



# Leadership, Coordination and Support

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The Regional Director makes his opening address to the October 2017 session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Brisbane, Australia.

## Introduction

The Office of the Regional Director, the Division of Programme Management and the Division of Administration and Finance work in close coordination to support WHO's work in the Western Pacific Region, coordinating technical programmes, country support, partner and donor relations, administrative and financial support, and communications.

The work is guided by the Regional Director's vision of ensuring countries are always

the starting point for WHO's work. This year, the team has led efforts to strengthen communications, promote a stronger culture of teamwork and collaboration among staff within the Region, promote stronger accountability and transparency, and increase the diversity of the WHO workforce within the Region.

### Office of the Regional Director

The Office of the Regional Director (RDO) directly supports the work of the Regional Director as the leader of WHO's work within the Western Pacific Region, and as a member of WHO's global senior management team. RDO also provides leadership and coordination of communications,



external relations and partnerships, and information products and services, and supports the work of WHO governing bodies.

The Communications unit (COM) within RDO works closely with the Region's 15 WHO country offices, technical divisions and WHO headquarters to provide timely, accurate, credible, understandable, relevant and actionable health information and advice to policy-makers, partners and the public. This year, RDO has led a process to strengthen WHO's communications in the Region.

Strong communications rely on high-quality publications, information products and translation services. The Information Products and Services team (IPS), which includes the Library, the Publications unit and the Translation team, assists WHO staff and Member States in creating, translating, disseminating and retrieving health-related information.

The External Relations (ERP) unit supports good relationships with the 42 donors that directly support WHO work in the Region.

ERP also ensures transparency and accountability in the use of donor funds, through rigorous systems of grant management and sustained coordination with technical units and country offices to ensure timely and high-quality donor reports. In the Western Pacific Region, ERP also coordinates the implementation of the *Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors*, adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2016.

## Division of Programme Management

The Division of Programme Management (DPM) coordinates technical cooperation with Member States through programme development and operations, country support and editorial services. The Division employs results-based management and cross-cutting approaches in order to ensure results at the country level. DPM directs strategic and operational plan-

ning as well as resource allocation based on priorities identified by WHO governing bodies – the World Health Assembly, the Executive Board and the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific. Its work is guided by the Programme Committee and country cooperation strategies. The Division is also responsible for overall coordination of governing body meetings, including the annual session of the Regional Committee.

The Programme Development and Operations (PDO) unit coordinates the implementation of the programme budget across the Region. Over the past year, the unit supported the closure of Programme Budget 2016–2017 with a 99% implementation rate against available resources – one of the highest of all WHO regions. This was achieved in partnership with the Programme Management Officers' Network, which is coordinated by PDO. Together they planned and rolled out Programme Budget 2018–2019 and prepared for the transition to the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, and will be instrumental in ensuring its effective implementation throughout the Region. PDO is also responsible for coordinating and convening regional meetings, more than 75 of which were held over the past year, involving Member State representatives, partners and more than 300 experts.

The Country Support Unit (CSU) works closely with WHO country offices to ensure that Member State priorities and needs are at the centre of all work. The unit also coordinates the development, implementation, monitoring and review of WHO country cooperation strategies – which are jointly developed with Member States to guide WHO work in countries. CSU helps drive WHO reform in the Region, serves as a regional



The Regional Director discusses Member State concerns during the October 2017 session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Brisbane, Australia.

focal point for the WHO transformation and implements WHO evaluation policies in the Region. The unit also coordinates WHO's work with other United Nations agencies and global health initiatives.

The Editorial Services team (EDT) ensures the quality of WHO official documents and information products by providing editorial guidance and support across the Organization. The team coordinates all documentation for the Regional Committee from all divisions in the Region, as well as supporting the communications needs of the Regional Director. In general, EDT supports quality control for all publications and communications products at the Regional Office.

## Division of Administration and Finance

The Division of Administration and Finance (DAF) is comprised of three units – Budget and Finance, Human Resources Management, and Information Technologies and Administration. The Division ensures accountability and transparency in the use of funds through diligent reporting and oversight. Effective procedures for recruiting and retaining skilled staff, as well as support for equipping and empowering staff, help WHO deliver meaningful results in the Western Pacific Region.

The Budget and Finance unit within the Division provides guidance, policies and reporting procedures that strengthen internal financial control for compliance and quality assurance.

