

**138th WHO Executive Board
25-30 January, 2016**

**Agenda Item 5.2
*Member State Consultative Process on Governance Reform***

**Presentation of the Chairperson Report on the Second Open Member States
Meeting on Governance Reform**

**By Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco,
Permanent Representative of Mexico**

Madame Chair, Ms M. Precious Matsoso,
Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,
delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

- I thank the invitation to appear before this Executive Board session to introduce the Chairperson's Report on the Second Open Member States Meeting on Governance Reform, as contained in EB.138/6
- Before I get to the substance and suggest a way forward allow me to briefly make a pause and address "the elephant in the room". Let us recall that decision 136/16 adopted by this WHO governing body at its 136th session (February 3rd, 2015) requested the *Inclusive Member States Consultative Process on the WHO Governance Reform* to report directly to the Executive Board at its 138th session under a separate agenda item. I am here to fulfill those provisions. As you know, I was not consulted, and as the chair of PBAC just said, nor did I agree with the decision taken to include this matter in the agenda of the past 23rd session of the PBAC, as I believe that it was contrary to the mandate by Member States which is very clear and leaves no room for interpretation.
- Let me now recall that the Chairperson's Report represents the last phase of the *Inclusive Member States Consultative Process on the WHO Governance Reform* established with the aim to accelerate the WHO governance reform. Allow me also to stress the fact that the Process did not work in a vacuum. It followed and build upon recommendations made over several years by different bodies, both within and outside of the Organization, including the findings of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee (IEOAC) in January 2015, when it identified the risks related to the slow pace of the governance reform and to the lack of alignment in priorities of the three levels of the Organization.
- The Process consisted of the establishment of the Working Group on Governance Reform (Working Group) composed of two representatives of each of the six WHO Regions: Mozambique and South Africa (African region); Mexico and United States of America (Americas region); Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Morocco and Pakistan – one substituted the other as per regional agreement – (Eastern

Mediterranean region); Estonia and Russian Federation (European region); India and Thailand (South East Asian region); Australia and China (Western Pacific region).

- The Process was complemented by two meetings open to all Member States, with the aim to further examine and decide on the findings of the Working Group. The First Open Member States Meeting on Governance Reform was held in Geneva on 13 May 2015, and the Second Open Member States Meeting on Governance Reform was held in Geneva on 10–11 December 2015.
- During the **Second Open Member States Meeting on Governance Reform**, Member States discussed the **38 recommendations** that the Working Group agreed to and that were relevant to both **working methods of governing bodies** and the **alignment of the governance of the three levels of the Organization**.
- Different views were expressed and a number of proposals were made. Taking into consideration the discussions and proposals made during the first part of the Meeting, I issued a revised version with **22 recommendations** that was circulated among all participants.
- The revised version of the 22 recommendations was thoroughly discussed and a number of proposals were made during the last seating of the Second Open Member States Meeting (11 December 2015). Notwithstanding the efforts made, the Meeting was unable to agree on the recommendations due to several factors.
- As a result, under his own responsibility the Chairperson decided to submit to the Members of the Executive Board a report containing a **second revised version of the recommendations**, based on the discussions and proposals made during the last seating of the Meeting.
- During the process, it became clear to me that a number of Members support some recommendations and not others, while some other Members support different ones. This is also true for the Secretariat. This preferences have been frequently characterized as “priorities”.
- As with any multilateral process, the only way to resolve this differences is by including recommendations that are important to some in exchange of accepting recommendations that are relevant to others. In other words, **to compromise**.
- The set of recommendations contained in my report are the Chairperson’s best attempt to find a balance that may lead to a compromise. I honestly believe that such a balance is possible and that the package of recommendations contained in the report may constitute a good basis for a compromise.
- No question, this package of recommendations is but only one approach and there may well be many other options, but subtracting or adding individual recommendations with a narrow look is not one of them, as it may lead to losing the **necessary balance and the indispensable integral approach**. Identifying a compromise requires time and effort. It is not as simple as picking and choosing and certainly not a drafting exercise as the PBAC seems to recommend.

- If Members of the Executive Board are unable to adopt the second revised version of the 22 recommendations as **one package**, in other words, **to adopt a compromise**, then the Executive Board should, in my opinion, opt to pave the way for **further discussions on all the recommendations** and not only on the priorities of a handful of actors. A quick fix will only take away the incentives for agreeing on an integral package.
- In order to assist the Executive Board in making a decision, I would like to take the liberty of sharing with you some lessons-learned as a result of the process of last year with the sole purpose of improving the chances of success of any future exercise:
 1. As I said earlier, time is necessary to build confidence, identify an acceptable **balance** and strike a **compromise**. The time allocated to this exercise last year was clearly not enough, a situation that was worsened by the decision to cut short the **Second Open Member States Meeting on Governance Reform** by one day, a full third of the time initially allocated. A drafting or any other kind of grouping to meet in the sidelines of the EB will simply not do justice to the complexity of the issues and the need to retain an indispensable balance and integrity that may lead to a compromise.
 2. Discussions should **take place with the highest possible degree of inclusivity** in order to guarantee ownership of the process among all Member States. In spite of all efforts, countries that did not participate in the Working Group were not comfortable with accepting the recommendations agreed to by the Working Group. We should avoid repeating this disconnect.
 3. The members-driven process could do with more support from the Secretariat.
- With this in mind and fully aware that it is your decision, I respectfully suggest Members to the Executive Board to consider the following course of action based on the considerations and reflections I just shared with you:
 1. The establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group or an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Process to continue the discussions on WHO Governance Reform, based on the work done so far.
 2. That the Open-Ended Working Group or Open-Ended Intergovernmental Process works on the basis of both informal and formal meetings open to all Member States, with the aim to accelerate the work towards agreements, taking advantage of the inter-sessional and formal calendar of WHO governing.
 3. That the Open-Ended Working Group or Open-Ended Intergovernmental Process starts its work immediately after the 138th session of Executive Board and reports on its progress, results and/or recommendations for adoption, as appropriate, at the 69th World Health Assembly and/or the 70th World Health Assembly.

I believe that a **committed, open and constructive disposition** from all Members is indispensable to close the gaps in the WHO governance reform. We need to build trust and carefully listen to **all**.

I wish to thank again all those who participated in the exercise and allowed me to learn so much about the importance of an efficient and effective WHO for everybody.

Thank you.