REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

AFR/RC55/5

2 June 2005

Fifty-fifth session
Maputo, Mozambique, 22–26 August 2005

Provisional agenda item 7.3

METHOD OF WORK AND DURATION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Report of the Regional Director

Executive Summary

This document is designed to facilitate the work of the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly concerning the method of work and duration of the Health Assembly. The Regional Committee is hereby invited to examine the document and advise on the draft procedural decisions. Decisions taken will be transmitted to the Director-General.

CONTENTS

FIFTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY .............................................................................1–7

METHOD OF WORK AND DURATION OF THE FIFTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY .................................................................................................................8–15

Credentials ........................................................................................................................................13
Travel expenses for least developed countries ..................................................................................14
Vice-President of the World Health Assembly ...............................................................................15

MEMBER STATES ENTITLED TO DESIGNATE PERSONS TO SERVE ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ........................................................................................................16–23

The Executive Board ......................................................................................................................16–17
Member States entitled to designate persons to serve on the Executive Board from May 2005 .....18–22
Credentials ........................................................................................................................................23
MAIN COMMITTEES OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY ..............................................24–29
Terms of reference and members ......................................................................................24–28
Informal meeting of the Regional Committee ..................................................................29

TECHNICAL ISSUES ........................................................................................................30

ANNEXES

1. Presidents of the World Health Assembly ........................................................................6
2. Distribution by country of functions during preceding Assemblies .................................7
FIFTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

1. The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly lasted six (6) days.

2. The agenda of the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly was heavy and discussions were intense. In all, the Health Assembly adopted 34 resolutions and two decisions.

3. Dr Jong-wook Lee, WHO Director-General, in his opening address, reported on the global health challenges confronting the world. He said that the increasing support being received from world leaders requires greater coordination to improve the effectiveness of interventions. Other invited speakers were Ms Ann Veneman, the newly-appointed Executive Director of UNICEF; His Excellency Mr Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives; and Mr Bill Gates, co-founder of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

4. The main technical agenda items included the revision of the International Health Regulations; health action in relation to crises and disasters, with special emphasis on earthquakes and tsunamis; malaria control; strengthening pandemic influenza preparedness and response; sustainable health financing for tuberculosis prevention and control; global immunization strategy; achievement of health-related millennium development goals; cancer prevention and control; disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation; public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol; international plan of action on ageing: report on implementation; international migration of health personnel: a challenge for health systems in developing countries; ehealth; containment of antimicrobial resistance; sustainable health financing, universal coverage and social health insurance; enhancement of laboratory biosafety; infant and young child nutrition; and the Ministerial Summit on Health Research. Each agenda item was supported with a resolution, including a resolution on sustaining the elimination of iodine-deficiency disorders.

5. The adoption of the International Health Regulations (2005) represented a major public-health achievement. In addition, the re-introduction of international migration of health personnel as a substantive agenda item has increased the influence of African Region delegates in orienting the direction of global health.

6. Five resolutions were passed concerning the internal auditor, financial matters, the real estate fund, staffing matters, establishment of World Blood Donor Day, implementation of multilingualism in WHO, and collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations. Two of these resolutions were related to the unaudited WHO accounts for 2004 and the assessments for 2006–2007.

7. The request from Taiwan to be granted observer status at the World Health Assembly was dismissed by the Health Assembly.

METHOD OF WORK AND DURATION OF THE FIFTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

8. It was proposed to convene the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly on Monday, 22 May 2006 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, and to close it no later than Saturday, 27 May 2006.
9. In line with Resolution WHA52.21 on the reform of the World Health Assembly by which the Director-General is requested to make appropriate arrangements for a shortened plenary meeting, delegates at the Health Assembly will be:

   (a) requested to limit, to five minutes, their statements in such debates;
   (b) encouraged to make group or regional statements;
   (c) invited to submit written statements of not more than 600 words for inclusion in the verbatim records of the plenary meeting in lieu of taking the floor.

10. Delegates wishing to have their names placed on the list of speakers for the general discussion should notify the WHO Governing Bodies Department in advance, sending their notification to fax number 41 22 791 41 73.

11. Copies of statements to be made during the general discussion should be submitted to the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of the Health Assembly by the morning of 22 May 2006.

