

C. STATUS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF PAHO

1. The 49th Directing Council, held from 28 September to 2 October 2009, established an Audit Committee in the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).
2. The Audit Committee is to function pursuant to the Terms of Reference approved in Resolution CD49.R2 (Annex A). According to those Terms of Reference, the Committee serves the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) and PAHO's Member States in an independent expert advisory capacity. Through the Executive Committee, the Audit Committee advises on the operation of the Organization's financial controls, reporting structures, risk management processes, and other audit-related controls. The Committee is to be composed of three members appointed by the Executive Committee.
3. Audit Committee members shall reflect the highest level of integrity and must be fully independent of PAHO. The criteria for membership established in the Terms of Reference requires that candidates have recent and relevant senior-level financial, audit, and/or other oversight related experience.
4. According to the Terms of Reference, the process for identifying candidates for Audit Committee membership requires that the Director of the PASB draw up a list of qualified candidates to be submitted to the Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration (SPBA) prior to the Session of the Executive Committee where the election is to take place.
5. In order to identify a broad pool of highly qualified candidates in time for consideration by the Fourth Session of the SPBA that was to take place on 17–19 March 2010, the Director of the PASB retained the services of an executive search firm. Working closely with the executive search firm, PAHO's Secretariat developed a detailed advertising strategy, which included the development of a sourcing list of 76 persons. These individuals were then contacted in order to obtain names of potential candidates. A target list of United Nations organizations, international organizations, multilateral financial institutions, professional associations, and private sector entities was also developed. Advertisements were placed in leading print and online publications worldwide. A timeline was established in order to meet the deadlines established for the recruitment process. The closing date for submission of applications was 25 January 2010. The search firm received and screened 118 applications, out of which 32 qualified candidates were identified. The Director then selected six candidates from among this pool to be presented to the SPBA for consideration. Detailed curricula vitae of the six candidates were sent to Subcommittee members.

6. The Fourth Session of the SPBA appointed a Working Group consisting of the representatives of Barbados, Bolivia, and Guatemala to review the candidates' qualifications and summaries of their personal interviews, and draw up a ranked list. The Subcommittee emphasized that, in the interest of gender equity, at least one of the top three candidates on the list should be a woman.

7. Based on the Working Group's evaluation, the SPBA recommended that the first three candidates on the list be appointed, but included a fourth candidate in order to give the Executive Committee a choice. In order of preference, the candidates were: (a) Mr. Alain Gillette, (b) Mr. Peter Maertens, (c) Ms. Carman LaPointe, and (d) Ms. Amalia Lo Faso.

8. In accordance with the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference, the 146th Session of the Executive Committee, held on 21–25 June 2010, was requested to select three out of the four candidates recommended by the SPBA.

9. After extensive discussions, the Executive Committee agreed to follow the SPBA's recommendation and select the first three candidates proposed. It was subsequently determined by drawing of lots that Mr. Alain Gillette would serve on the Audit Committee for four years; Ms. Carman LaPointe, for three years; and Mr. Peter Maertens, for two years. To this end, the Executive Committee adopted Resolution CE146.R5, confirming the above-mentioned selections.

10. The individuals selected as members of PAHO's first Audit Committee were notified of their appointment by the Director of the PASB in July 2010. All three accepted their appointments. On 23 August 2010, however, Ms. Carman LaPointe informed the Director that she would not be able to serve her three-year term as a result of her recent appointment as the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nation's Office of Internal Oversight Services in New York.

11. In view of the resulting vacancy, the Director of the PASB contacted Ms. Amalia Lo Faso, the fourth finalist considered by the 146th Session of the Executive Committee. Ms. Lo Faso confirmed her continued interest and availability to form part of PAHO's Audit Committee and agreed that her name be submitted to the upcoming Executive Committee session that will take place on 1 October 2010 for consideration as an Audit Committee member for a three-year term.

