1. The sixth meeting of the Programme Development Committee (PDC) was held in Geneva from 20 to 21 January 2000 under the chairmanship of Dr J. Jiménez de la Jara (Chile). The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

Agenda item 3. Working in and with countries (Document EB105/7)

2. The Committee reaffirmed the importance of developing staff capacity to respond effectively to country needs, especially given the role of the WHO Representative as an adviser to the minister of health. The local health, political, economic and social situation had to be well understood and analysed by WHO to maximize its effectiveness. The Committee requested further refinement of the joint working mechanisms with countries in order to strengthen partnerships at the national level among the many sectors which affect health. The new country cooperation strategy had been designed to be sensitive to national realities and to guide WHO’s budgeting towards national priorities. To the extent possible, WHO should align its planning with the national planning and budgeting cycle. The Committee stressed that the sector-wide approach should be given sufficient prominence and that WHO’s role and leadership within the sector should be emphasized.

3. The Committee noted that flexibility was needed in the application of criteria, when available, for establishing and/or maintaining a WHO country presence. WHO worked with countries in ways that did not always depend on having a country presence or making significant financial investments, for example through networks, consulting, and WHO collaborating centres. WHO’s important role as an intellectual partner, influencing the agenda and behaviour of other organizations at country level, was also noted.

Agenda item 6. Use of languages in WHO (Document EB105/20)

4. The Committee welcomed the news that the Director-General would be announcing a series of measures to the Executive Board designed to strengthen further the Organization’s multilingual character and capacity, including free language training for staff, publication of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization in French and Spanish, in addition to English, and appointment of a high-level coordinator to advise the Director-General on language issues. While appreciating the
Organization’s swift and effective response, the Committee stressed the need to keep the language issue under review and to continue the search for additional measures to further strengthen multilingualism. It also noted the need to maintain a balance between communication and cost-effectiveness. Multilingualism had both political and management dimensions, and should be an ongoing component of reform. The Committee encouraged the regional offices to improve the availability of information materials in languages relevant to the region.

**Agenda item 4. Technical and health matters**

* Food safety (Document EB105/10)

5. The Committee noted with concern the increasing burden of foodborne disease, which had not been controlled by traditional measures. The public in many countries has lost trust in the ability of scientists and other authorities to ensure safe food. Food safety was both a highly complex issue and a fundamental public health concern. The Committee stressed that WHO had a key role to play in food safety, which should be implemented through stronger participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6. The Committee noted the important role of the private sector in ensuring food safety. International trade in food was also of particular concern. Food safety should be ensured, but nontariff trade barriers should not be erected. In addition, the fact that some countries exported out-of-date or unsafe products needed to be addressed. For some countries, full compliance with food safety standards throughout the food-chain would take time to achieve. In the interim, effective health and nutrition education was essential to raise awareness of the public about food safety.

* HIV/AIDS: confronting the epidemic (Document EB105/12)

7. The Committee noted with concern the continuing high burden of morbidity and mortality from HIV and AIDS throughout the world, often linked with poverty. The members stressed the importance of strengthening effective prevention and care for all groups, including efforts to reduce mother-to-child transmission. The Committee welcomed the information on WHO’s activities as a cosponsor of UNAIDS, with both direct and shared responsibility for outcomes.

8. The Committee highlighted the importance of WHO’s role in working with industry and other international and national partners. It suggested that the Executive Board should address the issue of how WHO, through its ongoing dialogue with those partners, might expand access to care, including drugs for HIV/AIDS. It also suggested that WHO should take a proactive role regarding modalities for implementation of international trade agreements, so as to increase availability of vital drugs at affordable prices in all parts of the world.

**Agenda item 8. Review of Health Assembly resolutions and decisions** (Document EBPDC6/2)

9. The Committee reaffirmed its view that discipline should be exercised by the Executive Board and the Health Assembly in formulating resolutions. The Committee requested that a proposed mechanism for reducing the number of resolutions with ongoing reporting requirements should be submitted at its next session.
ANNEX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chile
Dr J. Jiménez de la Jara (Member, Chair)
   Mr F. Ernst (Adviser)

Chad
Dr M.E. Mbaiong (Member)

India
Mr J.A. Chowdhury (Member)
   Mr K. Tuhin (Adviser)

Lao People’s Democratic Republic
Dr Ponmek Dalaloy (Member)

Netherlands
Dr G.M. van Etten (Member)

Qatar
Dr K. Ahmed Al-Jaber (Member)
ANNEX 2

JOINT MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. The joint meeting of the Programme Development Committee (PDC) and the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee (ABFC) was held on 20 January 2000.

