



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

**AFR/RC66/INF.DOC/10**

22 August 2016

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

Sixty-sixth session

Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 19–23 August 2016

Agenda item 21.10

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRANSFORMATION  
AGENDA OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION SECRETARIAT IN THE  
AFRICAN REGION: 2015–2020**

**Information Document**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Paragraphs</b>
BACKGROUND .....	1–2
PROGRESS MADE.....	3–12
NEXT STEPS .....	13–15

## BACKGROUND

1. The Sixty-fifth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa endorsed the Transformation Agenda of the WHO Secretariat in the African Region: 2015–2020 developed by the WHO Regional Director for Africa in fulfilment of her commitment to accelerate the implementation of WHO reform in the Region. The objective of the Transformation Agenda is to ensure that the WHO Secretariat in the African Region evolves into the primary leader in health development in the Region and a reliable and effective protector of Africa's health. The Transformation Agenda comprises four focus areas: pro-results values, smart technical focus, responsive strategic operations, and effective communication and partnerships.

2. The Regional Committee recommended that the Regional Director report regularly on progress made in implementing the reform agenda. This report summarizes the progress made between November 2015 and June 2016 and proposes the next steps.

## PROGRESS MADE

3. **Pro-results values:** To promote transparency, accountability and ethical behaviour, the Regional Director keeps staff members informed of progress and advances through regular town hall meetings and email updates, while relevant WHO and UN policy documents and tools are posted on the intranet to guide them and enhance their understanding and ownership of the Agenda. Discussions on the Agenda have become standing agenda items in the Regional Programme Meetings of WHO Representatives and in meetings of clusters in the Regional Office and in WHO country offices. Several country offices have peer-nominated secondary change agents with a view to promoting the above values and enhancing performance and the delivery of results.

4. **Smart technical focus:** This area seeks to ensure that the work of the Secretariat focuses on evidence-based priorities and interventions relating to the most pressing health issues affecting the Region. To streamline the work on disease outbreaks and health consequences of humanitarian crises, a new Health Security and Emergencies Cluster has been created. Under the leadership of Member States and in collaboration with partners, the Ebola virus disease epidemic in West Africa has been brought to an end. The Cluster has continued to provide support for the response to ongoing outbreaks and emergencies in the Region, particularly outbreaks of yellow fever, measles, Zika virus, cholera, Lassa fever, and dengue. In order to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks, a regional risk analysis and mapping has been conducted and the most vulnerable countries are being supported to strengthen preparedness.

5. The momentum towards polio eradication in the Region was maintained, with no confirmed wild poliovirus case in the Region since July 2014. The Region was among the earliest to successfully switch from trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) to bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) in April-May 2016 and to finalize phase 1 polioviruses laboratory bio-containment and destruction, in line with the Global Polio Eradication Global Action Plan requirements.

6. Ministers of health, parliamentarians and partners adopted a declaration on Universal Access to Immunization at the first ever Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa jointly organized with the African Union Commission in February 2016. Implementation of the declaration will contribute to reducing child mortality within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

7. In order to sustain the gains made in the fight against communicable diseases, important policy frameworks for implementing global strategies on HIV, TB, malaria and viral hepatitis have been developed to accelerate progress towards regional and global targets. Following the release of the revised WHO consolidated guidelines for HIV/AIDS which recommended antiretroviral therapy treatment for all persons tested HIV positive, dissemination workshops targeting 31 priority countries in the Region were organized between April and June 2016. In addition, the Expanded Special Project for Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases was established at the beginning of 2016 and launched in May 2016 to tackle five neglected tropical diseases amenable to preventable chemotherapy.
8. The Health Systems and Services Cluster has been reorganized to better support countries in moving towards universal health coverage (UHC). Greater focus is being given to primary health care and peripheral preventive and care services as priority health systems using an integrated approach. A UHC baseline assessment was initiated in 2015 to inform efforts to implement the SDGs and UHC in the Region and a report is due in July 2016. The results will be used to define priority actions for attaining UHC and for monitoring progress.
9. **Responsive strategic operations:** This focus area seeks to enhance WHO AFRO's delivery in terms of timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency, and by attracting and retaining the "best experts" within the Organization. The process of realigning staff positions with identified priorities for the Region has been completed at the regional level. The structures of Clusters and Programmes have been defined, new post descriptions matching functions to regional priorities prepared, and some staff members separated and new ones recruited, resulting in a measure of staff turnover. On the whole, there has been an increase in the number of positions, but filling them will be based on the availability of funds.
10. In line with the country-focus approach, a consultancy firm has been hired to conduct a review of the 47 WHO country offices in the Region and propose staffing patterns based on country priorities. In addition, technical key performance indicators (KPIs) are being developed to enhance and measure the performance of staff members and WHO country offices in their contribution towards health development in countries. Key performance indicators have been introduced for many aspects of management and administration and are being monitored in country offices to ensure improved management of resources and effective delivery in line with WHO's rules and procedures.
11. An Accountability and Internal Control Strengthening (AICS) Project has been launched. Its objectives are to strengthen the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls; improve accountability, transparency and compliance with WHO's rules; and measure, monitor and report on progress and trends. To address the perceived culture of non-compliance, a Compliance and Risk Management Committee has been formally established in the Regional Office to ensure a strategic, transparent and effective approach to risk and compliance management.
12. **Effective communication and partnerships:** An assessment of internal and external communication capacity has been carried out by a global communications consultancy firm. The assessment highlighted the need for strengthening the Communications Unit by recruiting additional staff and allocating adequate resources for its functioning, including by establishing media hubs in subregional locations. A Regional Communication Strategy is being developed.

**NEXT STEPS**

13. In order to ensure more structured and successful implementation, the Transformation Agenda will be costed and fully integrated into the Programme Budget. A Project Management Team and an Oversight Committee will be established to oversee effective implementation, monitoring and reporting.
14. An online platform to collate, monitor, assess and report on the activities committed to the Transformation Agenda will be established. The platform will be made accessible to all Member States and partners as part of the efforts to enhance accountability and transparency.
15. The ongoing and future changes are being effected within the framework of the Transformation Agenda seek to strengthen the capacity of the WHO Secretariat in the African region to meet the expectations of Member States and partners. The Regional Committee is requested to take note of this report and endorse the next steps.