12. If the 147th Executive Committee is able to fill this vacancy, it is anticipated that the inaugural session of the Audit Committee will take place in October or November 2010 in Washington D.C. This would enable the Audit Committee to begin its important work in time for the audit cycle that begins in January 2011.

Action by the Directing Council

13. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this report.

Annex

RESOLUTION

CD49.R2

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF PAHO

THE 49th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the document *Proposal for the Establishment of an Audit Committee* (Document CD49/26);

Acknowledging the Organization's ongoing efforts to establish a governance framework that reflects international best practices;

Noting the proposal to establish an independent expert advisory body to advise the Director and PAHO's Member States on the operation of the Organization's financial controls and reporting structures, risk management process, and other audit-related controls,

RESOLVES:

1. To establish the Audit Committee of the Pan American Health Organization.
2. To approve the Terms of Reference for the PAHO Audit Committee (see Annex).

Annex

(Second plenary, 28 September 2009)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF PAHO

Guiding Principle

1. An Audit Committee shall be established by the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to exercise an independent consultative function, providing the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau ("the Director") and the PAHO Member States, through the Executive Committee, with advice on the operation of the Organization's financial controls and reporting structures, risk management processes, and other audit-related controls. The Committee shall perform this function

through independent reviews of the work carried out by PAHO's system of internal and external controls, including PAHO's Office of Internal Oversight and Evaluation Services, the External Auditor, and the administration and management of the Organization. The work of the Audit Committee shall be conducted in accordance with internationally accepted standards and best practices and in compliance with PAHO's policies, regulations, and rules. The Audit Committee does not substitute the function of the Executive Committee of PAHO or of its Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration (SPBA).

Role of the Committee

2. The PAHO Audit Committee shall:
 - (a) review and monitor the adequacy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Organization's risk assessment and management processes, the system of internal and external controls (including PAHO's internal oversight and External Auditor function), and the timely and effective implementation by management of audit recommendations;
 - (b) advise on issues related to the system of internal and external controls, their strategies, work plans, and performance;
 - (c) report on any matter of PAHO policy and procedure requiring corrective action and on improvements recommended in the area of controls, including evaluation, audit, and risk management;
 - (d) comment on the work plans and the proposed budget of the internal and external audit functions;
 - (e) advise on the operational implications of the issues and trends apparent in the financial statements of the Organization and significant financial reporting policy issues;
 - (f) advise on the appropriateness and effectiveness of accounting policies and disclosure practices and assess changes and risks in those policies; and
 - (g) advise the Director in the selection process of the Auditor General of PAHO, and advise the Executive Committee in the selection of the External Auditor.

Membership of the Committee

3. The Audit Committee shall be composed of three members who shall reflect the highest level of integrity and be fully independent from PAHO. The Audit Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of PAHO. Members shall serve in their

personal capacity. Each Member shall serve as Chairperson of the Committee for one year on a rotational basis.

Criteria for Membership

4. All members of the Committee must have recent and relevant senior-level financial, audit, and/or other oversight related experience. Such experience should reflect, to the extent possible:

- (a) experience in preparing, auditing, analyzing, or evaluating financial statements that present a breadth and level of complexity of accounting issues that are generally comparable to the breadth and complexity of issues faced by PAHO, including an understanding of relevant accepted accounting principles;
- (b) an understanding of and, if possible, relevant experience in the inspection, monitoring, and evaluation processes;
- (c) an understanding of internal control, risk management, investigation, and procedures for financial reporting; and
- (d) a general understanding of the organization, structure, and functioning of international organizations in the UN system.

Terms of Appointment

5. The Members of the Audit Committee shall be appointed to serve no more than two full terms of three years each. The election cycle shall be fixed upon establishment of the Committee. Members may be reelected for a second and final term of three years, with the exception of the initial three Members of the Committee, who shall be appointed by drawing of lots to serve an initial term of two, three, or four years. Former members of the Audit Committee may be reappointed to the Committee subject to not serving more than two full terms.

Call for Proposals

6. The Director shall recommend a list of qualified candidates. The list will be notified to the SPBA prior to the Executive Committee Session and must include an extended CV of each of the candidates.

