

## 160th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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*Provisional Agenda Item 7.9-B*

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### **B. SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Member States of relevant developments since the last report presented in 2016 with regard to public health-related agreements and resolutions within the framework of subregional integration processes of interest to the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

2. This report also covers the progress made in activities carried out as part of cooperation agreements between PAHO and subregional integration entities.

3. The framework for subregional technical cooperation is supported by Resolution CD45.R6 (1), adopted by the Directing Council in 2004. With the adoption of this resolution, subregional technical cooperation was included in the budget policy in order to promote the strengthening of PAHO collaboration in integration processes in three subregions: Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

4. Through the signing of specific agreements and memorandums of understanding, PAHO currently provides technical cooperation to the subregional integration organizations mentioned below. This report includes a table showing the new developments and progress made in the implementation of priority resolutions emanating from these integration bodies, their relation to PAHO activities, and the measures that the Organization has supported.

#### **a) Central America**

- Central American Integration System (SICA): Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMISCA)
  - Meeting of the Health Sector of Central America and the Dominican Republic (RESSCAD)
  - Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project (MIDP)
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**b) Caribbean**

- Caribbean Community (CARICOM): Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD); Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED)

**c) South America**

- Andean Community: Andean Health Agency—Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS/CONHU)
- Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR): Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Working Subgroup on Health 11 on Health (SGT 11)
- Union of South American Nations (UNASUR): South American Health Council
- Pacific Alliance: Council of Vice Ministers of Health
- Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)
- Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)

***Integration Entities in Central America******Central American Integration System (SICA)<sup>1</sup>: COMISCA***

5. COMISCA is the forum that brings together the Central American Ministers of Health. The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), as the lead agency in health matters in the Region, participates in meetings of the Council by invitation of the presidency pro tempore or the COMISCA Executive Secretariat.

6. COMISCA convenes regular sessions twice a year in the countries that hold the presidency pro tempore. The presidency rotates among the member countries every six months. The 45th Meeting of COMISCA was held on 6 December 2016 in Managua, Nicaragua.

<b>COMISCA</b>		
<b>Technical and political forum</b>	<b>PAHO-related agreements and resolutions</b>	<b>Subregional impact and progress</b>
45th Meeting of COMISCA, held on 6 December 2016 in Managua, Nicaragua	Ending Preventable Maternal and Child Deaths: A Promise Renewed	The Member States agreed to include the assessment and monitoring of health inequalities, especially those related to women, children, and adolescents, in their respective health information systems.

<sup>1</sup> Link to information on SICA: <http://www.sica.int/>.

<b>COMISCA</b>		
<b>Technical and political forum</b>	<b>PAHO-related agreements and resolutions</b>	<b>Subregional impact and progress</b>
	Transformation of RESSCAD into the Regional Intersectoral Forum for Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic	The Member States approved the proposal for transformation of RESSCAD and thanked PAHO for its contribution to 32 years of RESSCAD.
	Comprehensive proposal for joint negotiations and procurement of medicines	The Member States approved the sixth version of the harmonized list of medicines and asked the Executive Secretariat of COMISCA for a revised proposal for the joint financing of medicines.

*Meeting of the Health Sector for Central America and the Dominican Republic (RESSCAD)<sup>2</sup>*

7. The Ministers of Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic, along with the social security and water and sanitation institutions, participated in the RESSCAD meeting. PAHO serves as the technical secretariat for this forum. Meetings are held once a year. The last meeting was held on 20–21 October 2016 in Managua, Nicaragua.

<b>RESSCAD</b>		
<b>Technical and political forum</b>	<b>PAHO-related agreements and resolutions</b>	<b>Subregional impact and progress</b>
Agreements of the 32nd RESSCAD, held on 20-21 October 2016 in Managua, Nicaragua	Agreement 1, on the transformation of RESSCAD into the Regional Intersectoral Forum for Health of Central America and Dominican Republic	The Regional Intersectoral Forum for Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic will expand the participation of SICA entities beyond the health sector and will seek to improve coordination with COMISCA. COMISCA will serve as secretariat of the Forum. PAHO is called to provide technical advice to the Forum.
	Agreement 2, on the contribution of social security towards universal health in Central America	The need for the systematic collection of the several health reform processes and the sharing of experiences was recognized. PAHO technical cooperation is requested for the systematic collection of information.

<sup>2</sup> Link to information on RESSCAD [in Spanish]: <http://www.paho.org/resscad/>.

RESSCAD		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
	Agreement 3, on the health of undocumented migrants	The member states agreed to amply disseminate PAHO Resolution CD55.R13 (2016) and to advocate for a public health approach to the topic.
	Agreement 4, on a comprehensive and public health approach to substance abuse	The member states agreed to develop a subregional plan, taking country experiences into consideration, and to use PAHO Resolution CD51.R9 (2011) as a reference framework.

*Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project: Mesoamerican Public Health System*<sup>3</sup>

8. The Mesoamerican Project is a mechanism developed by 10 Mesoamerican countries to strengthen regional integration and promote economic and social development in the participating countries. The objective is to improve conditions and human prosperity among the population. It was officially launched by the Presidents and Heads of State and Government at the Tenth Tuxtla Dialogue and Agreement Mechanism Summit, held in Tabasco, Mexico, on 27-28 June 2008.

*Mesoamerican Public Health System*

9. Colombia assumed the presidency pro tempore in August 2016 during a workshop to review the procedures of the system. In November 2016, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) held a workshop on the design and development of a financial platform for funding the Master Mesoamerican Projects. PAHO provided technical support.

*Caribbean Integration Entities*

*Caribbean Community (CARICOM)*<sup>4</sup>

10. The CARICOM Ministers of Health come together to meet as the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD). COHSOD is responsible for the promotion of health, education, and living and working conditions in the Caribbean Community.

11. The COHSOD meetings are traditionally held at PAHO Headquarters prior to the Pan American Sanitary Conference or the Directing Council. The most recent meeting took place on 24-25 September 2016 in Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> Link to information on the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project: <http://www.proyectomesoamerica.org/joomla>.

<sup>4</sup> Link to information on CARICOM: [www.caricom.org](http://www.caricom.org).

12. The CARICOM Heads of Government met in Georgetown, Guyana, for the 28th Intersessional Meeting in February 2016. Parallel to the Heads of Government meeting, CARICOM organized a Forum of Caribbean First Ladies/Spouses of the CARICOM Heads of Government to discuss the *Every Caribbean Girl, Every Caribbean Woman Initiative*. The Heads of Government welcomed the establishment of the Forum of CARICOM First Ladies and Spouses of Heads of State and Government Network and agreed to champion the initiative and other activities focused on addressing violence against women and women's and children's health.

CARICOM		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
Thirtieth Meeting of COHSOD: Health, 24-25 September 2016	Caribbean Cooperation in Health IV (CCH IV): Framework for coordinated action on health in the Caribbean	CCH IV was endorsed. It was requested that Chief Medical Officers be provided with additional resources to ensure effective implementation. The meeting also emphasized the need for increased capacity of the CARICOM Secretariat for the implementation of CCH IV.
	PAHO Subregional Cooperation Strategy	The Subregional Cooperation Strategy was endorsed as the PAHO response in support of CCH IV and PAHO/WHO technical cooperation in the subregion.
	Elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (EMTCT)	To date, two of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories in the Caribbean have been approved for certification of EMTCT and two more are expected to be reviewed in April 2017. The validation process for the Eastern Caribbean countries is expected to begin shortly.
	Noncommunicable diseases	The meeting presented the findings from the evaluation of the 2007 Heads of Government NCD Summit Declaration. It also committed to implement policies to address NCDs agreed upon by the Heads of Government in 2016. The Chairs of COHSOD and the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) were requested to establish a regional multisectoral task force to monitor progress in the implementation of these priorities and

<b>CARICOM</b>		
<b>Technical and political forum</b>	<b>PAHO-related agreements and resolutions</b>	<b>Subregional impact and progress</b>
		report annually to the Heads of Government Conference.
	Poliomyelitis	Countries were urged to increase efforts to achieve at least 95% polio vaccination coverage in all health districts. They were also urged to comply with the requirements of the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018, as well as the timeline for the submission of country plans.
	Health information system harmonization	Information Systems for Health (ISH), a comprehensive proposal developed by PAHO in collaboration with the Caribbean Technical Working Group on Information Systems for Health, was presented. The Member States agreed to champion ISH in the Caribbean and endorsed a high-level meeting on the subject. That meeting was held in Kingston, Jamaica, on 7–8 November 2016.
	Health financing options	Member States were encouraged to find efficiencies in health financing, to strengthen primary health care, and to move towards integrated health service delivery networks. They were requested to consider carrying out fiscal space studies for health and to consider a high-level dialogue on improving efficiency in health services delivery and sustainable financing.
	Regional health security: International Health Regulations (IHR)	Member States noted the progress made by States Parties in the implementation of the IHR and noted the increased number of Caribbean countries that have become members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to develop capacities to deal with radionuclear and chemical hazards. They were encouraged to participate in the global

CARICOM		
Technical and political forum	PAHO-related agreements and resolutions	Subregional impact and progress
		IHR Monitoring Framework post 2016.
	Regional health security: Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) proposal from the United States of America	The Government of the United States presented the GHSA, which calls for the development of a five-year roadmap for CARICOM with regional stakeholders and partners, including the UK and Canada. Note was taken of the GHSA, and its complementarity with the WHO International Health Regulations was recognized. Member States were encouraged to participate in joint external evaluations.
	Progress on the Caribbean Regulatory System (CRS), an effort to register essential generic medicines and carry out pharmacovigilance of these medicines in CARICOM	The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), with technical support from PAHO, is in the initial phases of implementing the CRS. The COHSOD meeting reaffirmed its support for the Initiative and encouraged Ministers to engage with the CRS by signing the individual member state memorandums of understanding with CARPHA and to designate a focal point.