Direct Financial Cooperation (DFC) activities were implemented and reported in a timely manner in Member States across

the Region, with financial support by the Organization that would otherwise have come from local government coffers. These payments help governments to strengthen health development capacity, simultaneously enhancing the impact of WHO technical cooperation. The Region has maintained zero overdue DFCs since September 2015. To ensure results, DFC quality-assurance activities were conducted in every WHO country office in the Region.

The Human Resources Management unit is tasked with recruiting world-class experts and getting them on board in the shortest time possible. The unit also takes into account gender and geographical representation to ensure balance and diversity among staff in the Region.

In 2017, the Region completed 100% of staff performance appraisals, known as Performance Management and Development System reviews. The Regional Office for the Western Pacific was the only major WHO office to achieve full on-time compliance.

The Information Technology group focused on managing risks and increasing compliance over the past year. Main initiatives focused on increasing the redundancy of the infrastructure, enhancing network quality, and delivering administrative and technical IT solutions to meet programme objectives. Key achievements included: development of the global risk management tool; significant enhancements to the regional analytics portal; and development of systems to manage the fellowship programme. The team also continued its close technological involvement in the roll-out of the Pohnpei Dispensary Strengthening Programme.

In the Administrative Services Unit, the year saw a comprehensive review of services provided by external partners, which led to lower costs and efficiencies. Further, the unit continued to ensure security and an optimal working environment by enhancing a number of areas on the grounds of the Regional Office.

In addition, the Division assisted office relocations in Malaysia in order to operate more efficiently and meet the requirements of the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards. ■



Handling everything from simultaneous translations to hotel reservations, the WHO team behind the scenes works to ensure that the session of the Regional Committee goes smoothly.

# 1. Creating a culture of information-sharing and teamwork



Living the Healthy City vision, WHO staff from the Lao office ride bicycles around the capital of Vientiane.

To strengthen country support, WHO staff throughout the Western Pacific Region came together six times this year to discuss key cross-cutting issues through the Technical Coordinators Meeting (TCM).

Initiated by the Regional Director in 2014, the TCM is held every two months at the

Regional Office, with country offices connecting via videoconference. The meeting promotes open communication, provides updates on major regional events and acts as a forum to discuss matters that affect everyone.

This year, TCMs covered a range of issues, from technical items such as triple elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis and syphilis, to operational challenges and accountability issues.

In January, the TCM was taken through a disaster simulation exercise: a mock Category 5 *Typhoon Tawhiri* striking the Philippines. The activity helped familiarize staff with the *Western Pacific Regional Emergency Response Framework*. They experienced first-hand what would happen if a disaster had struck. The exercise showed all staff that they have a role to play, which is especially useful in preparing staff who are not exposed to the health emergencies area.

In another TCM, staff discussed how the Regional Office can make regional meetings more effective. Staff developed recommendations on providing greater value for money and more impact for participants, such as improved planning processes with better peer review and the use of videoconference consultations when suitable. During TCMs, staff have the opportunity to engage with the Regional Director and discuss his strategic direction for the Region. As a result, staff have become better connected to one another, creating a stronger sense of family across the Region. ■



## 2. Communications

Strategic, effective and well-coordinated communications are crucial for WHO to help Member States and other partners build a better, healthier future for people across the Western Pacific Region.

The Regional Director has identified strategic communications as a key priority for WHO's work in the Region. Communications is especially important in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), when an increasingly crowded and complex development landscape means WHO must communicate proactively and strategically in order to do the job Member States expect. At the country level, strong communications and advocacy from WHO are more important than ever – to provide health information to the public, as well as to help shape the health policy agenda.

In order to strengthen WHO communications work in the Region from 2017 to 2018, RDO led a review of communications including a regional stakeholder survey – comprising in-depth interviews and an online survey of WHO staff, interviews with representatives of five Member States in the Region, as well as interviews with a range of media stakeholders.

Following the survey in July 2017, a new *Strategic Communications Framework for WHO in the Western Pacific Region* was developed and finalized. This framework guides WHO's approach to communications in the Region. It focuses on strengthening communications support to country offices, stronger corporate communications, better media relations, more engagement



WHO communications officers practise for a press conference. Good communications help WHO to inform policy-makers, partners and populations about public health.

on social media and other digital platforms, and strategic programme communications. The framework aims to use communications to drive positive health outcomes through, for instance, health awareness campaigns and advocacy. We are getting better at telling the story of WHO's work in the Region. An overhaul of the WHO Regional Office website is also under way.