7. The list of candidates will be subject to assessment, which may include requests for additional information and subsequent modification. The highest ranked candidates, according to the Criteria for Membership, will be proposed by the SPBA to the Executive Committee for decision.

Responsibility of Members

8. In performing their functions, Members of the Audit Committee shall neither seek nor receive instructions from any national government authority. They shall act in an advisory, non-executive, capacity and be fully independent from any government or PAHO body, structure, or entity. Members shall be guided solely by their expertise and professional judgment, taking into account the collective decisions of PAHO's Governing Bodies.

9. Members of the Audit Committee shall be required to sign a confidentiality statement at the beginning of their tenure, as well as a PAHO Declaration of Interest Form. Where an actual or potential conflict of interest arises, the Member shall declare such interest to the Committee and will be excused from the Committee's discussion on the corresponding issue.

Meetings and Rules of Procedure

10. The PAHO Audit Committee shall normally meet in a regular session twice a year. Additional meetings may be scheduled on an *ad hoc* basis as necessary. The Chairperson of the Committee shall determine the timing of meetings and the need for any additional meetings in the course of the year. He/she shall also set the agenda of the meetings, taking into account relevant requests from the Director and/or the Executive Committee of PAHO. The meetings shall be convened by the Secretariat of the Committee on behalf of the Chairperson. Members of the Audit Committee shall normally be given at least four weeks' notice of meetings.

11. The Director, the External Auditor, the Auditor General of PAHO, the Director of Administration of PAHO, and the Financial Resources Manager of PAHO shall attend meetings of the Audit Committee at the invitation of the Chairperson of the Committee.

12. The Audit Committee may decide to meet in closed session from time to time as determined by the Committee.

13. The Audit Committee shall endeavor to work on the basis of consensus.

14. Members serve in their personal capacity and cannot be represented by an alternate attendee.

15. The administrative and secretariat support function of the Audit Committee, including the preparation and maintenance of minutes of the meetings, shall be carried out by independent staff hired on an as needed basis for that purpose, and will report directly to the Chairperson on matters relating to the work of the Audit Committee.

Disclosure

16. The Audit Committee secretariat, observers, and any third party invited by the Committee to attend its sessions shall not make any document or information public without the Committee's prior authorization.

17. Any Audit Committee Member reporting on the Committee's work shall ensure that confidential materials are secured and shall keep other Members adequately informed.

Access

18. The Audit Committee shall have access to all records and documents of the Organization, including, but not limited to, audit reports and work documents of the Office of Internal Oversight and Evaluation Services, and reports issued by the External Auditors.

19. The Audit Committee shall be able to call upon any PAHO staff member or employee, including senior management of the Organization, and request meetings with any parties, as it deems necessary to obtain information relevant to its work.

20. PAHO's External Auditors and Auditor General shall also have unrestricted and confidential access to the Chairperson of the Committee.

21. The Audit Committee may obtain legal or other independent professional advice if it is considered necessary.

Reporting

22. The Chairperson of the Audit Committee shall interact regularly with and report to the Director on the results of the Committee's deliberations, as well as any issues relevant to its business.

23. The Audit Committee shall prepare an annual report of its work for the Executive Committee of PAHO. The Audit Committee may also prepare ad-hoc reports as requested by the Executive Committee. The Director shall be given the opportunity to comment on all reports prior to their submission to the Executive Committee.

Resources

24. The Audit Committee shall be provided with such resources as are necessary to undertake its duties. Funds shall be included in the biennial budget of the Organization to provide for administrative support, travel, and accommodation costs in relation to

Committee Members' duties. Such travel shall be conducted in accordance with PAHO regulations and rules. The Members shall serve without remuneration from PAHO.

Review of the Terms of Reference

25. The Executive Committee will periodically review the output of the Audit Committee, assess its effectiveness and make appropriate recommendations, in consultation with the Director, regarding its membership and Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee may be modified by the Directing Council as necessary.
