

**Report of the thirty-fourth Meeting
of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee (IEOAC)
of the World Health Organization**

Virtual meeting | 17 June 2021

Opening and administrative matters

- The Chair confirmed a **quorum** with five of the members of the IEOAC present.
- Mr Greg Johnson joined the meeting following his appointment with immediate effect at the 149th Executive Board.
- No conflicts of interest were recorded by the present members.
- The **agenda** was unanimously adopted.
- In view of the ongoing COVID-19 situation **the meeting was held virtually** with the secretariat present at the WHO-offices in Geneva.
- Agenda and Participant list of the meeting is enclosed.

AGENDA ITEM 1 WHO Overview Briefing | CdC, ADG/BOS

- In follow up to the recommendation of the **34th Programme Budget Advisory Committee (PBAC)** which “(h) request the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee to conduct benchmarking of budgetary levels of enabling functions as a proportion of the overall budget across the United Nations system¹,” the IEOAC held an open discussion with Senior Management to discuss how best to address this request.
- It noted that the definition of “enabling functions “ varies across UN organizations and it was imperative to start with a clear definition which would allow other UN organizations to also provide the necessary comparative data. It was agreed that data should cover Headquarters, Regions and Country Offices and should be based on expenditures. A trend analysis going back 3 biennia would be preferable and data should be collected at the budget centre level to facilitate aggregation.
- The Committee discussed channels such as the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) or its Finance and Budget Network that could be used to collect such data and it was agreed that an official request could be sent from the IEOAC to these channels with the help of the WHO Secretariat.
- In a follow up to the update of the terms of reference (TORs) of the IEOAC, it had been proposed by the 34th PBAC that an informal consultation with members of the PBAC should be held before the IEOAC provides revisions to its TORs at the 35th meeting of the PBAC.
- The IEOAC discussed with Senior Management how best to implement this consultation. It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft a communication on behalf of the IEOAC which would be sent to all missions requesting feedback on the terms of reference (done).
- Senior Management also provided a short update to the IEOAC on the Year of the Workforce notably in the area of flexible working arrangements. The committee noted that due to the ongoing

¹ EB 149/2 https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf

pandemic, concerns over mental health of staff members and shortage of office space at HQ due to the current construction, more flexibility has been given from 1 June to 31 December 2021 to permit broader teleworking outside the duty station. The committee took note that flexible working arrangements will have some impact on overall mobility of staff.

AGENDA ITEM 2 Progress Update: IT Strategy Implementation | ADG/BOS, CIO, CTO, Manager PMO

Context | Summary

- The Committee met with the Assistant Director-General of Business Operations, the Chief Information Officer and selected IT staff to discuss the status, timeline and expected benefits of key WHO IT projects.
- It received information on the next generation of the Global Management System (GSM and the implementation of the Contributor Engagement Mechanism (CEM) which aims to obtain an end-to-end approach to the management of donor relations
- Furthermore with the objective of understanding the total amount of IT spending in order to understand its needs in the area of planning, implementation of projects and specifically for the area of cyber security, the Committee received an overview of the IT budget.

Observations

- Following questions from the Committee with regards to the division of work between IT lead initiatives within WHO programmes and IT initiatives within the Information Management and Technology department, the Committee took note of WHO’s Project Management Centre of Excellence which enables the handling of projects in a portfolio system thus ensuring a strong project management discipline.
- The Committee applauded WHO’s progress from a low maturity in the area of cyber security to a higher one as of today. It however sought to understand the underlying issues which would allow further improvement in this area. Clarity on the overall IT budget and specifically the amount dedicated to cyber security out of the total IT budget was requested.
- The Committee explored whether improvements in this area could be achieved through further investment in human resources (new staff) or an increase in overall funding of the IT budget. It was noted that at HQ further funding to the amount of an additional US\$25 million on top of the US\$60 million budget would enable absorption of additional operational costs resulting from approved initiatives and new implementations.
- In addition, in other WHO regions there was also a need for an increase in their IT budgets.
- The IEOAC **reiterated Recommendation XI of its 31st meeting to member states notably the “continuation of IT- and cybersecurity investments to protect the organization despite the missing “business case” for such investments.”**

Recommendation I

- In the area of IT management, the IEOAC advises a centralized approach in order to avoid duplication and to allow for efficiency gains.

