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**AFRO’s COMPLIANCE PROGRAMME AND STATUS OF WHO INTERNAL AND
EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS**

Information document

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BACKGROUND

1. This information document is prepared in accordance with the request from the Fifty-seventh session of the Regional Committee in 2007 to regularly update its Member States on progress made in strengthening compliance with administrative rules, regulations, policies and procedures. The document describes challenges and achievements in the area of compliance management since the last session of the Regional Committee in Côte d'Ivoire in August/September 2011, and provides an update on the status of implementation of internal and external audit recommendations.

2. In response to increased scrutiny and demands from Member States for more effective internal controls and accountability, WHO headquarters and all WHO regions have increased their efforts to strengthen compliance management in the context of the new Global Management System (GSM) environment and the scarcity of available financial resources. The Regional Director continues to view compliance management as a priority for WHO budget centres in the African Region.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT

(a) Accountability

3. To establish clear accountability for WHO activities in the Africa Region, the Regional Director has issued new delegations of authority, clarifying the authority and responsibilities of senior managers in the Regional Office, Intercountry Support Teams (ISTs) and Country Offices (WCOs). The Deputy Regional Director, Cluster Directors, IST Coordinators and the WHO Country Representatives and Liaison Officers have further delegated authority to their staff, as appropriate, thereby creating a transparent accountability framework for WHO activities in the African Region. Compliance with the delegations of authority is monitored and can be withdrawn at any moment in case of non-compliance or abuse.

(b) Policies, Procedures and Training

4. To ensure compliance with WHO rules and regulations, policies and procedures, they need to be effectively communicated to and understood by all staff of the WHO African Region. As already reported to the Regional Committee last year (Document AFR/RC61/INF.DOC/2), the Regional Office has contributed to the development of the new WHO e-Manual. This Manual now contains all WHO-wide policies and procedures, including links to WHO financial and personnel regulations and rules and standard operating procedures. The e-Manual is available to all WHO staff in the African Region.

5. In addition, Regional Office web sites, in particular the sites from the General Management Cluster (GMC) and the Compliance Team (CT/AFRO) provide for all staff concerned an easy access to AFRO-specific policies, procedures and delegations of authority. Furthermore, training has been provided to administrative staff of WHO Country Offices, clarifying their roles and responsibilities, raising awareness of their respective roles in compliance management and drawing their attention to control weaknesses frequently found by auditors in country office settings.

(c) Regional Office Compliance Team (CT/AFRO)

6. A Compliance Team (CT/AFRO) has been established comprising three audit professionals and support staff to manage the Regional Office compliance programme on a day-to-day basis and to be the focal point for all compliance issues in the African Region. The CT/AFRO which reports directly to the Regional Director is headed by a senior compliance officer.

7. During the reporting period, the CT/AFRO carried out compliance reviews in WHO Country Offices in Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, Togo and Zambia and on selected activities at the Regional Office. In addition, the CT/AFRO assisted Regional Office managers to close old audit reports and participated in staff training and meetings to raise awareness among WHO staff in the African Region of internal controls and other compliance issues.

(d) Oversight Role of ISTs and RSUs

8. With the reorganisation of the Regional Office in 2012, the roles of Inter-country Support Teams in Harare, Libreville and Ouagadougou (ISTs) and the Regional Support Units in the Regional Office (RSUs) in Brazzaville in the area of compliance monitoring have been clarified and strengthened. The ISTs provide assistance and oversight over financial, administrative, logistics and human resources activities in the WCOs to ensure that WHO rules and regulations are respected. The RSUs also provide oversight over financial transactions initiated or processed by the Regional Office.

(e) Responsibility of Member States for Direct Financial Cooperation agreements (DFCs)

9. In the past years, WHO Member States have frequently stressed the importance of an effective internal control framework for WHO activities. In this context, Direct Financial Cooperation agreements (DFCs) with governments have received more and more scrutiny from auditors, especially in the Africa Region where DFC constitutes the second highest object of expenditure after staff-related expenses. Late submission or non-submission of financial and technical reports by Member States to justify the use of these funds has been the subject of audit queries.

10. The WHO country offices will work closely with their counterparts in the national ministries of health to ensure effective accounting for these expenditures to avoid audit queries in the future.

(f) Status of External and Internal Audit

11. The Regional Director considers internal and external audit reports as an important management tool to continuously improve compliance and risk management in the African Region. During the reporting period, the Regional Office was able to close all but one old and outstanding internal audit report (i.e. issued prior to 2011). A detailed list of open audit recommendations is shown in the Annex for information purposes.

12. The Regional Committee is invited to take note of this information document and to provide any specific guidance to the Regional Office.

ANNEX

Implementation Status of open Internal and External Audits as at 28 August 2012

N°	Audit Title	Audit report date	Audit Report Number	No of Recommendations	Closed to date	Open Recommendations	Comments
Internal Audits				(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)-(2)	
1	Regional Office AFRO	22 March 2010	09/820	46	41	5	
2	WCO/Angola	23 February 2012	11/872	32	0	32	
3	Regional Office AFRO	29 March 2012	11/874	46	0	46	Not yet due
4	WCO/Uganda	...June 2012	12/883	32	0	32	Not yet due
5	WCO/Central African Republic	27 July 2012	12/891	53	0	53	Not yet due
	Total Internal Audits			209	41	168	
External Audits							
1	Regional Office AFRO2008	EA-08-AF-01	6	4	2	Status to be verified with new External Auditors
2	Regional Office AFRO	10 February 2011	EA-10-AF-12	15	11	4	Status to be verified with new External Auditors
	Total External Audit			21	15	6	