12. The theme for World Health Day 2006 will be “Human resources for health”.

**Credentials**

13. The credentials of delegates, alternates and advisers should be delivered to the Secretariat (Governing Bodies Department) by 1st May 2006. Credentials shall be issued by the Head of State, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health, or any other appropriate authority. Member States shall be represented at the Assembly by not more than three (3) delegates. Alternates and advisers may accompany delegates. Only original documents are examined and considered for formal credentials by the Committee on Credentials. Faxes and e-mails are not considered as formal credentials but may be sent to the Governing Bodies Department (fax: + 41 22 791 41 73; e-mail: credentials@who.int) for advance information prior to delivery of the original document. Credentials should include the following information for each participant: LAST NAME (in capital letters), first name, title, function, institution, city, gender (unless indicated in title).

**Travel expenses for least developed countries**

14. Resolution WHA 50.1 provides that only Member States that are classified as least developed countries by the United Nations shall be reimbursed for the actual travel expenses of one delegate each. In accordance with WHO policy, tickets will be provided only for travel by the most direct route. As was the practice in 2005, qualifying delegates from the African Region will be encouraged to have their tickets purchased for them by the WHO country offices before departure.

**Vice-President of the World Health Assembly**

15. The chairman of the fifty-fifth session of the Regional Committee, in accordance with Decision 6 (2) of the thirty-third session of the Regional Committee for Africa, will be proposed for the office of President of the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly. If for any reason the Chairman of the Regional Committee is unable to assume office, one of the Vice-Chairmen will do so in the order originally chosen by lot, first and second Vice-Chairman.
MEMBER STATES ENTITLED TO DESIGNATE PERSONS TO SERVE ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board

16. It is proposed to convene the one-hundred-and-seventeenth session of the Executive Board on Monday, 23 January 2006, at WHO headquarters, Geneva, and to close the session no later than Saturday, 28 January 2006.

17. The Executive Board consists of 32 persons designated by as many Member States. The African Region has seven (7) members on the Board. The term of office of each Member is three (3) years; that is, each Member will serve for six (6) Board meetings. New members are elected during the World Health Assembly, and the term of office starts at the Executive Board session which immediately follows that Health Assembly and ends after the closing of the third consecutive Health Assembly at which the Member is replaced.

Member States entitled to designate persons to serve on the Executive Board from May 2005

18. The fifty-fourth session of the Regional Committee for Africa held from 30 August to 3 September, 2004 by Decision 8 decided that for the purpose of ensuring a geographical balance of Member States from the African Region serving on the Board, the Regional Membership should be divided into three subregions: Subregion I, Subregion II and Subregion III, corresponding to the African Region’s geographical groupings. Each subregion is allocated two seats out of the seven to which the Region is entitled. The seventh seat will rotate among the subregions.

19. Following the new arrangements and in accordance with Decision 9(4) and Resolution AFR/RC54/R11(2) of the fifty-fourth session of the Regional Committee for Africa, Liberia (I), Rwanda (II), Madagascar (III) and Namibia (III, rotating seat) each designated a representative to serve on the Executive Board starting with the one-hundred-and-sixteenth session, immediately after the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly, joining Guinea-Bissau, Kenya and Lesotho.

20. The term of office of Guinea-Bissau will end with the closing of the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly. In accordance with Decision 8 and Resolution AFR/RC54/R11 of the fifty-fourth session of the Regional Committee for Africa, designating Members to serve on the Executive Board, Guinea-Bissau will be replaced by Mali from Subregion I.

21. Mali will attend the one-hundred-and-eighteenth session of the Executive Board in May 2006 and should confirm availability at least six (6) weeks before the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly.

22. The Fifty-first World Health Assembly decided by Resolution WHA51.26 that the persons designated to serve on the Executive Board should be government representatives technically qualified in the field of health.

Credentials

23. The credentials of the delegate and alternate shall be issued by the Head of State, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health, or any other appropriate authority. Member
States shall be represented at the Executive Board by not more than one (1) delegate. Alternates and advisers may accompany delegates. Only original documents are examined and considered for formal credentials and should be delivered to the Secretariat (Governing Bodies Department) by Tuesday 23 May 2006. Credentials should include the following information for each participant: LAST NAME (in capital letters), first name, title, function, institution, gender (unless indicated in title).

