



Report
on the use of travel funds
in the World Health Organization

by
S. Ilic'
Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva
April 1974

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report is limited to the use of travel funds at WHO Headquarters in Geneva. The task of the Inspector was somewhat different from an earlier one when he undertook a study of the use of travel funds in the United Nations. First of all, in WHO the presentation of the expenditure differs to some extent from that used by the United Nations. Secondly, there is almost identical justification for the funds requested in the budget estimates; from year to year one finds the same formula for "duty travel" whether the expenditure is in the same amount or different. Thirdly, there are no quarterly reports specifically on travel - neither on travel undertaken during the previous quarter nor on proposed travel for the future. There is a different practice in the UN where such quarterly reports do exist and are sent to the office of Financial Services. FAO has also recently introduced a new system of control of the use of travel funds whereby schedules listing travel plans for all staff duty travel and non-staff travel are prepared by HQ units and Regional Offices for the first four months of a biennium and brought up to date on a rolling two-monthly basis. The existing reports in WHO do not offer a detailed picture of all travel undertaken during a quarter. They give to some extent an account of the activities of a unit or division during a quarter which has more importance for internal use than for the Executive Board.

2. The present study required research and the reading of many travel authorizations to obtain a comprehensive picture of the manner in which travel funds had been used. The Inspector also went through all travel reports of a big Division and those of some other Divisions on a selective basis.

3. The present report does not embrace all short trips, but rather the more important ones upon which he could form an opinion as to the proper use of travel funds.

4. The Inspector wishes to express his thanks to the staff of WHO for the co-operation and assistance they gave him in the course of preparation of this report. He would like to point out in particular that this study was undertaken and the report drafted before the new Director-General took office and that in the circumstances he may not be familiar with all of the cases that are quoted in the report. The Inspector hopes nevertheless that the Director-General will find his observations and recommendations useful.

Chapter I

TRAVEL OF DELEGATES TO THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

5. The second report of the Committee on Administration and Finance unanimously recommended to the first World Health Assembly in July 1948 the adoption of the following resolution concerning the transportation and/or per diem allowance for delegates to the second World Health Assembly:

"The Health Assembly

RESOLVES there is authorized the reimbursement to each Member of WHO of the actual travelling expenses of one delegate only to the second Health Assembly, the maximum reimbursement to be restricted to the equivalent of first-class return accommodation by recognized public transport via an approved route from the capital city of the Member to the place of the meeting, and not to include the payment of subsistence, except where this is included as an integral part of the regular posted schedule for first-class accommodation for recognized public transport."

6. The first World Health Assembly adopted this resolution (resolution WHA1.139).

7. During the second World Health Assembly, on the proposal of the Committee on Administration and Finance, the Assembly authorized for each Member and associate Member of WHO payment of actual travel expenses of one delegate or representative only to the third and subsequent Health Assemblies, the maximum reimbursement to be restricted to the equivalent of first-class return accommodation by recognized public transport (resolution WHA2.46).

8. Since then WHO has reimbursed each year to Member States the travel expenses of one delegate, equivalent to a first-class return air ticket.

9. These expenses have not changed much apart from increases in fares and new admissions to the membership of WHO.

Table 1

TRAVEL EXPENSES INCURRED BY DELEGATES

Twenty-third World Health Assembly	\$106,987
Twenty-fourth World Health Assembly	\$120,302
Twenty-fifth World Health Assembly	\$139,877

10. It is interesting to note that apart from the United Nations, IBRD and IMF, WHO is the only member of the UN system reimbursing the travel expenses of delegates attending its Assembly.

11. The reimbursement of travel expenses by WHO to Members attending the first and second World Health Assemblies was motivated by a desire to ensure that every Member State would be able to send a delegate to the Assembly, wherever the latter was held.

12. After twenty-five years of existence, WHO has proved beyond doubt its efficiency and contribution to Member States' health organizations and at present every Member State shows great interest in the work and activities of WHO as is indicated by the attendance at successive World Health Assemblies. In 1973, for example, the twenty-sixth World Health Assembly was attended by 136 delegations, a total of 613 persons or an average of 4 per delegation. In a few rare cases only did the Permanent Mission represent the Member State concerned.

13. Therefore, the Inspector considers that while at the beginning of the existence of WHO such measures as the reimbursement of one first-class return air ticket were justified, the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly may now wish to reconsider the decision taken twenty-five years ago and bring WHO into line with the practice existing in other specialized agencies.

14. If the Executive Board were to decide to maintain the existing practice of reimbursing a return ticket to one delegate of a Member State attending the World Health Assembly, the Inspector is of the view that, bearing in mind the increase in air fares, such reimbursement might be limited to the cost of an economy-class ticket.

Chapter II

TRAVEL EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

15. By resolution WHA1.91, the World Health Assembly decided that members of the Executive Board should receive reimbursement of their actual transportation expenses between their normal residence and the place of meeting of the Board, the maximum being limited, in the case of delegates to the World Health Assembly, to the equivalent of first-class accommodation by recognized public transport via an approved route from the capital city of the Member to the place of the meeting. The members of the Executive Board were entitled to a first-class return air ticket and subsistence allowances.

16. Table 2 shows the expenditure for this category:

Table 2
EXPENDITURE - EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSIONS
(in US\$)

<u>1970</u>		<u>1971</u>		<u>1972</u>	
45th	46th	47th	48th	49th	50th
35,316	23,874	37,948	21,976	37,737	18,189

17. It will be noted that this expenditure does not vary much, the first session always being longer and hence more expensive.

18. If a Member State has in its delegation a member of the Executive Board and he attends the World Health Assembly, in practice WHO will reimburse to the Member State two first-class return air tickets. (In some cases, in spite of rotation, some Member States are almost always reimbursed two tickets.)

19. The Executive Board, at its fifth session, considered this question and recognized that under resolutions of the first and second World Health Assemblies those Member States which have as one of their delegates to the Assembly a member of the Executive Board are, in practice, entitled to the reimbursement of transportation costs in respect of two delegates to the World Health Assembly if a meeting of the

Board has been arranged to take place immediately before or after the World Health Assembly. When this question was dealt with (1950), the Executive Board considered that this restriction would inevitably create difficulties and might inflict hardship on some Member States. The Executive Board decided therefore to retain the practice of reimbursing the transportation costs to members of the Executive Board who are at the same time members of delegations to the World Health Assembly. This means in fact that WHO reimburses in some cases two first-class return air tickets.

20. Bearing in mind that sessions of the Executive Board are at present usually held immediately after the World Health Assembly during which the new elections to the Executive Board have been held and that this session lasts no longer than three or four days and bearing in mind also that in some cases only a few members of the Executive Board requested to be reimbursed for the session following the World Health Assembly, the Inspector is of the view that the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board might wish to look once again into the matter and decide to discontinue reimbursing travel expenses to the members of the Board attending the World Health Assembly as members of their respective delegations.