Recommendation II

- In the area of IT and specifically for cybersecurity, the IEOAC encourages member states to consider this as a “critical investment” and to explore the possibility of providing a onetime supplemental investment to be used based on a clear business case from the WHO.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Progress Update: Data/Analytics | ADG DDI, ADG/BOS, Director DDI, Unit Head

Context | Summary

- The Committee requested a progress update in the area of data analytics to better understand WHO’s Data Management strategy including its goals, targets and state of implementation; an update on analytics use cases; and information on the frequency and potential delays in availability of global health data.

Observations

- The Committee noted that as a result of multiple recommendations and requests from the member states, the IEOAC and the PBAC with regards to the reduction of data fragmentation, and in order to increase efficiencies in WHO’s end to end data process, the Director General had endorsed the urgent implementation of the World Health Data Hub and secured organizational support through the Deputy Director General from technical programs. The end-to end process data process which will be implemented through the World Health Data Hub was currently being updated.
- With regards to the analytics use cases the Committee was pleased to learn that amongst others, in May 2021 WHO onboarded WHO’s excess mortality data and published WHO’s first global Covid-19 excess mortality estimates. In addition,, the organization was currently exploring an Artificial Intelligence workstream on Covid-19 surveillance data and intended to update the data from the Triple Billion Dashboard in August with a completely automated backend by December to include projections on the impact of Covid-19 on all three Triple Billion targets.
- The Committee addressed the sensitivity of data and specifically systems WHO had installed to ensure protection of sensitive data. It was pleased to learn of the availability of mandatory training for staff as well as an environment regulating access to information.

Recommendation III

- WHO to ensure that its data analytics strategy supports an organization wide learning agenda that centers on the major policy and programmatic questions that the organization seeks to answer

AGENDA ITEM 4

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)| CdC; ADG/BOS, Principal Legal Officer, Director CRE, Director IOS, Director HRT, Head of WR office Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, National Consultant WR Office Bangladesh

Context | Summary

- The Committee requested a holistic and complete review of the overall processes governing PSEA with the objective of ensuring that policies are followed through; an effective implementation process exists; and that there was relative assurance from senior management that the current mechanism employed by WHO allows for easy and safe reporting of such cases irrespective of the channel being used.

Observations

- The end-to end process covering the areas of prevention through reporting, to investigation, resolution and the aftermath and was complemented with a presentation of the current policy “Prevention and Addressing Abusive Conduct (PAAC)” as well as main activities in the areas of training, capacity building, data and monitoring and protection mechanisms.

- The IEOAC was pleased to note that external WHO contractors must adhere to WHO PSEA policies which are available in the WHO contractual agreements and in addition WHO has cultivated a climate allowing such issues to be brought forward through different channels.
- To complement its understanding of the effectiveness of the end-to-end process across the three levels of the organization, following introduction by Senior Management at Headquarters, the IEOAC discussed and challenged the PSEA process with the Head of WHO Representative Office of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as well as with the national consultant of the WHO Representative Office for Bangladesh.
- It noted that effective training of specific focal points on PSEA matters exists, however the Committee concurred with management that to allow PSEA issues to be addressed, it is fundamental to **cultivate a culture of trust at all levels of the organization and above all in remote areas in the field where it is more difficult to implement an established process.**

Recommendation IV

- Line managers of PSEA focal points should be made aware of the additional responsibilities of PSEA focal points to ensure necessary time and effort is fully allocated to this task.

Recommendation V

- WHO to expedite investigations pertaining to sexual exploitation and abuse whilst ensuring there is a balance in the analysis of information from both parties. The IEOAC reiterates the need for a strong reporting system to help all victims whilst ensuring a complementary support service over time

Mr **Christof** Gabriel Maetze (Chair), Mr **Jayantilal** Karia,
 Mr **Christopher** Mihm, Mr **Bert** Keuppens, Mr **Greg** Johnson.

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