### *Integration Entities in South America*

*Andean Community (CAN): Andean Health Agency–Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS/CONHU)*<sup>5</sup>

13. The Andean Health Agency–Hipólito Unanue Agreement (ORAS/CONHU), as part of the Andean Integration System, acts as executive secretariat for the Meeting of Ministers of Health of the Andean Area (REMSAA).<sup>6</sup> PAHO participates in these meetings as the technical advisory agency on health. An umbrella memorandum of understanding was signed between PAHO and ORAS/CONHU on 16 March 2017. The XXXVI REMSAA meeting will be held in Venezuela on 17–18 April 2017, at which Bolivia will transfer the pro tempore presidency of REMSAA to Venezuela.

<sup>5</sup> Link to information on ORAS-CONHU [in Spanish]: <http://www.orasconhu.org/>.

<sup>6</sup> Link to information on REMSAA resolutions [in Spanish]: <http://www.orasconhu.org/reuniones-ordinarias>.

*Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR):<sup>7</sup> Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Working Subgroup 11, on Health (SGT 11)*

14. Health issues are addressed by Working Subgroup 11 on Health and in the Meeting of Ministers of Health of MERCOSUR and Associated States (the Meeting). The Working Subgroup is a technical body made up of representatives of the States Parties of MERCOSUR. Its main objective is the formulation and harmonization of common regulations in MERCOSUR within each area of jurisdiction. The main objective of the Meeting is to harmonize strategic policies linked with public health and align them with regional priorities, as well as to develop plans and programs of action for their joint implementation. The Member States rotate the pro tempore presidency every six months. Venezuela held it in the second half of 2016 and Argentina currently holds it for the first half of 2017. Meetings are held in the country that holds the presidency pro tempore. PAHO participates as the technical advisory agency on health. An umbrella memorandum of understanding was signed between PAHO and MERCOSUR on 11 June 2015. No meetings of the MERCOSUR Ministers of Health have been held since the last report. The next meeting will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 17 June 2017.

*Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)<sup>8</sup>*

15. UNASUR has a South American Council on Health (CSS), which is made up of the Coordinating Committee, the Technical Secretariat, and five technical groups. The Technical Secretariat, consisting of representatives from three Member States (the Member holding the current presidency pro tempore and the Members holding the past and future presidencies pro tempore), convenes and supports the Council's meetings. Venezuela was granted the presidency pro tempore for one year in April 2016. The most recent meeting of the CSS was held on 31 March 2017 in Quito, Ecuador; agreements were being finalized.

*Pacific Alliance<sup>9</sup>*

16. The Pacific Alliance is a Latin American trade bloc that currently consists of four Member States that border the Pacific Ocean: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Health has been included on the Alliance's agenda at vice ministerial meetings held in Colombia (22 June 2015) and Peru (29 February 2016). No date has been identified for the next ministerial meeting.

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<sup>7</sup> Link to information on MERCOSUR: <http://www.mercosur.int/>.

<sup>8</sup> Link to information on the UNASUR: [www.unasursg.org](http://www.unasursg.org).

<sup>9</sup> Link to information on the Pacific Alliance: <https://alianzapacifico.net/#inicio>.



*Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America–People’s Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), Technical Working Group*<sup>10</sup>

17. The Alliance was founded in Havana, Cuba, on 14 December 2004 through an agreement between Venezuela and Cuba. The current membership includes 11 Latin American and Caribbean countries. The South American members of ALBA-TCP are Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

18. At the XIV ALBA-TCP Summit, held on 5 March 2017 in Caracas, Venezuela, a new Executive Secretary of the Alliance was named. There were no health-related resolutions from that meeting.

**Action by the Executive Committee**

19. The Executive Committee is invited to take note of this report and to formulate any recommendations it deems relevant.

**References**

1. Pan American Health Organization. Regional Program Budget Policy [Internet]. 45th Directing Council of PAHO, 56th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas; 2004 Sep 27-Oct 1; Washington, DC. Washington, DC: PAHO; 2004 (Document CD45.R6) [cited 2017 Apr 10]. Available from: <http://www1.paho.org/english/gov/cd/CD45.r6-e.pdf>

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<sup>10</sup> Link to information on ALBA: [www.portalalba.org](http://www.portalalba.org).