21. As regards the mode of travel, the Inspector is of the view that the Executive Board of the WHO may wish to follow the example of the Council of FAO (see chapter VI of this report).

Chapter III

TRAVEL EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF EXPERT COMMITTEES

22. The provision applicable to members of the Executive Board was extended to the members of the expert committees or scientific groups who are therefore entitled to first-class return air travel and subsistence allowance.

23. The membership of the expert committees and scientific groups changes from year to year; the number of experts varies from six to nine. For the years 1970, 1971 and 1972 there were 33 expert committees. In 1972, 15 expert committees were listed in the budget estimates but only ten were convened.

24. At this stage, the Inspector suggests that the Executive Board may wish to reconsider the above-mentioned provision applicable to members of expert committees and scientific groups and limit the payment of travel expenses to economy class.

Chapter IV

TRAVEL OF STAFF - DUTY TRAVEL

25. According to the Staff Rules, "official travel" is defined as travel for any purpose, the cost of which is borne by the Organization. Such travel includes not only travel on duty (mission) but also travel on recruitment, reassignment, home leave or repatriation.

26. Expenditure for official travel, as shown in the budget estimates under the heading "Summary by category of expenditure, indicating the percentage of total regular budget estimates" (see Table 3 below), includes for the financial years 1971, 1972 and 1973 (estimates) the total expenditure for all categories of such travel; from such a presentation it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the funds spent by staff on duty travel.

27. While the proposed programme and budget estimates for 1972 (Official Record No.187) provided a breakdown of the estimates of all types of travel, in the 1973 programme and budget estimates WHO used the standard classification by object of expenditure developed by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions on an inter-agency basis.

28. The figures for 1973 include the estimates for short-term consultants' travel and temporary staff travel as well as those for regular staff travel. According to the information the Inspector received, these figures cover not only Headquarters' travel but travel throughout the entire Organization.

29. The Inspector is of the view that in future there should be a detailed explanation of each category of travel and the estimates for each category should be given separately.

30. It has been stated in the Introduction to this Report that WHO does not, contrary to the practice of the UN and FAO, submit quarterly reports on travel by staff or the programme of proposed travel during the following quarter. The UN and FAO practices are most useful for a study of this type of expenditure as well as for overall control of the use of travel funds. Under WHO practice, information on travel of staff is provided on a monthly basis to the Assistant Directors-General and Directors by means of Allotment Reports which reflect the amount allotted, the obligation incurred, and the unobligated balance of allotments. Control is exercised by the "allotment holder"

on the basis of the information included in the Allotment Report and of information on duty travel kept at the Division/Unit level. In addition "Divisional Directors" are responsible for preparing quarterly reports on the work of their Divisions based on reports for the same period for the units under their supervision. In addition to the technical activities of the Division as a whole, such reports include an indication of all duty travel undertaken during the quarter in question as well as the purpose and duration of such travel.

31. The Inspector was told that the above-mentioned procedure assures extensive control over the use of travel funds in WHO. Having gone through the quarterly reports of one big Division, the Inspector was not convinced that the control over the rational use of travel funds was fully exercised. In the examples which will be quoted later in this report the Inspector will attempt to describe the situation and will leave it to members of the Executive Board to judge the effectiveness of such control.

Table 3

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE - TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS

(in US\$'000)

	1971	1972	1973 ^{1/}
Organizational meetings	249	262	263
Operational programmes	1,783	1,743	1,833
Administrative services	81	81	81
<u>Total</u>	2,113	2,086	2,177
Percentage of total budget	2.79	2.51	2.41

^{1/} Figures for 1973 are estimates

32. Another interesting feature in WHO is the delegation of authority to the Directors of Divisions made by the Director-General, by virtue of Article 31 of the Constitution, as the chief technical and administrative officer of the Organization and by virtue of such other authority as has been vested in him by the decision of the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board and with the agreement of the Assistant Director-General concerned. Authority thus delegated to Directors of Divisions includes:

- (a) responsibility to make adjustments between provisions for duty travel;
- (b) responsibility for authorizing duty travel of staff reporting to the Director concerned.

33. Nevertheless the Director-General retained the authority to have referred to him for decision (through the Assistant Director-General) proposals for increased provisions for individual activities as well as for duty travel (except where savings are available within the budgetary provisions for duty travel or consultants, including the reserves held by the Assistant Director-General).

34. Thus, in WHO, by virtue of this delegation of authority, control over the use of travel funds is in the hands of the Directors of Divisions for all staff responsible to them and, for the Directors of Divisions, in the hands of the Assistant Director-General concerned.

35. The Inspector was told that this delegation of authority and transfer of responsibility was made on an experimental basis. It is interesting therefore to analyse how this experiment - in such a very sensitive field as travel - is functioning.

36. The Inspector's research has been limited to 1972. In the course of this study of the way in which travel funds had been used, the Inspector's attention was drawn to some examples which, in his view, would seem to indicate the absence of real control or supervision by the Directors over the ways in which the funds had been used. He is perforce obliged to conclude that the delegation of authority did not prove to be fully effective.

37. This report will begin with a few remarks of a general nature and then give concrete examples which the Inspector came across during his study of travel funds in the course of 1972.

A. How duty travel requests are presented in the budget estimates

38. It is interesting to note that for almost every financial year the same formulation was given to justify requests for travel funds. Several examples are given below:

- (a) One Office of Director justified its travel funds request for 1970, under the title of "duty travel" as follows: "to visit epidemiological research centres and field research area; to observe special population in order to investigate disease incidence and prevalence and other matters relevant to the research interests; and to attend scientific meeting (cost \$25,000)". In the 1971 budget estimates an identical formulation was used, and in the 1972 budget estimates only a slight variation in the last phrase is found: "to represent WHO at scientific meeting" - again \$25,000;
- (b) A Division's requests for duty travel funds for 1970, 1971 and 1972 were as follows: "to stimulate, co-ordinate and evaluate research activities; visit international reference centres, help in organizing inter-regional activities; provide on request advisory services on basic, clinical and public health aspects of human reproduction and population dynamics and represent WHO at international meetings and at inter-agency meetings on the health aspects of population dynamics (\$3,500)". The formulation and the amount were identical for 1970, 1971 and 1972;
- (c) For another Division the duty travel requests for 1971 for the whole Division were submitted by the Office of the Director: "to enable staff of the Division to visit regional offices and certain countries in connexion with the development of training facilities for health personnel at all levels; assistance to education programmes in developing countries, the introduction of modern teaching methods, the planning and developing of appropriate schemes for the preparation of teachers, the development of research projects in medical education and the co-ordination of fellowship procedures and evaluation of fellowships and to attend international meetings (\$14,300)". For 1972 almost the same formulation was given with only small changes in the last phrase.

