



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

WPR/RC24/11
15 June 1973

Twenty-fourth Session
Wellington
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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Provisional agenda item 20

FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

1. In past years, the Regional Committee has adopted a number of resolutions relating to future sessions of the Regional Committee.¹ At its twenty-third session, the Regional Committee adopted two resolutions.
2. In resolution WPR/RC23.R22, adopted on 5 October 1972, the Committee accepted the invitation of the Government of Malaysia to hold its twenty-fifth session in Kuala Lumpur.
3. In resolution WPR/RC23.R23, adopted on 5 October 1972, the Committee decided "to consider the question of the venue of the twenty-sixth session (1975) of the Regional Committee and of holding alternate sessions at Regional Headquarters at its twenty-fourth session".
4. An extract from the summary records of the Regional Committee is attached to assist the Regional Committee in its discussion of the subject.

¹Resolution WPR/RC12.R11, Handbook of Resolutions and Decisions of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, 1972, 7th ed., section 5.3.2(12), page 7.

Resolution WPR/RC22.R17, Handbook of Resolutions and Decisions of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, 1972, 7th ed., section 5.4.3, pages 20-21.

ANNEX 1

EXTRACT FROM THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SIXTH MEETING
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE
(Wednesday, 4 October 1972)

TIME, PLACE AND DURATION OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH AND
TWENTY-FIFTH SESSIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE: Item 25
of the Agenda

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR recalled that the Committee had accepted the invitation extended by the New Zealand Government to hold its twenty-fourth session in Wellington. The dates would be from 28 August to 5 September 1973, because of the accommodation available in Wellington. Since the proposed programme and budget would have to be prepared in a new form for the next session, the earlier date would entail considerable effort on the part of the Secretariat. In regard to the twenty-fifth session to be held in 1974, the Government of Malaysia had offered to act as host.

Mr MARTINEZ (Malaysia) formally extended the invitation by the Minister of Health, Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew.

Dr KING (United States of America) said that the Committee would recall that at the previous session the United States delegation had opposed the proposal that all costs of Regional Committee meetings be paid out of the regular budget as it considered that such funds could be better used for financing programmes within the Region. The budget estimate for the session in 1974 was US\$20 000, an increase of \$6800 over the estimates for 1973; presumably that was for holding the session at regional headquarters in Manila. Although he would like to accept the kind invitation of the Government of Malaysia, it would be inappropriate to do so if funds would thereby have to be diverted from programmes already proposed by the Committee for the budget for 1974; if, on the other hand, it was planned to draw on savings which might occur, then programmes included in the Supplementary List would suffer. He wished to ask the Regional Director:

- (1) Would the Government of Malaysia cover all or most of the costs incurred over and above the cost of holding the session in Manila?
- (2) If that was not the case, would he be able to obtain funds to reimburse the Government of Malaysia? and (3) Did he consider it advisable to hold sessions of the Committee away from Manila during three consecutive years?

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR, in reply to the first question, said that he had not as yet conferred with the Representative of Malaysia as to the extent to which his Government would be able to finance the additional costs involved in holding the session in Kuala Lumpur, but he hoped to do so shortly. In reply to the second question, it was correct that the amount of \$20 000 was the estimate for holding the session at the Manila Headquarters. If additional costs were involved, he would have to use available savings to finance the extra amount needed to hold the session in Kuala Lumpur. As to the third question, in his opinion it was extremely useful to hold Committee sessions away from regional headquarters, especially as, for the last four years, they had always been held in Manila. That had been because governments were unwilling to cover the additional costs involved in holding a meeting in one of the Member countries. Quoting from resolution WPR/RC22.R17 adopted last year, he stressed the advantages of obtaining a more intimate knowledge of the peoples of the Region and the health situation in the various countries and territories. In many countries the Health Department was placed in a relatively low category and received less financial backing than other departments. One great benefit derived from holding sessions in countries other than the Philippines was that attention was focused on the activities of the Health Department of the host country. That meant that the Treasury or Legislature responsible for finances became more aware of health needs. Moreover, greater interest was aroused in WHO itself among a wider public.