Agenda item 2.1 Towards a strategic agenda for the WHO Secretariat (Document EB105/3)

2. The committees noted that the development of a corporate strategy would feed into products such as the General Programme of Work and the programme budget, and provide inspiration for ongoing reform in such areas as resource mobilization, information policy and human resources. They appreciated the participatory nature of the preparation of the strategy, its emphasis on the unity of the Organization and partnership with countries, and the manner in which it brought together in a more coherent fashion the many existing policies better to guide the work of the Secretariat.

3. The committees requested an analysis of the many new and existing partnerships between WHO and other bodies with a view to identifying better WHO’s advantages compared to others, and strengthening its leadership role in health development. They also noted that the identification of priorities did not mean a lessening of the Organization’s commitment to other areas of essential work, nor a separation between technical cooperation and normative work. The committees welcomed the emphasis on “one WHO” and reaffirmed the importance of being able clearly to identify regional issues and strategies.

Agenda item 5. Implementation of budget resolutions (Documents EB105/17, EB105/17 Add.1, EB105/17 Add.2, EB105/17 Add.3, EB105/40 and EB105/INF.DOC./3)

4. The committees noted that US$ 53.9 million had been identified for efficiency savings, of which US$ 15 million would be channelled to seven clearly defined priorities in the 2000-2001 biennium.

5. They noted that implementation of the mutually agreed separation of staff was aimed at freeing resources that would be channelled to priority programmes and at changing the mix of staff skills. The separation exercise was an integral and major part of the efficiency savings plan and had contributed approximately US$ 20 million in savings.

6. Support was expressed for the efforts undertaken in the area of programme monitoring and evaluation, where priority had been given to developing standardized business rules and procedures for programme implementation and monitoring. Noting plans for an integrated system of planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, the committees suggested that a mechanism should be set up to involve the Board in the systematic review of programme evaluations.

1 Document EBPDC6/1 Rev.1.
Recommendation to the Executive Board (1) To add programme evaluations to the agenda of future joint meetings of ABFC/PDC, as and when appropriate.

7. With regard to partnership mobilization for global health issues, the committees noted that:
   - secondments were included in the figures of extrabudgetary income wherever their financial implications could be calculated. Donations, both in kind and in service, would be identified separately in the future;
   - most extrabudgetary income went to priority areas, which were clearly identified throughout the programme budget. A table indicating where extrabudgetary funds were allocated during 1998-1999 would be prepared once accounts had been closed at the end of February.
   - in relationships with the private sector and innovative fund-raising initiatives, such as lotteries, prudence had been the guide, in order to protect the integrity and reputation of the Organization.

8. On evaluation of the management support units (MSUs) the committees sought clarification on whether the creation of MSUs had given rise to inconsistencies, particularly in the area of interpretation and application of rules and procedures. They noted that some inconsistencies had been identified in the needs of MSUs arising from differences in the type of work in the various clusters, but all clusters were expected to apply common rules and standards. Evaluation of MSUs would continue through regular audits and other review processes.

9. Concerning transfers between appropriation sections, the committees noted that the requested transfer was the result of an organizational change. Hence in no way did it augment the level of the programme budget or change the contents of the programme approved by the Fifty-second World Health Assembly. The requested transfer would make possible transparent management and financial reporting of the related activities.

Recommendation to the Executive Board (2) To adopt the draft resolution contained in document EB105/40.

Agenda item 7. Executive Board matters

- Report by the Chairman of the Board: Terms of reference of the Programme Development Committee and the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee (Documents EB105/39 and EB105/39 Add.1)

10. The committees noted that in a changing work environment, constant attention had to be paid to the terms of reference of the committees of the Board. The current organizational reforms had implications for the activities of the governing bodies and could lead to improvements or refinements in the method of work, including innovative use of new communication technology. The committees stressed the important nature of their tasks and the need for sufficient time to carry them out well.

11. The committees agreed that their two Chairmen, the Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Chairman of the Board should participate in preparation of a document outlining options for revised terms of reference for the committees, to be submitted to the Executive Board at its 106th session. It might also address implications for the work of the governing bodies of the current organizational reforms in WHO.