This new approach is already bearing fruit. The Western Pacific Regional Office has the

biggest following of all Regions on Facebook, grew 500% on Twitter over the past year, and supported many country offices in increasing their engagement via social media. The network of WHO communicators across the Region is stronger than ever before, and country offices are increasingly active in using communications as a health promotion and programme tool. ■

### 3. Accountability and risk management in the Western Pacific Region

Every WHO staff member in the Western Pacific Region plays a part in ensuring the efficient use of resources in an ethical and

transparent manner in order to achieve the objectives and goals of the Organization. Under the leadership of the Regional

Director, the Regional Office has established the Accountability Framework for the Western Pacific Region. It acts as an enabler by providing the overall architecture for accountability within the Region and defining what it entails. The framework defines the roles and responsibilities of staff members and shows how integral they are for the Organization to fulfil its goals and mission. Risk management is an intertwined and critical component of the framework that works in tandem with accountability.

The Region is taking a leading role globally in improving accountability through cultural and behavioural change in the Organization to accept and own responsibility for the risks involved in working to achieve results.

The Region endeavours to foster a culture that encourages dialogue about risk and an effective response to risk, both strategically and in daily operations.

A clear risk management process was incorporated in the programme budget planning activities over the past year. This process will continue to be an important part of the planning cycle, including monitoring and evaluation. This systematic risk management process informs decision-making and embeds risk management into all corporate processes and culture throughout the Region. ■



A WHO staff member demonstrates how to use a “tippy tap”, a simple device for handwashing with running water. Every WHO staff member makes the most efficient use of resources in order to make a real impact for the people we serve.



## 4. Better reflecting the diversity of Member States

Responding to Member State requests, the Human Resources Management unit and the Division of Programme Management are working together to support the GoWHO initiative, which addresses the issue of under-representation of Member States in WHO staffing.

The WHO human resources policy highlights the desirability of recruiting staff from as wide a geographic basis as possible. Still, 32% of Member States continue to be either unrepresented or under-represented in the international professional staff category.

Through a series of workshops and learning opportunities, the GoWHO initiative supports those Member States by working to raise awareness of WHO, encouraging young people to pursue a career in public health and attracting talent. The initiative also provides coaching on how to prepare to join WHO.

Over the past 12 months, workshops were held in China, Fiji and Japan, with nearly 300 face-to-face participants. In Japan, three satellite sessions were connected to the Tokyo workshop via videoconference,

and 16 000 people tuned in to a live stream in China.

Workshop participants were introduced to WHO and shown ways to improve their resumes and written tests. They also practised competency-based interviews with feedback from peers and WHO staff.

“Thank you very much for conducting this workshop,” wrote one participant. “It helped me to understand the overall recruitment process of WHO and what they expect, and was full of practical tips.” ■



Group photo of WHO country office staff in Cambodia.

## 5. Editorial services go greener

Governing body documents used to take weeks of staff overtime, reams of paper and thousands of litres of fossil fuels to dispatch to Member State representatives. That was until Editorial Services (EDT) converted to true “green” documentation for the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.

Now Member States receive working documents in enhanced Portable Document Format, or PDF. This initiative allows technical units to spend more time improving content, embedding links to supporting documents for reference and previous governing body decisions for context. This feature allows Member States to simply click on hyperlinks, rather than searching for supporting materials.

As a result, Member States receive governing body documents sooner and in a format that is easier to share for translation, for example, and to verify receipt. Not surprisingly, Member State representatives have expressed broad satisfaction with the convenience and functionality of the new documentation system, not to mention the kilos of papers they no longer have to carry. EDT still makes a limited number of hard copies available – both of working documents and daily journals – for representatives at the Regional Committee session. All documents are also posted on the WHO Regional Office website.

While boosting connectivity and convenience, the new document system significantly shrunk the carbon footprint of the Division of Programme Management, as well as ship-



WHO looks for ways to reduce its carbon footprint in the Region. Green policies mean more green spaces for people to enjoy, like these children playing in the mountains of Benguet in the Philippines.

ping and overtime costs. In all, document production and dispatch costs shrunk by more than US\$ 35 000 in 2017, compared to previous regional committees.

To carry out this initiative, EDT staff mastered techniques for converting documents so that they add enhancements to docu-

ments while improving the security and portability of WHO documents.

For the sixty-ninth session of the Regional Committee, EDT will look to further enhance security and functionality of documents, while updating Member State contacts and improving convenience for participants. ■