If the Committee no longer supported the resolution adopted last year, he feared that some of the less affluent Members would be unable to invite the Regional Committee to hold a session in their countries.

Dr ISHIMARU (Japan) said that his delegation fully appreciated the remarks made by the Representative of the United States of America but in view of the resolutions adopted at the past sessions and the explanation made by the Regional Director, he proposed that the Committee adhere to the points made clear in resolution WPR/RC22.R17.

Dr DILL-RUSSELL (United Kingdom) suggested a compromise. An earlier resolution provided that meetings could be held outside the regional headquarters in Manila every other year. He proposed therefore that, as from 1974, the Committee revert to the original resolution - i.e., that subject to an invitation being received, the regional committee meeting would be held outside Manila every other year. This meant that, in so far as costs were concerned, the possible burden on the regular budget would be reduced to this extent; at the same time, opportunity was given for Members to visit countries in the Region and become acquainted with health conditions. The

Regional Director had stated that the meeting had been held in Manila for four years prior to the present one. The meetings in Guam, Wellington and Malaysia would take the Committee through 1974. It could then revert to alternate years in Manila. In other words, the 1975 meeting would be held in Manila; in 1976 it would be outside, if an invitation was received to hold it outside; the 1977 meeting would also be in Manila, and so forth.

Mr MARTINEZ (Malaysia) expressed appreciation of the statements made by the Representative of the United States of America and the Regional Director. The Malaysian Government would meet its commitments in hosting the meeting in the spirit of operative paragraph 2 of resolution WPR/RC22.R17, after having had discussions with the Regional Director.

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) stated that this subject had been raised four years ago at the Executive Board meeting in Geneva, and it was the general opinion that WHO should undertake the costs of these meetings. This seemed to be the general practice in all regions, except the Western Pacific. The subject had again been discussed last year and the Committee had agreed that the additional costs should be undertaken by the Regional Office. This was a different practice and, for this reason, governments had now begun to extend invitations.

Dr Azurin supported the resolution passed last year, in which it was agreed that when a meeting was held outside Manila, WHO would find ways of supporting the costs from the current budget. However, the practice had had some deviations. The costs of the meeting in Guam were being met by the Government, those of the meeting in Wellington would be borne by the New Zealand Government. If this were to stand, it would be a good practice for governments that could afford it to bear the total costs of the meeting, but for those which had difficulty in doing so, WHO should meet the expenses and the host government would pay only the costs of hospitality arrangements.

As far as holding the meeting every other year in Manila, he said that, as long as invitations were received from governments, there was no need for requiring the holding of the meeting in Manila. There were sixteen countries in the Region and if the meeting were held outside the regional headquarters every other year, it would be thirty-two years before the Committee could make a complete round of countries.

Dr SO SATTA (Khmer Republic) indicated that his delegation shared the views of the Representatives who had spoken in favour of accepting the invitation made by the Malaysian Government. The financial

problem could certainly be solved by consultations between the Regional Director and the Government of Malaysia.

Dr PHOUTTHASAK (Laos) associated himself with the statements made by the Representatives from the United Kingdom and the Philippines.

Dr TAUTASI (Western Samoa) expressed his full support of the resolution which permitted the Regional Committee to see the work in various countries and bring the members into closer fellowship and mutual contact with one another. His Government also had in mind inviting a future regional committee to Western Samoa. This would not only improve mutual relationships between his people and the Organization but also strengthen their trust and confidence.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR drew attention to the two points which had been raised during the present discussion: the Malaysian Government's invitation to hold the twenty-fifth regional committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1974 and the proposal of the Representative of the United Kingdom to hold meetings, starting in 1975, alternately in the regional headquarters and in countries extending an invitation. He suggested that the first subject be considered.

