



## 158th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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*Provisional Agenda Item 7.13-F*

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### F. STATUS OF THE PAN AMERICAN CENTERS

#### Introduction

1. This document was prepared in response to the mandate from the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to conduct periodic evaluations and reviews of the Pan American Centers, and report on institutional matters or technical progress of strategic importance to the Organization.

#### Background

2. The Pan American Centers have been an important modality of PAHO technical cooperation for almost 60 years. During this period PAHO has created or administered 13 centers,<sup>1</sup> eliminated nine, and transferred the administration of one of them to its own Governing Bodies. This document presents up-to-date strategic information on the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (BIREME) and the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA).<sup>2</sup>

#### Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (BIREME)

3. BIREME is a specialized center of PAHO/WHO founded in 1967 to channel the technical cooperation that the Organization provides to Member States in relation to scientific and technical information, and the sharing of knowledge and evidence that contribute to the ongoing improvement of health systems, education, and research.

4. Within PAHO's organizational structure, BIREME is situated within the Office of Knowledge Management, Bioethics, and Research, and has a specific biennial work plan (BWP) 2016-2017, approved by the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

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<sup>1</sup> CLATES, ECO, PASCAP, CEPANZO, INPPAZ, INCAP, CEPIS, Regional Program on Bioethics in Chile, CAREC, CFNI, CLAP, PANAFTOSA, and BIREME.

<sup>2</sup> On this occasion, it was not considered necessary to include information on the Latin American Center for Perinatology and Human Development/Women's and Reproductive Health (CLAP/WR) given that no changes of strategic importance have taken place since the last report.

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### ***Institutional Structure of BIREME***

5. Since its inception, BIREME's institutional structure was established by the Agreement on Maintenance and Development of the Center, signed by PAHO/WHO and the Ministries of Health (MINSAL) and Education (MEC) of Brazil, the Ministry of Health of the State of São Paulo (S-SP) and the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP). This Agreement expired on 1 March 2015.

6. In 2009, the 49th Directing Council of PAHO adopted Resolution CD49.R5 establishing a new institutional framework for BIREME, including its own statute.

7. BIREME's headquarters has been located in the São Paulo campus of the *Universidade Federal de São Paulo* (UNIFESP) in accordance with the abovementioned BIREME Maintenance Agreement to which the University is a signatory.

### ***Current Status of the Institutional Frameworks***

#### *Facilities and operations agreement*

8. Given the expiry of the abovementioned Maintenance Agreement, and in order to provide BIREME with a legal foundation under which to continue operations in Brazilian territory, the PAHO/WHO Representative in Brazil and BIREME Director developed a new agreement (*Termo de Cooperação*) directly with the Ministry of Health of Brazil and specifically for BIREME, which expressly recognizes BIREME's legal status as an integral part of PAHO, functioning under the Organization's basic agreements with the Government of Brazil. The *Termo de Cooperação* is under review by PAHO. This *Termo de Cooperação* will also ensure necessary financial contributions from the Government of Brazil to maintain BIREME's operations.

9. After almost 40 years of BIREME's dwelling at UNIFESP premises, the University has notified that it will be renovating its facilities and that BIREME can no longer maintain its headquarters in UNIFESP's campus. As a result, and after a thorough search and analysis of available options for BIREME's Headquarters, BIREME has relocated its facilities to rental premises located in the city of São Paulo. Some update of the new premises was necessary. The move took place on 1 April 2016.

10. At the end of 2015, 17 employees that had been assigned to work at BIREME by UNIFESP returned to the University. Their previous tasks were distributed among the remaining staff at BIREME.

11. During the first quarter of 2016, 19 local employees retired or took early retirement in accordance with Brazilian law.

12. A contingency plan for BIREME is in place during this transition period to guarantee its continued optimal functioning.

13. The post of Director of BIREME is currently under selection and the new Director is anticipated to assume duties in 2016.

***Short-term Challenges***

14. The upcoming challenges in this period include:
- a) finalize and operationalize the Agreement (*Termo de Cooperação*) with the Ministry of Health of Brazil;
  - b) appoint the new Director of BIREME;
  - c) structural and functional reorganization of BIREME to fit the needs of the BWP 2016-2017;
  - d) schedule the 2016 Scientific and Advisory Committee Meetings of the Center.

**Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA)**

15. PANAFTOSA is a PAHO center located in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro. It was created in 1951 pursuant an Agreement subscribed between the Government of Brazil and PAHO. Its initial purpose was to execute the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-mouth Disease. In 1998, the zoonotic reference, research, and technical cooperation activities were transferred from the Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonoses (INPPAZ) to PANAFTOSA. With the close of INPPAZ in 2005, PASB's technical team on food safety was moved to PANAFTOSA facilities.

***Recent progress at PANAFTOSA***

16. The 17th Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA, for its Spanish acronym) will be hosted by the Government of Paraguay and it will take place in Asunción in July 2016, with the theme "One Health and the Sustainable Development Goals." The theme will emphasize the link between animal health and public health and its contribution to sustainable development, as well as the need for good governance and long-term commitment among all sectors and actors to promote and improve the health of the people of the Americas today and future generations.

17. RIMSA is the only permanent regional forum that addresses issues, proposes actions and coordinates with the participation of the Ministers of Agriculture and Health of all Member States of PAHO. Through RIMSA, PAHO receives political support for its technical cooperation on veterinary public health in the field of food safety, eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas and prevention and control of zoonotic diseases. In addition, RIMSA supports and articulates issues related to the animal health/human health interface, critical for the prevention and control of emerging and neglected infectious diseases, as well as for the containment and reduction of the impact of antimicrobial resistance. This multisectoral meeting aims to generate high-level support

for PAHO's implementation of plans and projects related to thematic health-related areas as approved by PAHO's Governing Bodies.

**Action by the Executive Committee**

18. The Executive Committee is invited to take note of this progress report and to formulate the relevant recommendations.

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