39. Even when there is an increase in the funds requested for duty travel, no explanation is given.

40. In view of the fact that for years the same amount of travel funds has been requested by some Divisions, it is difficult to avoid the impression that this has become a routine matter.

41. There are many other examples of the same nature but the Inspector does not propose to quote them all. In his view, either the form of presentation of travel fund requests should be changed and more information about the proposed travel be given, or the funds requested under the title "duty travel" should be included in the chapter dealing with the Office of Director giving a description of the actual travel to be undertaken so that Member States know for what purpose the money would be spent.

42. The explanation given to the Inspector concerning the examples quoted above are that they relate to the Divisions and units which have primarily research roles and promotional responsibility and where the use of travel funds by the Divisions and units could not be itemized and budgeted for two years in advance. The reason for unchanged travel budgets according to this explanation is a result of the directive of the Director-General that no requests for increases for travel would be considered.

43. Since UN, WHO and other specialized agencies have adopted programme budgeting, the justification for travel estimates should be presented in greater detail, for this is the area in which a rationalization of the use of funds is both necessary and feasible. Examples and an analysis of some travel will show how in practice these funds have been used.

B. Ways in which itineraries are drawn up

44. From several itineraries examined by the Inspector, he cannot avoid the impression that travel embraces all countries or cities of a region and sometimes amounts virtually to travel around the world. The following will illustrate this point:

- (a) One staff member's request for travel gave as itinerary:
Geneva - Alexandria, Addis Ababa, Entebbe, Lagos, Ibadan,
Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Abidjan, Dakar - Geneva (twenty-three
days - \$1,897);
- (b) Another staff member's proposed travel included the following
cities: Geneva - New Delhi, Rangoon, Kuala Lumpur, Manila

Tokyo, San Francisco, Hamilton, Seattle, Copenhagen - Geneva (thirty-eight days - \$2,764). The purpose of travel was described in very brief terms: "to visit a country project in Burma, research and reference centres in Malaysia, Japan and USA and the regional office";

(c) Another example is as follows: Geneva - Washington, Houston, Mexico City, Bogota, Cali, Lima, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Dakar, Brazzaville, Nairobi, Entebbe, Addis Ababa, Lagos, Yaoundé - Geneva (thirty-one days - \$4,098). Purpose: "to visit institutions interested in teacher training and to visit schools of public health; to study specialization and continuing education patterns; to take part in the seminar workshop on teacher training for schools of medicine and allied health sciences as secretary to the meeting". This almost round-the-world trip needs no comment; it cost as much as the whole travel allotment of some Divisions;

(d) One further example is also very interesting. Itinerary: Geneva - San Juan, St. Thomas, San Juan, Mayaguez, San Juan, Miami, Washington, Ottawa, San Francisco, Honolulu, Tokyo, Singapore - Geneva (cost \$2,176). Purpose: "to visit laboratories in connexion with UNDP project on surveillance of Biotoxins in Marine Food Fish; to visit Environmental Protection Agency; to visit NIH and regional office; to attend the International Congress on Pharmacology (San Francisco); to visit marine laboratories in Hawaii in connexion with UNDP project; to visit research institute Tokyo; to visit laboratories of government chemist and IARC Regional Centre (Singapore)".

45. The Inspector does not wish to comment further on these rather extensive itineraries. There are many others which could be quoted, as for example: Geneva - Tokyo, Manila, Wellington, Auckland, Sydney, Canberra, Sydney, Singapore - Geneva. Purpose: to participate in International Congress of medical records and visit countries of WPRO to discuss with authorities implementation of problems relating to UNPFA project.

Or another: Geneva - Alexandria, Addis Ababa, Entebbe, Lagos, Ibadan, Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Abidjan, Dakar - Geneva (cost \$1,899). Purpose: to visit laboratories

in connexion with problems of yellow fever and the assistance which could be given should a large outbreak occur.

Yet another interesting itinerary concerning refresher training could be also cited: Geneva - Copenhagen, Stockholm, Amsterdam, London, Edinburgh, London, Montreal, Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Oak Bridge, Washington, New York, London - Geneva (13 August - 15 October 1972). Purpose: Refresher training and visit to Regional Office AMRO and the UN Scientific Committee on the effects of atomic radiation.

46. The Inspector was given some explanation of these itineraries. It was explained that for each itinerary the need and value of journeys consist of justifications and costings provided by the Unit to its divisional Director or the Assistant Director-General, and the subsequent report on the visit prepared by the person concerned and sent on his return to the divisional Director or the Assistant Director-General. The Inspector was told that:

- (a) justification exists for each journey independently of the travel authorization;
- (b) extended trips are frequently more economical and time-saving than a number of short trips and they are more often than not planned with great care and thoroughness;
- (c) these long journeys with frequent stops are not made for the personal pleasure of the staff member but are often thoroughly inconvenient, uncomfortable and fatiguing: the sole reason for undertaking them is to use to the very best advantage the limited funds available for travel; and
- (d) duty-travel reports are available which allow for an ex-post facto assessment of the value of the journey undertaken.

47. The Inspector is not convinced that extended trips are more economical than a number of short trips. The question is whether frequent trips are needed. The Inspector is not convinced by the explanation given under (d) above concerning the value of travel reports.

48. As for the reports which are said to allow for an ex-post facto assessment of the value of the journey undertaken, the Inspector, having read the reports of the travel undertaken by a big Division during 1972 and by others on a selective basis, has reached his own conclusions. Not being a technical expert, the Inspector will

leave the judgement of the real value of reports to the members of the Executive Board. Nevertheless, approaching this subject from an administrative and financial point of view and having in mind better and rational use of funds appropriated by the World Health Assembly, he would quote some examples to show that the lack of control led to an extensive use of travel funds.

49. Of 75 trips made in 1972 by a big Division, 27 were without any reports. In some cases self-explanatory memos or notes were substituted for reports. In other cases the explanation of the travel was given in writing on the following lines: "at the invitation of the University of Lausanne and in the framework of a course in microbiology Dr.X. gave a lecture introducing the objectives and methods of epidemiology".

50. The attendance of a staff member at a conference was explained in this way: Malaria control in countries where time-limited malaria control is unpracticable at present. Dr. Y. participated to present the interim results of malaria project (Research on epidemiology and control of malaria in the African Savanna) exposure of problems and needs of countries, contacts with WHO and national staff involved (cost of travel \$1,253).

51. No report on the following home-leave-connected travel. The purpose of the visits (itinerary: Geneva - Baltimore, Chapel Hill (Houston), Ann Arbor - Geneva) was to discuss in these centres whether there were studies similar to the Kaunas Rotterdam Intervention study; and the on-going relevant research. "In addition to discussions, Mr. X represented the results of WHO work and procured documentation (study protocol preliminary analyses etc.) of the various on-going studies. He also established contact with two consultants to the project IR0674 for 1973 in Baltimore and Chapel Hill".