MAIN COMMITTEES OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Terms of reference and members

24. The Thirty-first World Health Assembly, by its Resolution WHA31.1, decided that:

(a) the terms of reference of Committee A shall be:
   (i) to deal primarily with programme and budget matters;
   (ii) to review the proposed programme budget and the Executive Board’s report thereon;
   (iii) to recommend the budget level and the appropriation resolution;
   (iv) to consider the tentative budgetary projections for the following biennium and study such other items as shall be referred to it by the World Health Assembly (Rule 34);

(b) the terms of reference of Committee B shall be:
   (i) to deal primarily with administrative, financial and legal matters;
   (ii) to review WHO’s financial position, including the Financial Report and the Report of the External Auditors; the status of contributions and advances to the Working Capital Fund; the status of any funds that have a bearing on WHO’s financial position; and consideration of the amount of available casual income to be used to help finance the budget;
   (iii) to recommend the scale of assessment;
   (iv) to study such other items as shall be referred to it by the World Health Assembly.

25. The Chairmen of these Main Committees shall be elected by the World Health Assembly after consideration of the Report of the Committee on Nominations.

26. Each Main Committee shall, after consideration of the report of the Committee on Nominations, elect two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur.

27. Annex 2 to this report, prepared for the information of members of the Committee on Nominations, shows the distribution by country of office-bearers at earlier Health Assemblies.

28. The Director-General, in consultation with the Regional Director, shall consider for nomination before the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, delegates of Member States of the African Region who may serve effectively as:

   (a) Vice-Chairman of Main Committee B;
   (b) Rapporteur of Committee A.
Formal meeting of the Regional Committee

29. Before the opening of the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, the Regional Director will convene a formal meeting of the Regional Committee on Saturday, 20 May 2006, at 9.30 a.m. at the WHO headquarters, Geneva, to confirm the decisions taken by the Regional Committee at its fifty-fifth session and discuss agenda items of the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly of specific interest to the African Region. During the World Health Assembly, coordination meetings of the African delegates will be held every morning at 8.00 a.m. in the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

30. In accordance with Executive Board Resolution EB99.R28, the World Health Assembly, by its Resolution WHA50.18, operative paragraph 2(1) decided that the Executive Board, when preparing the provisional agenda of each World Health Assembly, shall normally include individual technical programme items in that agenda as separate items only in the years when the World Health Assembly does not undertake a full review of the proposed biennial programme budget, thus allowing more time for discussing such technical items.
### ANNEX 1

**PRESIDENTS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assembly</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thirtieth</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Dr S. Tapa</td>
<td>Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-first</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>M.K. Mohammed</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-second</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Professor P. Tuchinda</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-third</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Dr A. R. Al-Awadi</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-fourth</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Dr Néropi Violaki-Paraskeva</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-fifth</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>M.M. Diop</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-sixth</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>M. Tansri Chong Hon Nyan</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-seventh</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Dr G. Soberon Acevedo</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-eighth</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Dr S. Surjaningrat</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-ninth</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Dr Z. Hamzeh</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortieth</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Dr J. Van Londen</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty-first</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Dr Ngandu-Kabeya Dibandala</td>
<td>DRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty-second</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Professor Minzhang Chen</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty-third</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Dr P. Naranjo</td>
<td>Equador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forty-fourth</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Dr P. Nymadawa</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forty-fifth</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>M.A. Al-Badi</td>
<td>UAE</td>
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<td>Forty-sixth</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>M.C. Ortenzahl</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
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<td>Forty-seventh</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>M.B.K. Temane</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forty-eighth</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Dato Dr Haji Johar Noordin</td>
<td>Brunei Darussalaam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty-ninth</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Dr A.J. Mazza</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiftieth</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>M. Saleem I. Shervani</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Dr F.R. Al-Mousawi</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
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<td>Fifty-second</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Maria de Belen Roseira</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifty-third</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Dr. Libertina Amathila</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifty-fourth</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Dr Hong Sun Huot</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifty-fifth</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Dr J.F. López Beltrán</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Fifty-seventh</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Mr Mohammed Nasir Khan</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifty-eighth</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ms S Salgado</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2

DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTRY OF FUNCTIONS DURING PRECEDING ASSEMBLIES
RÉPARTITION PAR PAYS DES FONCTIONS EXERCÉES AU COURS DES ASSEMBLÉES PRÉCÉDENTES

The attached table provides information, by type of function, for each of the previous Assemblies.

