

Report of the 11th Country Support Unit Network meeting

Barbados, 6-8 June 2012

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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**World Health
Organization**

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List of acronyms

BCA	Biennial Collaborative Agreement
BRICS	Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa
BWP	Biennial Workplan
CCO	Department of Country Focus
CPC	Caribbean Programme Coordination
CSF	Country Focus Support
CSU	Country Support Unit
EB	Executive Board
ECC	Eastern Caribbean Countries
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
GA	General Assembly
GPW	General Programme of Work
HERA	Health Emergency Risk Assessment
HWO	Head of WHO Office in a country, territory or area
IHR	International Health Regulations
NCD	Noncommunicable disease
PWR	PAHO/WHO Representative
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
ToR	Terms of Reference
WHA	World Health Assembly

Report of the 11th Country Support Unit Network meeting

Supporting the implementation of WHO reforms at country level

The eleventh Country Support Unit (CSU) Network meeting took place in Barbados from 6-8 June 2012. The meeting was hosted by the Barbados country office and was attended by all regional CSUs, excluding SEARO; as well as Heads of WHO Offices in countries, territories and areas (HWOs) Bahamas, Barbados, Cambodia, Comoros, Iraq, Jamaica, the Office of Eastern Caribbean Programme Coordination and Serbia. Four staff from the Department of Country Focus (CCO) also participated. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

Overall objective

The overall objective of this meeting was to strengthen the CSU Network to back-up and support the work of WHO offices in countries, territories and areas, to implement the WHO reforms at country level.

To achieve this objective, the meeting focused on strategic discussion around the following:

1. *WHO reforms in countries*
 - The roles and responsibilities of the CSUs with regards to the implementation of the roadmap, as well as modalities for implementation where applicable.
 - Revising the *Guidelines for working with WHO offices in countries, territories and areas* and how to monitor compliance.
 - Reviewing the content for the updated terms of reference for Heads of WHO Offices in countries, territories and areas.
 - The need for and core elements of a communications strategy for increasing the visibility of WHO's work in countries.
2. *Country cooperation strategies (CCS)*
 - Updating CSUs on the EMRO, WPRO and global CCS analyses, and agreeing next steps.
 - Obtaining inputs on a draft module for ensuring emergency risk assessment and readiness is adequately reflected in CCSs.
 - Updating CSUs on CCSs being undertaken in middle income and emerging economies (e.g. BRICS – Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China), as well as high income countries (Switzerland).

3. *Experiences from the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), BRICS and other groupings of countries*
 - Updating CSUs on the functioning of the BRICS network, and the AMR and WPR programmes in SIDS as well as the experiences of other groupings of country offices.
4. *Assessment/evaluation of WHO performance at country level, in line with the Draft Formal Evaluation Policy (EB131/3).*
 - What the CSUs can do to support a shift towards a culture of evaluation at country level in line with the WHO reforms, and monitor and report on evaluations of WHO performance at country level.

1. Opening session

The PAHO/WHO Representative (PWR) for Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Countries opened the 11th CSU Network Meeting, welcoming all participants – also on behalf of the AMRO CSU and Coordinator of the Office of the Coordinator of the Office for Eastern Caribbean Programme Coordination (CPC) located in Barbados. She encouraged the participants to make the most of the discussions around WHO’s reforms, to further strengthen support to countries for more effective work at the country level.

Director of the Department of Country Focus (CCO) thanked the Regional Director Dr Mirta Roses Periago, CSU AMRO, PWR Barbados, and PWR CPC for agreeing to host this meeting, and for their hard work organizing the logistics. She took this opportunity to highlight the uniqueness of the 11th CSU Network meeting, as we “put ourselves in the context for the WHO reforms, and look towards the future”.

The WHO reforms put countries at centre stage, and Director CCO pointed to the opportunity that this meeting provides to agree on actions that will support country teams and help to measure and assess country work in order to give it more visibility. She reminded participants that the meeting would not be “business as usual”, but focused on ensuring support for the implementation of WHO reforms at country level.

Director CCO also thanked the eight HWOs for their participation: the contribution of HWOs ensures that discussions are “in touch with reality” and that the actions agreed are realistic and implementable.

Presentation of the AMRO Country Focus Support Unit

At each CSU Network meeting, the host CSU updates his/her colleagues on the structure and functioning of the Region’s country support unit. Coordinator Country Focus Support (CFS) AMRO presented an overview of the vision, mission, purpose, objectives and functions of CFS.

Vision

The CFS vision was established with the vision of creating a bridge between the levels (including the subregional level) of the Secretariat, in order to optimize AMRO's technical cooperation focus on countries.

Mission and purpose

CFS facilitates and contributes to the integration of the various levels and parts of the Organization to ensure the region's technical cooperation meets the specific country needs within the framework of the national, subregional, regional and global health agendas, in accordance with the Organization's mandates.