52. In two other cases the following explanation was given: "no written report: the discussions with the collaborators dealt with record forms and working procedures for the study".

53. For another 11 trips made by staff of the same Division during 1972 brief explanations written on 21 January 1974 were given to the Inspector. Some of these will be quoted.

54. A visit to Manila was to attend the Regional Seminar on Health Laboratories services and the final Report of this meeting was brought back. At the request of the Regional Office a short visit was paid to Viet-Nam to become acquainted with the

Development of Laboratory Services in Saigon. As this visit was not made at the request of the Government and the Regional Director did not request any specific comments, no final report on this visit was prepared (cost \$1,913).

55. For the travel Geneva - Sydney - Geneva (21 days, cost \$2,285) the following explanation, written on 24 January 1974, was given: "the purpose of the visit was to follow up the work conducted in Washington as part of the meeting of sociological researchers. The work undertaken during the time in Sydney included: the services of pre-test results, final revisions of data-collection instruments, formats for data collection, sampling procedures and other administrative and technical matters coincidental to implementing the field work at the first study site for the International Collaborative study on Dental Health manpower system in relation to Oral Health Status". Supporting documents such as interview schedules, field notes, correspondence and various other materials were available but the Inspector did not wish to go into such detail.

56. Travel by a staff member to Washington and back to Geneva in order to attend a meeting of sociological researchers and to meet with various US agencies regarding funding for the project IR-0788 was explained in a note given to the Inspector on 24 January 1974 in 12 lines.

57. One staff member of the same Division travelled 6 times and spent 65 days on travel (total expenditure \$4,325) but did not write any report. The explanatory note written on 21 January 1974 gives in one page and a half the information on these visits.

58. As for the other 19 trips selected by the Inspector, there was no report in three cases. In one case, concerning a long trip that included Latin America and the African continent the report was written only on the part of the trip concerning Latin America, while no report was prepared on the other part.

59. In another case a mission report was never written, the main aim of Dr. X's short visits being to establish personal contact with his collaborators and to advise them on the future lines of research envisaged by WHO for which they receive financial support.

60. As for the quality of reports for an ex-post-facto assessment of the value of the journey undertaken, the Inspector, not being "technical" in this field and having in mind the need for the establishment of a reasonable ratio between the technicalities and the more rational use of funds does not wish to engage in an analysis of these

reports, considering it to be the duty of the Assistant Directors-General who approves the reports. He nevertheless wishes to quote some examples where it would be very difficult to evaluate the real results and the benefit of the trip to WHO.

61. On the Seminar organized in Teheran on the Plan of Epidemiology in Clinical Practice and Delivery of Health Care and the Role of Epidemiology in Health Service Organization and National Health Planning the following fourteen lines appeared in the report:

"The seminar was intended to provide practical demonstration of the application of epidemiology to the planning, implementation and evaluation of health services delivery systems. Formal general presentations were complemented by specific reports on completed or ongoing projects, and by group discussions focussed on research and development of services, chronic and infectious disease interventions. The sessions of the seminar were led by five WHO/IEA consultants and were attended by professionals from Iran and five other countries in the East Mediterranean Region.

I gave a presentation on the application of epidemiological studies to the improvement of health services. A study on the epidemiology of malaria in progress in Nigeria was taken as an example. I also conducted a discussion group on 'Infectious Disease Intervention' in three sessions in collaboration with Dr. A. Lucas from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria." (The cost of travel was \$731).

62. Another trip (Geneva - Bogota, Cali, Medellin, Chapel Hill, New York, Bottle Creek - Geneva, 15 days - cost \$1,862) resulted in a report containing four pages of which, for example, the visit to Cali accounted for 20 lines, Medellin 11 lines and Chapel Hill 3 lines.

63. The report on a visit to the UN Institute for Economic Development and Planning (Dakar) and various Community Health Service projects in Libya and Egypt contains four and a half pages on the Institute of which three and a half are a mere description of the programme of the Institute. As for the rest of the report, the visit to Libya was described in four lines and the visit to Egypt in six lines (cost \$1,291).

64. The following is the report on travel to Paris of a staff member to participate in the "Journée d'Etude de l'association scientifique" where the staff member had to present a paper:

"En l'absence du rapport de mission qu'on ne retrouve pas, voici de mémoire quelques informations relatives à cette mission. L'objectif était de participer à la Journée d'Etudes de la Société de Démographie, Economie et de Sociologie médicales et de présenter une communication sollicitée par le Secrétariat de la Société et préparée par Drs. Benyoussef et Wessen sur "Etude Pilote en Tunisie sur l'utilisation des services de santé (Méthodologie et résultats)". Cette communication a été présentée et discutée en séance plénière. Par ailleurs, il a été possible durant le séjour à Paris de

procéder à des échanges de vue avec des spécialistes (Dr. Fagnani et autres) de l'Institut national de la Santé et de la Recherche médicale (INSERM - Paris) sur leurs travaux non encore publiés et présentant de l'intérêt pour nos programmes de services de santé (Utilisation et couverture) et de planification sanitaire (Méthodologie et évaluation)."^{1/}

65. Another visit of a staff member to Dakar (3 November - 13 November, cost \$889) resulted in the following:

"En l'absence du rapport de visite rédigé par Drs. X.Z.Y.P. qu'on ne retrouve pas, vous voudrez bien trouver ci-joint une copie du compte rendu de cette mission établi le 11 novembre 1972 par le président du groupe de travail rapporteur et adressé au Directeur SHS en annexe à la lettre datée du 13 novembre (copie ci-jointe)."^{1/}

66. To the letter of the Rapporteur mentioned above was enclosed the "Compte Rendu des Travaux" which stipulates that the final report will be finished in Geneva (it was not to be found, as can be seen from the above).

67. Another example concerns the participation of a staff member in the work of the Expert Group Meeting on a Unified Approach to Development Analyses and Planning, held in Stockholm. In the summary of the visit the staff member gives in three paragraphs his views on the meeting, attaching three documents: (a) Draft report which contains recommendations, (b) Note - comments on the draft report, and (c) Copy of the Preliminary Report on a unified approach to development analyses and planning. It is interesting to note that the comments on the draft report were addressed to an Ambassador in the Foreign Office of the host country and only a copy of them was attached to the summary submitted to the Director-General of WHO.

68. As for the reports on travel, the itineraries of which include many cities, the Inspector wishes only to quote the report on the travel of the staff member whose itinerary was given in para 44(c). As was mentioned earlier only the part of the travel to Washington, Mexico City, Bogota, Cali, Lima, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia was described in 90 per cent of the report which, in 60 pages, described the medical education in the countries the author visited, information which was given to him by the people he visited or from papers prepared for him. The Inspector wonders whether such information could not have been supplied to the staff member by some other means, by PAHO for example, which has a special Latin American Teacher's Training Programme.

