our elevators and our boilers. We have to update our ventilation system. We have to modify this particular room, as beautiful though it is, it was not designed to accommodate the representation from 38 Member States. President Enrique Iglesias, when he was here, said to me that this is the most beautiful meeting room in the whole of Washington, and just as I was about to agree with him, he said "of course it was built by an Uruguayan." Some of these modifications may not be physically very pleasant and you are going to have to put up with the inconvenience.

The penultimate point I am going to make is with regard to staff relations. I said to you in February that I do not seek adversarial positions with staff or the Staff Association. I can tell you now in October, that this has not occurred. We have not had adversarial positions with the Staff Association. I also urge you all to join the Staff Association, and those of you who did not take my advice then, I encourage you to take my advice now. A strong Staff Association is good for the Pan American Health Organization as a whole, and it is no point leaving the burden to a few chosen persons. It is good for all staff to belong to the Staff Association.

We have completed the study on the Scale Compression which has involved very intensive work, and I am very pleased with the effort that Dr. LaVertu and her team have put into this. I have the report with me now. But it is not something you can read in an hour or two. I am going to have to read it carefully before I decide whether to approve it in full or in part.

Later during this year, we will be starting a salary survey, and I hope that this will go smoothly without any of the animus that from time to time accompanies staff surveys in organizations.

And now, finally, I want to speak very briefly and rather philosophically about the future. I have no intention of changing now the structure of the Organization that I put in place in February, and the basic principles that we enunciated at that time still remain. The insistence on the Strategic and Programmatic Orientations will remain because, again, those having been accepted by the Governing Bodies, they have to be our guide and there will be no ceremonial "tipping of the hat" to them as I have said to you before. Our Strategic and Programmatic Orientations have to guide our work.

In many of the things I have said, in the many places I have spoken, I have tried to articulate what should be the guiding principles for the Organization, what things we feel to be part of our credo. There will always be persons who say they do not know. This is normal; this is also healthy because it gives the opportunity for you who know to repeat them. I am not going to repeat here what I said at my inauguration, what I said in February, what I have said in numerous speeches, about the underlying principles that must guide our work, or what we intend to do in the Organization. Those principles that we articulated of countries working together, the spirit of pan-Americanism, the kinds of managerial styles we wish to see in place, still remain.

I am pleased that when I visit the countries, I feel that these principles are permeating the Organization. Every Organization changes, and some change with more velocity than others. Those of us within, have to be conscious of and accompany the change, to help the change and, if necessary, comment on the change as it proceeds. That is the only way we are going to really have permanent change in our Organization.

One point that I made, probably tangentially, earlier on was the need for the Organization to make itself known to its publics, in the plural, and we are enthusiastic about seeking ways in which we should make the Organization known. That is one point that we did not deal with *in extenso* in February. But it has come home to us very clearly, that there is a frightening degree of ignorance about the Pan American Health Organization in areas outside health. We do not seek to promote the Organization with any sense of self-aggrandizement. But, we do wish that various publics know about what the Organization does so that the issues that the Organization deals with can have proper discussion in the countries. We are trying to develop some very specific strategies for having the Organization much better known in the countries of the Americas. Some of you have given ideas about this already and we hope that some of you will give even more ideas about how this might be done.

But, at the end of the day, when we speak about the work of the Organization, we must realize that the work of the Secretariat will be very small compared to what the countries will do, hopefully, with our help. As I have said to you before and will repeat again, it is not what the countries will do

individually, it is what the countries will do together. That is the major focus of our work and this will continue to be so. You will always hear me use the word "our" because I genuinely believe it is "our" work.

Thank you very much, indeed, for your attention.

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