Summary Report

The Global Policy Group (GPG) held an ad hoc meeting on 8 August 2017 at WHO HQ to discuss the report of the Working Group on Initiatives for Change, which was established by the Director-General to develop proposals generated through a consultative process with staff. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General.

The following report summarizes the discussions of the GPG and the subsequent decisions of the Director-General.

1. **Working Group on Initiatives for Change.** The Working Group was established during the DG-elect transition period to receive, consolidate, and synthesize contributions of staff from across the Organization on proposals for change, which had been requested by Dr Tedros. The Working Group proposed a series of flagship initiatives and enablers, linked to the DG’s five priorities. In discussion on the flagship initiatives, a consensus emerged on prioritising work around the concept of ‘keeping the world safe and serving the vulnerable’, aligned with the SDGs, focussing on health policy and health systems for the 21st century within the context of UHC and working beyond the health sector, and integrated with work on health security. With regard to the enabling factors, the GPG highlighted three main priorities; strengthening the work of WHO in countries, enhancing resource mobilization and communications, and building a workforce of excellence.

   Dr Tedros highlighted the need to learn from the experience in other organizations in mainstreaming the SDGs into the work of WHO; the importance of linking with the UN reform agenda; and the value of expanding engagement with other international agencies, including regional and subregional organizations. He emphasised the need to demonstrate that WHO can perform effectively in fragile states and vulnerable communities, making a stronger link between the humanitarian response and development, focussing on equity and building on the normative work of WHO. This demands that WHO prioritises its work in such countries, bearing always in mind that WHO has universal membership and therefore has to remain relevant for all. The Organization needs to communicate better, mobilize more resources, and develop lean, rapid and effective processes for procurement and logistics.

   A series of sub groups will be formed to take forward planning for the initiatives and enablers as prioritized by the GPG, while ensuring integration of the different work streams.

2. **Strategic Vision for WHO.** The GPG discussed the development of the next general programme of work (GPW), which will aim is to clearly present the value of the work of WHO, demonstrate alignment with the SDGs, identify priorities, guide resource mobilization, and provide a framework for the next programme budget 20-21. The GPG agreed that the process should start immediately, beginning with consultations in the forthcoming Regional Committees, so that the Executive Board can review this in January prior to adoption by the Assembly in May 2018.

   A concept note on the development of the GPW will be drafted for consultation in the Regional Committees.
3. **GPG ways of working.** The GPG highlighted the value of meetings based on a structured discussion and focused on strategic issues. They agreed that bi-monthly meetings would be useful – adding at least two virtual meetings a year, and highlighted the value of holding meetings in countries, in order to see the situation on the ground, and take the opportunity to meet with high level government officials and other stakeholders.

4. **Resource Mobilization.** Dr Tedros briefed Regional Directors on steps underway to strengthen resource mobilization, and expressed appreciation for the report of the GPG Working Group on Resource Mobilization, noting the importance of building capacity at the country level, professionalising the resource mobilization approach and making stronger links with advocacy and communications. Additional measures are planned to encourage greater ownership of Member States for raising resources for WHO; a significant proposed change is that the Financing Dialogue should be led by Member States, with high level engagement in countries.

5. **WHO Travel Policy.** Recent allegations of wasteful and costly travel have been damaging for WHO. Although several of the allegations were incorrect, it is recognised that the Organization needs to take significant steps to further reduce travel costs and demonstrate greater efficiency. The GPG was briefed on the proposed revisions of WHO travel policies and procedures to more closely align with UN travel policies. Additional measures are being taken to reduce the numbers of staff attending external meetings, with the concept of formalising a WHO delegation to each external meeting, and stronger management of travel and travel budgets. Non-staff travel also needs to be addressed with better planning and review of meetings organized by WHO.

6. **Strategic decision making in WHO governing bodies.** Dr Tedros briefed RDs on his recent meeting with the Officers of the Executive Board (the Bureau), held on 31 Jul-1 Aug. The Bureau can perform a key role in managing the intersessional work of the Board between its meetings, acting as a ‘bridge’ between Board meetings. The aim is strengthen strategic decision-making in the Board and the Assembly. The Bureau has proposed holding an additional meeting of the Board in November, to review the work on the GPW, and to discuss ways of strengthening the work of the governing bodies, including the rules of procedure.

   The GPG discussed additional ways of strengthening links between the Regional Committees and the Board; ways of enabling equitable engagement in the work of the Governing Bodies, particularly for those Member States that are not adequately represented in Geneva; and the need to foster stronger links between Ministries of Health and Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Harmonisation across Regions for the process of proposing members to the Executive Board is needed. It was also noted that this initiative will have consequences for the selection of Bureau members, and for the relationship with regional coordinators in Geneva.

   The next meeting of the Bureau will be held in Islamabad on 7 October, immediately prior to the EMRO Regional Committee, to prepare the provisional agenda for the 142nd Executive Board.

7. **Other Matters.** The DG confirmed that his practice is not to extend staff beyond the age or retirement (except under exceptional circumstances, and only in the interests of the Organization), in order to provide more opportunities to ‘refresh’ the Organization. The GPG also discussed the agenda of high level health related events for 2017 and opportunities for taking forward the new WHO agenda. Finally, the GPG reviewed preparations for the meeting of Heads of WHO Country Offices, scheduled for 30 October to 1 November 2017.

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