^{1/} No English translation exists.

69. The second part of the report was not written. It would be interesting to know what benefit resulted to WHO from this trip.

70. In the view of the Inspector long trips embracing many cities necessarily result in a very brief description of the visit or meetings attended. For example, a staff member whose travel included Santiago and Rio de Janeiro in order to visit a typhoid vaccine project (Chile) and to attend the Brazilian Congress on Microbiology, wrote a very short report on his visit to Brazil (one page) and only eight lines on the Congress he attended and these eight lines are purely descriptive.

71. The situation is similar in the case of a staff member who made a long trip (see itinerary in para.44(d)) but who wrote, for example, on his visit to the Caribbean Research Institute, St.Thomas: 28 lines; Puerto Rico International Underwater Laboratory: 11 lines; Department of Marine Biology, Miami: 11 lines. This duty travel was undertaken in conjunction with home leave (Canada) and cost \$2.176. The following is an extract from his report and the Inspector leaves it to the members of the Executive Board to judge its value:

"20 June Dr. Robert Brody, Caribbean Research Institute, St.Thomas Virgin Islands

1. Dr. Robert Brody was leaving the Caribbean Research Institute which had been affiliated to the University of Puerto Rico, but was being closed down. (Dr. Edward L. Towle, the Director of the defunct Caribbean Research Institute, was organizing the 'Island Resources Foundation, Inc.', P.O. Box 4187, St.Thomas, US Virgin Islands 00801 (Suite 54, Plantation Manor) where Dr. Brody would be the principal investigator).
2. He has been using mongooses for bioassay of toxic fish (paralysis - usually in a day, but much later in some cases). During the earlier part of his work he extracted the fish samples using Scheuer's technique, but later he freeze-dried the sample and extracted the toxin with water which was much simpler.
3. According to him a meeting was to be held among the St. Thomas group, Dr. Halstead, University of Mississippi (Dr. Huang), University of Wisconsin (Dr. Moran) and University of Hawaii (Dr. Banner). Work on the ciguatera problem was expected to be partly sponsored by NIH and the Sea Grant.
4. There were 60 reported cases of fish poisoning in St. Thomas (total population 80,000) in 1971. In the first three months of 1972, 26 cases were reported, among these 20 sought medical treatment and ten went to a hospital. The incidence is lower than that in the South Pacific area.

Dr. Brody attributed this difference to the fact that fish constituted 15% of the protein in St. Thomas but 80% in the South Pacific. He and his colleagues have prepared a descriptive brochure about ciguatera and a set of questionnaires which were sent to all local physicians calling attention to this matter (copies kept in FAD).

5. Dr. Brody mentioned that there were more ciguateric fish on the south side of Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, etc. and the northern part of the Lesser Antilles; in the southern part, only large baracudas are toxic.

6. Dr. Brody stated that he only needed nominal financial support from UNDP, nevertheless, he would appreciate the contact with the British, Dutch and French Governments which control most of the Caribbean Islands.

30 June Dr. David A. Olsen, Puerto Rico International Underwater Laboratory (PRINUL), San German, Nr. Mayaguez

Dr. Olsen is basically a statistician but took some courses in zoology at the University of Hawaii under Dr. Dr. A.H. Banner. His approach to the biotoxin problem was that of a 'network analysis'. Since there will not be many relevant and reliable data for analysis for some time to come, I doubt very much if he could be of much help at present. However, they will have an "underwater laboratory" which was to be delivered to them in September. It can be stationed on the bottom of the sea near any island. The personnel (both scientists and the crew) can work underwater for days without losing time going up and down.

I also talked to Mr. Ian Koblick, Manager of the project. Both he and the Assistant Governor of Puerto Rico, who visited me in San Juan, assured me that PRINUL has the full support of the Commonwealth Government of Puerto Rico. They also expect to receive some financial support from the Sea Grant of the US NOAA and expect to establish some working relations with the School of Pharmacy of the University of Mississippi. A detailed proposal concerning the role of PRINUL in the proposed UNDP project is given in Olsen's letter of 12 July 1972.

3 July Dr. Charles E. Lane, Department of Marine Biology, University of Miami

Dr. Lane had been considered by the US Government as one of the US nominees to attend the meeting of the Panel of Experts on the problem of marine biotoxins. He considered the problem worthy of a concerted effort at an international level and that the proposed terms of reference of the Panel were appropriate. He provided me with a list of the names of scientists from whom we should try to obtain additional background information.

Dr. Findlay Russel, Professor of Physiology and Biology, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, came to see me in San Francisco. I told him about the proposed terms of reference of the meeting of the Panel of Experts and he felt that these were appropriate and expressed the view that the problem of marine biotoxins is significant and widespread enough to warrant support by UNDP."

72. The Inspector did not wish and was not able to scrutinize all travel reports submitted during 1972, but as was already said, he limited himself to about one-tenth of the reports. There are no doubt other interesting examples similar to those quoted above.

73. In his view the length of a report cannot be the only factor to be taken into account in assessing its quality, but it is certain that a very brief description of the travel rarely enables its real value to be assessed.

74. In his view there is need for a system to be introduced in WHO concerning not only the evaluation of the proposed travel but also the evaluation of the results of the travel, that is to say, approval of the travel reports in order that the real benefit for the Organization could be ascertained. The Director-General and the Executive Board might wish to consider the establishment of an evaluating unit within the Office of the Director-General which should have a say in the travel programme and comment on the reports submitted after the travel has been completed.

C. Frequent visits to certain cities

75. In analyzing travel authorizations the Inspector found that in the course of 1972, for example, staff members visited about 235 cities. Some cities were visited very frequently. For example, Paris was visited seventy-eight times; Copenhagen forty-nine times; London forty-six times; Washington forty-one times; New Delhi thirty-eight times; Moscow thirty-four times; New York twenty-six times. Twenty-two cities were visited ten or more times; sixteen cities five to ten times. If we omit Copenhagen, Manila and other regional offices, the Inspector wonders whether such frequent visits to some cities were really necessary.

76. The Inspector does not think that these frequent visits to some cities were made by the staff for their personal pleasure. He wonders whether in some cases some other means of communication (letter, cable, telephone etc.) could not have achieved the purpose of the visit.