Dr CHEVAL (France) said that his delegation did not intend to oppose the resolution adopted at the preceding committee meeting and was glad to accept the invitation put forward by the delegation from Malaysia.

Dr FRANKLANDS (Australia) expressed the view that it was good to have meetings in other countries if this was done without detracting from the financial commitments to the WHO programme. He supported the Malaysian invitation, as well as the proposal of the Representative of the United Kingdom that in 1975 the Committee should revert to the alternate arrangement of having every second session at the regional headquarters. There would be less frequent invitations if it was part of the principle that the extra costs involved in having meetings outside the regional headquarters had some bearing on the amount put forward for various country programmes. This was what it would amount to in the long run if it cost WHO more to have its annual committee session in another country. Some of that money, as pointed out by the United States delegation, must be diverted for this purpose rather than go to programmes from which countries benefitted. He pointed out that there should be some limit to this expense. If sessions of the Committee were held at least every alternate year at regional headquarters, the costs would be less in the long run.

Dr TAYLOR (New Zealand) associated himself with the views expressed by the Representative of Australia and expressed the hope

that the Committee would be going to New Zealand and Malaysia. It was obvious that the following year the meeting would be back in the regional headquarters; this would give the Committee three years to make a change if anything unforeseen at the present time arose. He supported the proposal of the United Kingdom Representative that in 1975 it would be appropriate to go back to the previous alternate arrangement. It was a great advantage for the Representatives to have meetings in Manila. Undoubtedly, meetings in other countries were useful in that the Representatives met people whom otherwise they would not meet. However, there were also people in the Regional Office in Manila whom some of the members of the Committee had not yet met and it was helpful to know them too.

The CHAIRMAN asked that the Committee vote on whether or not the invitation of the Government of Malaysia to hold the Regional Committee Meeting in 1974 in Kuala Lumpur should be accepted.

This was done and the results were: fourteen in favour, none against and one abstention.

The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Committee, then thanked the Minister of Health of Malaysia, Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew, for the invitation. In the absence of further comments, she requested the Rapporteurs to draft an appropriate resolution. (For consideration of draft resolution, see the seventh meeting, section 1.2.)

The Chairman then invited the Committee to vote on the proposal made by the Representative of the United Kingdom to hold the session every other year at the regional headquarters in Manila.

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) believed that it was too early to consider the proposal at the present time. The Committee had two years in which to make a decision. If a vote were taken at this time, the forthcoming Regional Committees would be prevented from making a decision themselves. It might perhaps be better to discuss the subject next year or in 1974.

Dr KING (United States of America) pointed out that the Committee had the proposal of the United Kingdom Representative before it and it was under obligation to discuss and put it to the vote.

Dr FRANKLANDS (Australia) asked if the representatives were entitled, under the Rules of Procedure, to speak for or against the proposal following the motion of the delegate of the United States to put the matter to vote.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR stated that those who wanted to speak could still do so.

The CHAIRMAN invited further comments from the delegates.

Dr DILL-RUSSELL (United Kingdom) clarified that his proposal suggested that the Regional Committee meeting for 1975 should be held in Manila. Thereafter, subject to invitations being received from countries in the Region, it could be held outside Manila in 1976 and any alternate year thereafter.

Dr FRANKLANDS (Australia) referred to resolution WPR/RC3.R9 on this subject, which had been adopted in 1952. The proposal by the Representative from the United Kingdom bore out the original resolution and he was happy to support it for the main reason that invitations might be issued by various Member countries on the basis of other resolutions which had been passed, particularly the one last year which provided that certain additional costs which could not be paid for or agreed upon by those issuing the invitations, would be taken from the funds of the Region. This meant that funds which would have been used to carry out projects, would have to be diverted to cover the expenses of a meeting outside the Regional Office. Under the circumstances it was reasonable to accept the proposal of the Representative from the United Kingdom that alternate meetings should be held in the Regional Office where the cost would be at a minimum, compared to what would be incurred if invitations from other countries were accepted.