The purpose of the CFS is to make PAHO/WHO's country focus policy operational in order to serve the countries better through integration of political, technical, managerial and administrative aspects of PAHO/WHO's technical cooperation.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the CFS, are to:

- Contribute to and facilitate integrated management of technical cooperation focused on countries.
- Promote and facilitate communication between country offices, the RDs office and the technical and administrative areas of the secretariat, to address political issues, develop strategic approaches and establish new modalities of cooperation for the definition of WHO's programme and presence in each country.
- Promote and support technical cooperation among countries as a strategy for collective self-reliance among member states.

Organizational chart

Four technical staff in CFS are each responsible for one subregion: the Caribbean; Central America and the Dominican Republic; Andean countries and Cuba; South Cone including Mexico, Haiti and the US-Mexico-border field office. These staff are supported by five administrative staff, some of whom fulfill semi-professional responsibilities.

These technical and administrative staff support 27 country offices, one field office and the Office for Caribbean Programme Coordination (CPC).

CFS functions

Within the **political and strategic sphere**, the functions of the CFS are as follows:

- Integrate and distribute information on the situation in a country, including implications for PAHO/WHO's technical cooperation;
- Provide strategic information from and for PAHO/WHO's Governing Bodies and Executive Management regarding the work of the Secretariat in countries and sub-regions;

- Prepare, disseminate and follow-up the Regional Director's activities;
- Prepare, coordinate, and follow-up visits of Ministers and other national and subregional authorities to the Regional Office; and
- Organize Managers' Meetings and follow-up on the recommendations.

In terms of **technical and programmatic functions**, the CFS:

- Reviews and monitors the countries' and subregional Biennial Work Plans (BWP);
- Coordinates the preparation of the CCS and ensure linkage between BWP and CCS;
- Supports country office development plans;
- Contributes to strengthening PAHO/WHO's presence in the countries;
- Promotes and supports sub-regional health initiatives and Technical Cooperation among Countries; and
- Advocates for and facilitates a coordinated response from technical areas and units, in support of the countries' technical cooperation programme.

In terms of **managerial and administrative functions**, in collaboration with the Office of Administration, the CSF:

- Coordinates the general managerial support from the regional and global operational levels in support of technical cooperation program of the Country Office;
- Supports the standardization of procedures among the country offices;
- Coordinates and facilitates PWR transfer process;
- Processes reprogramming and transfer of Funds;
- Analyses human resources needs and negotiates for rotation of personnel (vacant post funds, Associate Professional Officers, Associated Experts, UN Volunteers, National Professionals);
- Supports Country Offices in closing and complying with observations from audit processes; and
- Coordinates orientation programmes for new HWOs.

CFS strategies

The strategies of the CFS include:

- Maintaining direct contact/communication with country offices via "desks" organized by geographic sub-regions. (CFS acts as a "hinge" unit between the regional office and country offices);
- Being closely involved with/in country office and subregional technical cooperation programmes;
- Systematically analyzing proposals related to country offices, and recommendations for the attention of the Regional Director and the Executive Management;
- Coordinating and negotiating with technical and administrative units, and Chief of Staff; and
- Advocating for greater country focus at the regional and global levels.

Substantial authority has been delegated to HWOs. At the same time, the regional office provides ongoing support and oversight.

Subregional level

The CSF functions are enacted at three levels: 1) the headquarters level; 2) the regional level; and 3) the sub-regional. This sub-regional level is a new and important level, relating directly to the relevant technical unit at the Regional Office. An example is the Office for Eastern Caribbean Countries in Barbados, which provides administrative support and technical support to other Caribbean countries.

The subregional level is consistent with and allows implementation of the Country Focus Policy and helps to align the Regional and country agendas. It contributes to faster progress on the achievement of regional objectives and provides a response to the challenges related to equity between countries in the same subregion.

Questions from participants focused on the interaction between country focus/support and planning; as well as capacity building of HWOs, especially for resource mobilization. In response, AMRO explained that the CFS, separate from planning, consolidates evidence on country office needs and takes this evidence to Planning. CFS has the oversight over the planning, programming and evaluation of all country offices. The full presentation on the AMRO CFS can be accessed here:

<http://intranet.who.int/homes/cco/documents/cfs%20presentation%20-%20draft.ppt>

2. WHO reforms in countries

Draft roadmap for the implementation of WHO reforms at the country level

Participants reviewed the A65/5 [WHO reform - Consolidated report by the Director-General](#), and the draft [GPW 2014-2019](#). They also considered the *Draft roadmap/framework for implementation of WHO reforms at country level* which was developed by CCO based on the World Health Assembly (WHA) and Executive Board (EB) WHO reforms papers¹ and proposes actions for implementation over the coming five years.

In many ways, the regions are ahead of the WHO reform processes. For example, EMRO and

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