



PAHO's Director calls for greater cooperation to increase regional self-sufficiency for medical products

Drawing from the lessons from COVID-19, Director says solidarity will be key "as we work together to re-engineer progress and return to an upward trajectory."

Washington, DC, 20 June 2022 (PAHO) – The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Director, Carissa F. Etienne, called on countries to work together to raise manufacturing capacity and decrease the regional dependence on imports for medicines, vaccines, and other key health products as a major lesson from COVID-19.

"We are learning that as a Region we must collectively embark on a sustainable and collaborative, rather than competitive, pathway to self-sufficiency," the Director told Member States at the opening of the 170th Session of PAHO's Executive Committee.

Dr. Etienne cited PAHO's Revolving Fund for Vaccines, as an "exceptional expression of Pan-American solidarity for public health." Established in 1979, the Fund has enabled countries in the region, regardless of economic status, to access quality and safe vaccines at a single price. Since the start of COVAX in 2021, it has delivered over 142 million vaccines to countries in the Americas.

The PAHO Director also called on countries to increase long-term investment in public health, both financial and human capital, to ensure universal health and improve the resilience of systems against future health threats.

"This pandemic has harshly exposed the deeply rooted fault lines of inequity and inequitable access to health that exist in our Region," Dr. Etienne said. Continued underinvestment will hamper the "more agile, consolidated, and efficient response to the next pandemic which we so earnestly desire."

The 170th Session of PAHO's Executive Committee takes place from 20-24 June. Discussions include the organization's budget, as well as policies to strengthen pandemic preparedness and most pressing health issues in the region.

PAHO's Governing Bodies comprise the Pan American Sanitary Conference, the highest governing authority which meets every five years to determine general policies; the

Directing Council, which meets annually in years when the Conference does not meet; and the Executive Committee, which meets twice a year and acts as a working party of the Conference or Council.

This year, a one-day Forum will be convened after the closure of the Executive Committee, where PAHO Director candidates will have the opportunity to present their vision for the organization to Member States, Participating States and Associate Members.

The election of the PAHO Director will take place during the 30th Pan American Sanitary Conference in September 26-30, 2022. The elected person will take office on February 1, 2023, and serve for an initial term of five years.

Links

[170th Session of the Executive Committee](#)

[Executive Committee releases names of nominated candidates for post of PAHO Director](#)

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system.