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) stated that the proposal of last year did not envisage such alternate arrangements. There were advantages to the alternate arrangement but there were also certain advantages accruing from the resolution of last year. There was no certainty at the moment there would be continuous invitations. If none was received beyond 1974, the session would be held in Manila. The alternate arrangement was predicated on the belief that invitations would be received. He felt that the proposal to amend last year's resolution was premature and suggested that its consideration be postponed.

Dr PHONG (Viet-Nam) supported the suggestion of the Philippine representative.

Dr TAYLOR (New Zealand) felt that the Committee should be able to decide that the 1975 meeting would be appropriately held in the Regional Office in Manila. This would be useful in the forward planning of the Regional Director and his staff and also the Member countries.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR pointed out that the Committee was not under obligation at this session to determine the site of the

Regional Committee three years from now. It could express its wishes but the question of the date and place of the Regional Committee in 1975 would have to be included in the agenda next year.

Dr TAYLOR (New Zealand) stated that the resolution before the meeting had the effect of a decision, if accepted, that the session would be in Manila in 1975. It suggested that after the 1974 meeting, the practice of holding the Regional Committee at the Regional Office every other year should be re-instated. He considered that the 1975 session should be in Manila. Three sessions outside the Regional Office might be too taxing to the Region's resources.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR believed a decision would have to be made on two questions: first, whether the Committee wished to take up the proposal of the Representative from the United Kingdom or to postpone its consideration; second, if the Committee should vote to take a decision at this session, then a vote would have to be taken on the proposal of the Representative from the United Kingdom.

Dr KING (United States of America) stated as a point of order that there was before the Committee only one formal proposal amending a resolution and an informal suggestion made by the Philippine representative.

Mr DAS NEVES (Portugal) supported the views of the Representative of the United States of America.

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) changed his suggestion to a formal proposal that consideration of the matter be deferred until next year or the year after.

To a request for clarification made by Dr PHOUTTHASAK (Laos), Dr DILL-RUSSELL (United Kingdom) stated that his proposal was that the session in 1975 should be held in Manila with no compromise and thereafter it could be held, subject to invitations being received from Member countries, outside Manila every other year.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR read Rule 37 of the Rules of Procedure which dealt with the procedure to be followed when two or more proposals were moved. In accordance with the rule, the Committee should first vote on the proposal of the Representative of the Philippines.

At the request of the Representative of the Philippines, the Regional Director also read Rule 4 covering the determination of the time and place of the next regular session by the Committee. He also

referred to resolution WHA9.20 of the World Health Assembly, adopted in 1956, which requested Regional Committees to plan the place of the Regional Committee meetings, together with the budgetary implications, two years in advance so that appropriate budgetary provision might be made by the Assembly when it approved the programme and budget for each year. The Regional Committee was not restrained by any rule from expressing its wishes at this time as regards the session three years from now but the subject would in any case have to be an item of the agenda next year.

At the suggestion of the CHAIRMAN, the proposal of the Representative of the Philippines was put to a vote.

Dr KING (United States of America) asked whether the Chairman had the right of a vote as representative of her country and whether she intended to use it.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR said that the Chairman had the right to vote or to abstain as she desired. As a point of order, since the voting had taken place the results should be announced.

The result of the voting was 7 votes in favour, 6 against, with one abstention.

Decision: Consideration of this item was postponed to next year. (For consideration of draft resolution, see the seventh meeting, section 1.3.)

EXTRACT FROM THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE
(Thursday, 5 October 1972)

Future sessions of the Regional Committee
(Document WPR/RC23/WP/18)

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) asked why the question of holding alternate sessions at regional headquarters had been included in the draft resolution. It was his understanding that only the venue of the twenty-sixth session (1975) was to be considered at the twenty-fourth session.