D. Frequent and long absence of some staff members from their duty station

77. An analysis of travel during 1972 disclosed very interesting facts about the absence, sometimes very prolonged, of some staff members from their posts at Headquarters:

- (a) In one office where there are only two professional staff members, they were absent from their duty station for 149 days, one of them for seventy-five days, the other for seventy-four days.
- (b) In Internal Audit, ten auditors were absent 415 days, one of them seventy-five days travelling for routine audit checks. It is interesting to note that, except for the Washington Office where there were three auditors on routine audit check, all other regional offices were visited by two auditors, although the question was of a routine nature. The Inspector is of the view that for routine audit checks it would be more economical to send to most of these offices only one auditor. It is encouraging anyhow to note that according to the Inspector's information it is planned to send in 1974 only two auditors to AFRO and one auditor to all other regional offices for a routine audit check.
- (c) In the Division of Public Information, staff members were absent from the office for about 280 days - one staff member for forty-six days, another for forty-two days, a third for thirty-five days. It is interesting to note that a public information officer from the New York Liaison Office spent forty days (cost \$1,383) in assisting with public information aspects of the inauguration of the new IARC building, while there are at Headquarters in Geneva in the Division of Public Information ten information officers in addition to the Director.
- (d) In another Division absences of one administrative and four medical officers amounted to 184 days, one medical officer for seventy-six days, another for fifty-two days.
- (e) In a Division where there are eight scientists, two medical officers and two technical officers, six scientists (out of eight) and one medical officer (out of two) were travelling for 370 days, of which one scientist's travel amounted to about 119 days and the other 96 days. The explanation given to the Inspector was that the scientist who had travelled for 172 (and not 119) days was required, at very short notice, to take over the direction of the Onchocerciasis Control Programme in Ouagadougou as acting chief of the mission. The Inspector was told that he spent 172 days in this capacity and

did it at great sacrifice and that his efforts in Ougadougou resulted on his return to Geneva in the production of an outstanding report entitled "Onchocerciasis Control in Volta River Basin Area".

Something seems to have gone wrong here because the scientist whose travel the Inspector quoted was never in Ouagadougou.

(f) In the Division of Communicable Diseases, of thirty-eight staff members only six were travelling, but they spent 333 days (one ninety-six days, another ninety-seven days, a third sixty-seven days) on travel which included the following cities: New Delhi, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Surabaya, Djakarta, Rio de Janeiro. The purpose of this travel was: to discuss IR cholera courses in the regional office (New Delhi), to lecture at an IR seminar on cholera and smallpox (Malaysia, Singapore), etc. to finalize the plans for controlled field trials of cholera vaccines in Singapore and discuss bacterial diseases programmes in Indonesia. To lecture at IR seminar on cholera and enteric infections, (Rio de Janeiro). According to the information of the Inspector the objectives of the travel mentioned in this paragraph relate exclusively to the problem of the control of cholera which was particularly serious in 1972 and "that travel reports would indicate quite clearly that control was essential during this critical period". In connexion with this the Inspector wishes only to state that two staff members from HQ attended a seminar on cholera and enteric infections (27 November - 8 December, Rio de Janeiro) and that the report submitted was less than one page in length (5 paras - 29 lines). The Inspector wonders what benefit the Organization derived from this travel, for it would be difficult from this short report to obtain a real picture.

(g) In one Division a staff member was absent from his office almost every month for some time:

		<u>Voucher No.</u>
1.	Geneva, New Delhi, Madras, Geneva (5-13 Feb.16-17 Feb.)	72(10)502
2.	Geneva, Copenhagen, Geneva (20-25 Feb.)	72(10)699(8204)
3.	Geneva, Copenhagen, Geneva (3-5 May)	72(69)991(8203)
4.	Geneva, Brussels, Geneva (25 May - 1 June)	72(10)699(8203)
5.	Geneva, Lyon, Geneva (20-21 June)	72(10)072(0002)34
6.	Geneva, Cochabamba, La Paz, Geneva (20 Jul - 1 Aug)	72(63)003(13)
7.	Geneva, Madrid, Geneva (24 Sep - 4 Oct)	72(10)72(0002)63
8.	Geneva, Prague, Moscow, Geneva (19 Nov - 1 Dec)	72(63)991(0892) and 72(10)699(8214)
9.	Geneva, Budapest, Geneva (3 Dec - 6 Dec)	72(10)CVD(3001)702

- (h) In another Division a staff member was also absent almost every month from his office^{1/}. The Inspector does not wish to question the necessity for the travel of two chiefs of an important Division who were absent almost every month from their office, nor to deny the usefulness of the contribution they made to the question of diseases requiring urgent intervention, but, nevertheless, he wonders whether some of the trips made by these two staff members could not have been made as effectively by staff from the regional offices concerned.

78. Frequent absence from the duty post in Geneva was found in other Divisions or units and some of the more interesting examples may be quoted:

- (a) In one big Division with a total of fifty staff members, fourteen (nine medical officers, four scientists and one statistician) were absent from their duty posts 850 days, an average of sixty days. The Inspector went through the duty travel reports of this Division to assess ex post facto the value of the journeys undertaken. His findings are contained in paras 49-57.
- (b) Another striking example of long absence is found in a Division composed of thirty-eight staff members (Professional staff - fourteen medical officers, four scientists and one technical officer) of which thirteen (eleven medical officers, one scientist and one technical adviser) were absent 628 days from their duty station.

	<u>Voucher No.</u>
<u>1/</u> Geneva, The Hague, Delft, Amsterdam, Geneva	(4-6 Jan.) 72/10/052/0002/11
Geneva, Paris, Geneva	(10-11 Feb.) 72/10/052/0002/17
Geneva, Vienna, Geneva	(8-11 Mar.) 72/10/052/0002/22
Geneva, Paris, Geneva	(12-13 Apr.) 72/10/052/0002/29
Geneva, Amsterdam, Geneva	(18-19 Apr.) 72/10/052/0002/30
Geneva, Stockholm, Geneva	(3-15 June) 72/10/052/0002/42
Geneva, Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Moscow, Geneva	(20 June - 5 July) 72/10/052/0002/43
Geneva, Washington, Raleigh, Washington Geneva	(16-25 July) 72/10/052/0002/50
Geneva, London, Geneva	(25 Aug.) 72/10/052/0002/59
Geneva, Paris, Geneva	(18-19 Sep.) 72/10/052/0002/65
Geneva, Moscow, Geneva	(25-28 Sep.) 72/10/052/0002/68
Geneva, Washington, Geneva	(24-28 Oct.) 72/70/033/236
Geneva, Vienna, Geneva	(1-5 Nov.) 72/10/993/1532/22
Geneva, Zurich, Lausanne, Geneva	(13 Nov.) 72/10/052/0002/77
Geneva, Moscow, Geneva	(11-19 Dec.) 72/10/052/0002/80

79. It is interesting in connexion with the above-mentioned Division to note that a chief of a unit was absent eighty-six days from his office during 1972 (almost every second month), while another chief of a unit in the same Division was absent for seventy-seven days. One wonders how these units were able to function.

