The Global Policy Group held their meeting from 16-17 January 2018, chaired by the Director-General and attended by the Deputy Directors-General, the Regional Directors, and advisors. The GPG discussed the following agenda items.

**Preparations for PBAC and EB meetings**

The GPG discussed the agendas of the forthcoming meetings of the PBAC27 and EB142, examining key agenda items, including the report of the IEOAC, polio transition, the report of the International Civil Service Commission, challenges in FENSA implementation and strengthening accountability across all levels. The GPG also identified issues warranting greater examination, and RDs shared information on specific issues of particular relevance to their Regions.

As a priority for the upcoming meetings of WHO’s governing bodies, the GPG discussed the draft thirteenth general programme of work 2019–2023, which the Director-General will present for the Board’s consideration. The draft general programme of work: is fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals; offers a statement of vision, mission and priorities for WHO; clear strategic priorities, strategic shifts and organizational shifts; is in harmony with the Director-General’s agenda for change; and reflects the shifts in WHO’s methods of work that will be required to support that change.

The Secretariat has prepared a high-level financial estimate for the draft GPW 13 which will be available for Member States for their information. The financial estimate for GPW 13 is primarily driven by the effort to strengthen WHO at the country level and includes a target for efficiency and economy savings. Work related to these areas has already begun, including: regional functional reviews which aim to improve the capacity of WHO country offices to deliver high quality technical advice and effective and efficient operational support; and work related to implementation of a holistic value-for-money approach and to foster an organizational culture driven by results and impact.

**Transformation Agenda**

The GPG discussed the transformation agenda, emphasizing that the goals and strategic priorities outlined in the draft GPW13 require agile, modern organization that works as one, across programmes and levels. It requires an organization that is committed to driving impact and technical excellence at country level. While transformation endeavours to describe the comprehensive process and capacity that the organization is putting in place to effectively implement the strategic and organizational shifts it needs to deliver on these new strategic priorities, the GPG noted that the agenda needs to continuously evolve and allow room for continuous improvement. It is also important to learn lessons from past reforms, in particular related to: the need for clarity of communication and engagement of staff at all levels; the scaling/sharing of best practices from transformation initiatives across regional and country levels; and the need for a structured and effective implementation approach, with adequate capacities and performance metrics to facilitate robust mainstreaming of reforms, with a view to embed changes across all levels of WHO operations.

The GPG reviewed a number of key dimensions related to the transformation, including: the culture change component; a revised WHO operating model focused on country needs and demands; changes to priority business processes; and targets for transformation progress by the WHA in May 2018.
On the culture change component, the GPG reviewed the results from the WHO culture survey, and discussed both the organizational culture and management practice areas that require improvement as well as the strategic approaches to be taken to address these issues, noting that region-specific examination of the results are ongoing.

In terms of the operating model, the GPG stressed the need to ensure that WHO’s approach to supporting Member States at country level needs to be actionable and consequential, converging both the national health strategy and the new GPW. While there is value in the current Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS), both in terms of process of development and content in defining WHO’s role in supporting Member States, there is a need to further strengthen the instrument to ensure broader buy-in across partners, stronger prioritization and linkages to organization-wide planning to support a specific country’s needs.

In terms of the ‘fit for purpose’ processes, the GPG reviewed the work done to consolidate and prioritize the processes proposed for improvement through redesign or transformation. The GPG agreed on a phasing of the process improvements, identified near-term priorities for improvement, and outlined steps that should be taken to optimize the improvement or redesign of each process.

Selection And Recruitment Of Heads Of WHO Offices In Countries, Territories and Areas

Following on their meeting in November 2017, the GPG reaffirmed the critical need to address the issue of recruitment/selection of HWOs. Supported by Directors Country Cooperation and HR in the discussion, the GPG reiterated that the need for recruitment of the types of skills sets needed for head of country office posts. There is a need to re-orient the system to ensure that candidates with strong potential can be quickly identified, assessed, provided developmental tools, provided the best opportunity to be positioned to succeed as leaders for WHO at country level. Identification of prospective candidates needs to be more strongly guided by WHO senior leadership (as opposed to solely relying on external support to perform assessments).