Dr KING (United States of America) said that he thought the amendment proposed by the Representative of the Philippines was to postpone consideration of the matter for just one year.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the motion before the Committee was to delete the last part of the resolution after the words "Regional Committee" and to add instead the words "at its twenty-fourth session".

Dr DILL-RUSSELL (United Kingdom) said that his proposal on behalf of the United Kingdom Government had been that alternate sessions should be held at regional headquarters but that had been counter-amended by the Representative of the Philippines.

Dr FRANKLANDS (Australia) concurred with the previous speaker whose proposal had certainly implied that alternate meetings would be held at regional headquarters. To retain that passage would make little difference and it would give representatives a chance to air their views, which might be quite valuable for Member countries. They required to know what would be the financial implications of any decision taken and how it would affect the programmes already planned. He recommended that no change be made to the draft resolution before the Committee.

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) said he did not want to re-open the discussion on the advisability or not of holding alternate meetings at regional headquarters. Nevertheless there had been no mention of "alternate" in his proposal which had been approved. The inclusion of that idea changed the whole content of what had been approved at the previous meeting. His proposal had been to consider the idea of holding alternate sessions at the twenty-fifth session and not at the twenty-fourth.

Dr TAYLOR (New Zealand), speaking as Rapporteur, said he considered he had produced a text which was in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee. The venue of the twenty-sixth session had been discussed only because it would presumably be at regional headquarters. Its venue was a compulsory subject for discussion next year. That had led on to a discussion on the whole new approach to holding meetings with funds available from Headquarters. Going back to the idea of holding alternate sessions at and outside regional headquarters, the holding of one session in Wellington and the next in Malaysia would compensate for the four years running in which sessions had been held at regional headquarters. The resolution was necessary as it reflected the discussion which had taken place this year. Most members had formally asked for the inclusion of the present wording so that the matter would be on the agenda of the next session.

Mr UNG SU HAI KIM TENG (Khmer Republic) suggested that the discussion should cease as it seemed unlikely that it would lead to a solution that would be acceptable by all representatives. The Representative from the Philippines had suggested that consideration of the question might be deferred until the twenty-fourth session of the Committee.

Dr CHEVAL (France) was convinced that the delegation would have carried on with the discussion at the preceding meeting if the Representative from the Philippines had not put forward his proposal. In any case, it would be wise to include the proposed resolution in the report so as to remind the Committee that it should discuss it at its following session.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR said that it was for the Committee to decide whether or not to retain the last part of the resolution. He recalled that, at the previous meeting, the voting had shown 7 votes in favour, 6 against, with one abstention. The voting at that time had been on the proposal of the Representative of the United Kingdom, namely "that as from 1974, the Committee revert to the original resolution, i.e. that, subject to an invitation being received, the meeting would be held outside Manila every other year". In other words, the 1975 session would be in Manila, in 1976 away from there, and in 1977 in Manila again, and so on.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the draft resolution was still open to amendment. Did any member second the amendment proposed by the Representative of the Philippines?

Dr AZURIN (Philippines) said that the Representative of the Khmer Republic had seconded it.

Dr DILL-RUSSELL (United Kingdom) raised a point of order. If the amendment was made, then there was no point in the resolution at all and it should be dropped. The idea contained in it, after amendment was already contained in the Rules of Procedure.

Mr UNG SU HAI KIM TENG (Khmer Republic) formally supported the proposal made by the Representative from the Philippines.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR, after saying that the next procedure was to vote on the proposed amendment but, if it were adopted, then, as already pointed out, the resolution would have no purpose. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, he would have to submit it next year.

A vote was then taken on the proposed amendment. Votes in favour: 5, against: 7, with 2 abstentions. Rejected.

A vote was then taken on the draft resolution, with the following result: Votes in favour: 9, against: none, with 4 abstentions. Adopted.

Decision: The draft resolution was adopted (see resolution WPR/RC23.R23).