*******
Le tableau ci-joint donne les informations par type de fonctions, pour chacune des Assemblées précédentes.

**TABLE/TABLEAU**

|         | WHA47  
47ème Assemblée 1994 | WHA48  
48ème Assemblée 1995 | WHA49  
49ème Assemblée 1996 | WHA50  
50ème Assemblée 1997 |
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<td>Président President</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>Brunéi Darussalam</td>
<td>Argentine</td>
<td>Inde</td>
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<td>Vice-Présidents Vice-Presidents</td>
<td>Rep. démocratique populaire lao Égypte Thaïlande Slovénie Argentine</td>
<td>Burkina Faso Mexique Iran Bolîvar Myanmar</td>
<td>Gabon Qatar Bulgarie Sri Lanka Fidji</td>
<td>Algérie Venezuela Libye Portugal Chine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairmen of Main Committees</td>
<td>Other members of the General Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Président President</strong></td>
<td><strong>Président des Commissions principales</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>Argentine, Bélarus, Burundi, Chine, Cuba, Chypre, France, Guinée-Bissau, Jamaïque, Liban, Niger, Fédération de Russie, Sierra Leone, Espagne, Ouganda, Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord, États-Unis d’Amérique</td>
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<td><strong>Président President</strong></td>
<td><strong>Président des Commissions principales</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodge</td>
<td>Bahrain, Bhoutan, Bolivie, Chine, Cuba, République démocratique du Congo, Dominique, France, Guinée-Bissau, Iran (Rép. Islamique d’), Japon, Mali, Niger, Fédération de Russie, Suède, Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord, États-Unis d’Amérique</td>
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<th>Rapporteurs des Commissions principales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Président President</strong></td>
<td><strong>Président des Commissions principales</strong></td>
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<td>Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Bélarus, République pop. démocratique de Corée</td>
<td>Bahrain, Bhoutan, Bolivie, Chine, Cuba, République démocratique du Congo, Dominique, France, Guinée-Bissau, Iran (Rép. Islamique d’), Japon, Mali, Niger, Fédération de Russie, Suède, Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord, États-Unis d’Amérique</td>
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</table>
| Président  
President | WHA55  
55ème Assemblée 2002 | WHA56  
56ème Assemblée 2003 | WHA57  
57ème Assemblée 2004 |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Président  
President | El Salvador           | Bangladesh            | Pakistan              |
| Vice-Présidents  
Vice-Presidents | Botswana  
Ukraine  
Népal  
Kiribati  
Oman | Cameroun  
Bolivie  
Jordanie  
Allemagne | Afrique du Sud  
Bulgarie  
Grenade  
Malaisie  
Timor-Leste |
| Chairmen of Main  
Committees  
Présidents des  
Commissions principales | Ireland  
Senegal | Canada  
Fidji | République démocratique Populaire du Laos, Com. “A”  
Bhoutan, Can “B” |
| Other members of the  
General Committee  
Autres membres du  
Bureau de l'Assemblée | Barbades  
Chine  
Côte d’Ivoire  
Cuba  
République populaire et démocratique de Corée  
France  
Japon  
Mexique  
Maroc  
Fédération de Russie  
Rwanda  
Sao Tomé et Principe  
Sierra Leone  
Espagne  
Emirats Arabes Unis  
Royaume-Uni de Grande Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord  
États-Unis d’Amérique | Algérie  
Bahraim  
Burundi  
Chine  
Cuba  
France  
Ghana  
Grèce  
Inde  
Iran (Islamic Republic)  
Jamaïque  
Lesotho  
Poland Russian Federation  
Royaume-Uni de Grande Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord  
Tanzanie  
États-Unis d’Amérique | Botswana  
Chili  
Chine (Rep. Popol.)  
Cuba  
États-Unis d’Amérique  
Fédération de Russie  
France  
Irlande  
Jamahiriya arabeliyenne  
Kazakhstan  
Libéria  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Royaume-Uni de Grande Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord  
Tchad  
Trinité- et- Tabago  
Yemen |
| Vice-Chairmen of Main  
Committees  
Vice-Présidents des  
Commissions principales | Brésil  
Inde  
Tunisie  
Viet Nam | Benin  
Maroc  
Roumanie  
République populaire et démocratique de Corée | Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines, Pays-Bas, Com. “A”  
République Centrafricaine, Jordanie, Can. “B” |
| Rapporteurs of Main  
Committees  
Rapporteurs des  
Commissions principales | Comores  
Indonesie  
Czech Republic  
Venezuela | Bangladesh, Can “A”  
Hongrie, Can “B” | Bangladesh, Can “A”  
Hongrie, Can “B” |
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<th>Président / President</th>
<th>WHA58 58ème Assemblée 2005</th>
<th>WHA59 59ème Assemblée 2006</th>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Other members of the General Committee / Autres membres du Bureau de l'Assemblée</td>
<td>Bhutan, Brazil, China, Congo, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Lebanon, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mongolia, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zimbabwe</td>
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