E. Multiple attendance at meetings or visits

80. When approaching this problem, the Inspector was aware of the fact that all medical officers or other specialists are not interchangeable in WHO or in other specialized agencies. On the contrary, the Inspector is convinced that there are cases where groups of persons of different scientific disciplines are needed to be present and work together at meetings or other activities. But in his view there are cases where this multiple attendance from the same Division or unit is excessive. The following are examples:

- (a) At the IR Seminar on Cholera and Enteric Infections, Rio de Janeiro, 27 November to 8 December 1972, there were 16 participants with 15 staff members present; three were from Geneva Headquarters of which two were from the same unit and one from another unit. The question is whether there was need to send two staff members (chief of the unit and one medical officer) from the same unit to Brazil (the travel report on this trip was discussed in para 77(f)).
- (b) At the WHO Interregional Seminar on Cholera and Smallpox with 14 countries participating, there were eight WHO staff members including two chiefs of units from Headquarters, the Director of a regional office, two representatives of the SEARO office, three from WPRO and one from EURO. The Inspector wonders whether it was not possible to dispense with the attendance of some people, particularly when the report which emerged from the seminar was no longer than four pages.
- (c) At the request of the Government of a Member State, five staff members of a Division visited the country from 15 to 22 October 1972 on an exploratory mission to review the overall objectives for the development and strengthening of the basic health services with special emphasis on MCH and family planning, to consider the possibility of developing a project for a service oriented applied research programme, to suggest another timetable for the development of a protocol and further implementation of a project.

- (d) In connexion with another project, five staff members visited a country at different times during 1972.
- (e) During February and March various WHO staff members visited Iran in connexion with the Health Services Development. One was from one Division, the other five from another Division. It would be interesting to know whether less than five members from the same Division could not have performed the task.
- (f) In another unit four staff members (three medical officers and a clerk) spent ten days in New Delhi at the same time for the same purpose. The question arises whether one staff member - one medical officer - might not have performed this task at the seat of a regional office with long and valuable experience in the unit's activities and where there is also a good and experienced administrative staff.

81. The following explanation was given to the Inspector on the multiple attendance:

"The conference was a week-long, inter-country smallpox seminar convened at the final attack phase of the global programme of smallpox eradication. Almost 100 national participants from the principal smallpox-afflicted countries took part. Two of the medical officers attended at the request of the countries concerned in order to provide special assistance. The Chief of the Smallpox Programme and an administrative officer also participated in the conference, during the course of which and for some period afterwards they worked with the Regional Office and the countries concerned in order to plan the best possible co-ordination of efforts and to resolve technical, logistical and administrative problems in regard to the country programmes. Because of a clerical shortage at the Regional Office and the need to have someone who was familiar with the technical terms and administrative procedures of the programme, one clerk was brought from headquarters to assist in the conference."

82. Notwithstanding the above explanation, the Inspector still maintains his view that the attendance of three medical officers was excessive. At least he cannot believe that in the regional office concerned there was no-one familiar with technical terms and administrative procedures of the programme.

F. Travel that could be undertaken by staff of the regional offices

83. One gets the impression that there is no co-ordination between the regional offices and Headquarters in the field of travel. As is known, the regional offices are adequately equipped (staff plus advisers) and could perform various tasks on behalf of Headquarters.

84. In some cases, the tasks performed by a staff member travelling from Headquarters to Asia or some other region could no doubt have been performed by the staff of regional offices. Some examples are given to support this view:

- (a) one staff member - a medical officer - was sent in connexion with emergency assistance to the smallpox eradication programme in Bangladesh. This staff member was absent for three and a half months from his duty post in Geneva. The Inspector wonders if this task could not have been performed in a more economical and rational way, either by sending an adviser or staff member from the regional office in New Delhi or by engaging an expert from this region;
- (b) one staff member travelled from Geneva to Baghdad to discuss the problem of smallpox in Iraq with the authorities concerned, review their present activities for smallpox control, and advise them accordingly. The question is whether a staff member from the regional office could not have performed the same task and reported to Headquarters;
- (c) in another case a staff member from Headquarters visited Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Kabul, Alexandria in order to assist in the development of the smallpox eradication programme in West Pakistan, to review the programme in Afghanistan and later to discuss both these programmes in Alexandria with staff of the regional office. It would seem that this task could have been performed by a staff member from the regional office.
- (d) four staff members of another Division attended the Interregional Seminar on Methods of Epidemiological Surveillance of Communicable Diseases including zoonoses and food-borne diseases;
- (e) three staff members attended the informal discussion on the WHO/FAO Co-ordinated Research Programme on Wildlife Rabies in Europe held in Nancy.

Chapter V

EXCESS BAGGAGE

85. Part VII of the Manual of WHO dealing with travel, sets forth the conditions in which the Organization will reimburse excess baggage to staff members or members of various expert committees and scientific groups. In general, staff members are reimbursed for expenses incidental to travel such as transport of baggage, taxi fares, communications and other expenses incurred in connexion with official travel or which are necessary for the performance of their official duties when travelling. But "members of the staff are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses while travelling that a prudent person would exercise if travelling on personal business".

86. What is of interest in connexion with the present report is the reimbursement of excess baggage when it is "accompanied". WHO reimburses the difference in weight between the first-class free baggage allowance of 30 kgs.(66 lbs) and any lower free baggage allowance which may be applicable (e.g. to a person travelling in tourist or economy class or to children under two years of age) (sub-paragraph 1, rule 30).

87. Under rule 30-2, 20 kgs. in addition to the weight allowed under the provisions of sub-paragraph 1 of rule 30 mentioned above, may be transported if a passenger is travelling on official business.

88. There are many categories of persons entitled to excess baggage. Only delegates to the World Health Assembly, members of the Executive Board and members of expert committees and scientific groups, participants at seminars and fellows, are excluded from the long list of those entitled to reimbursement of expenses for excess baggage.

89. From the foregoing it may be concluded that all staff travelling on official business, whether in first or in economy-class and whatever the duration of their mission, are entitled to a total of 50 kgs. of accompanied baggage.

90. It was not possible to ascertain the amount paid for excess baggage since WHO does not keep records which would give accurate figures on the utilization by staff of excess baggage entitlements while on duty travel. According to information the Inspector received, the view is that when such entitlement is really used it is only up to 10 kgs. and not to the 30 kgs. allowed by the rules.

91. Nevertheless, the Inspector is of the view that, despite his objection to the long list of those entitled to reimbursement of excess baggage expenses, whenever the duty travel is for two weeks or less, no excess baggage should be reimbursed. On the other hand, when duty travel is longer than two weeks, excess baggage not exceeding an additional 10 kgs. should be reimbursed.

92. The Inspector suggests that the Director-General and the Executive Board may wish to consider this matter.

Chapter VI

MODE AND STANDARD OF TRANSPORTATION

93. In his Report on the use of travel funds in the United Nations (JIU/REP/72/4, A/8900), the Inspector recommended that all reimbursement for travel should be limited to the equivalent of economy class except for the Secretary-General and those who accompany him.

94. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in its observations (A/8900/Add.1) considered that this matter was of interest to all members of the UN system and that it should be settled at the level of ACC.

95. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 3048 (XXVII) of 19 December 1972.

96. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) referred this question first to the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) and, having considered the recommendations submitted by the CCAQ subsequently agreed upon the following modified rule to govern official travel of staff members in the common system (A/C.5/1554):

- (a) Staff members at the level of Assistant Secretary-General or Assistant Director-General and above should be entitled to first-class accommodation for all official travel, except for journeys of short duration, such as within Europe or North America;
- (b) Staff members at the Director (D.2) level should normally travel by economy class, except when journey is on official business, involves a change of time zone and exceeds five hours flight time;
- (c) Staff members at the principal level (D.1) and below should travel by air economy for all official travel.

97. The ACABQ in its Report (A/9420) agreed with recommendations of ACC under (a) and (b) but had doubts about the validity of the conclusions of the formula recommended by the ACC as regards the travel of staff at the Director (D.2) level.

98. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly having discussed the Reports of the Secretary-General and the ACABQ decided that "payment by the United Nations of travel expenses of staff members shall be limited to the cost of economy-class accommodation

by air or its equivalent, except for the Secretary-General and Under-Secretaries-General, provided that when special circumstances warrant, the Secretary-General may, at his discretion, allow first-class travel" (resolution A/C.5/L.1155).

99. At the Plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the resolution of the Fifth Committee was amended so as to include Assistant Secretaries-General in the category of those entitled to travel by first class.

100. In the view of the Inspector the resolution of the General Assembly (A/RES/3198 (XXVIII)) of 18 December 1973 is a good step towards a more rational use of travel funds and it is hoped that in the near future the recommendation of the Inspector that only the Secretary-General and those accompanying him will be entitled to travel by first class will be adopted.

101. The Executive Board of WHO, having in mind the above-mentioned decision of the General Assembly, may wish to go further and follow the example of the Council of FAO which in November 1972 decided that henceforth, with the exception of the Chairman of the Council, all members of the Council and the Programme and Finance Committees should travel economy class, with no distinction in terms of distance.^{1/}

102. If the action taken by the Council of FAO were to be followed by other members of ACC, this would bring a uniform approach to travel by the Members of the UN family and would result in considerable economy.

103. This approach would be fully justified if one bears in mind that during the first months of 1974 air fares were increased twice - first in January by 6 per cent and then in April by a further 7 per cent. It is apparent that as travel by air becomes more and more expensive, particularly in first class, the possibility of travelling will be curtailed.

^{1/} CL 59/REP, p.53, paras 321-323

CONCLUSIONS

104. From an analysis of the travel made by the staff of WHO during 1972, it may be concluded that there is a good number of cases of extensive travelling and prolonged absence of staff, sometimes those who are responsible for Divisions or units.

105. From travel reports, although the number of those examined by the Inspector was limited to a big Division and some others on a selective basis, it was not possible in many cases to assess ex post facto the value of journeys undertaken by the staff in order to obtain a reasonable cost-benefit ratio.

106. The delegation of authority to, and the control effectively exercised by, the Directors of Divisions was not always at the level that sound economy and the rational use of funds would have required. This conclusion is based on many examples quoted by the Inspector in this Report and particularly on the reports that were not submitted or submitted in a way and form which did not permit the establishment of a real cost-benefit ratio.

107. This leads to the conclusion that there is need for the establishment of an evaluating system. In the Office of the Director-General a small unit, or such other machinery as the Director-General might consider appropriate, should be established to ensure control of the use of travel funds.

108. Although the budgetary provisions for travel on official business have declined as a percentage of the total budget for 1971 to 1973 from 2.79% to 2.41% the Inspector is of the opinion that there is in some Divisions room for further economy and rationalization in the use of travel funds.

109. The routine justification of travel funds and repeated requests by some Divisions for the same amount for travel for successive years, leads to the conclusion that there are some routine trips which might be reduced or not undertaken each year. This does not mean that all routine trips are necessarily unimportant, but only that some of them need not be undertaken each year.

110. The planning of itineraries is done in some cases in such a way as to result in long and costly trips. The reports from such long trips, including many cities, are necessarily very short and do not provide a good ex post facto assessment of the value of the trips undertaken.


111. Although a substantial portion of the travel undertaken by Headquarters staff is in connexion with operational and technical assistance, the Inspector nevertheless considers that the long absence of staff from Headquarters as has been shown by the examples quoted in the Report, should be reduced.

112. Bearing in mind the structure of WHO and the constitutional decentralization to the regional offices, it would be of interest to know whether some of the tasks that were performed by staff members travelling from Headquarters could not have been taken care of easily and satisfactorily by the staff of the regional offices; WHO is a specialized organization with highly-qualified and outstanding people who are competent to do the job whether they are at Headquarters or in the regional offices. The impression is that with more co-ordination and closer co-operation, much of the travel need not have been undertaken. Although the Inspector is aware of the distribution of functions, particularly as regards operational activities between Headquarters and the regional offices, he still maintains the view that some of the tasks, regardless of whether they are of operational character or not, might be undertaken by regional offices.

113. Extensive travel by some individual staff members which may prove more costly than the total travel funds of some units or Divisions, leads to the conclusion that there is room for some reduction in travel funds.

114. As for the entitlement to excess baggage, the Inspector considers that it should be allowed up to a maximum of 10 kgs. and for trips longer than two weeks.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Executive Board may wish to reconsider the question of reimbursement of one first-class return air ticket to delegates attending the World Health Assembly bearing in mind that after twenty-five years of existence WHO has proved beyond doubt its importance and contribution to Member States and that today it is in everybody's interest to send the most responsible people to the Assembly.
 2. The Executive Board may also wish to reconsider the decision to reimburse travel expenses of members of the Executive Board attending the Health Assembly bearing in mind that in practice not many members request the reimbursement of such expenses.
 3. The Executive Board may wish to consider the question of standards of travel accommodation with the view to adopting the new system recently introduced by FAO.
 4. The Executive Board should scrutinize all requests for travel funds and travel programmes so as to avoid unnecessary or excessive travel by staff members. In connexion with the above, in some Divisions travel funds might be reduced by 10-15 per cent.
 5. The Executive Board and the Director-General might wish to examine the introduction of an evaluating system, whether in the form of a unit in the Office of the Director-General or in some other form. Its duty should be to scrutinize all travel programmes and the reports on travel undertaken. In this connexion the quarterly reports of the proposed travel and travel undertaken in the last quarter should be introduced and submitted for scrutiny by the evaluation unit.
 6. The Assistant Director-General should be the first instance to which all travel programmes and travel reports should be submitted before they are sent for final approval by the Director-General.
 7. In order to ensure better co-ordination between Headquarters and the regional offices the travel plans for a quarter, before being finally approved, should be circulated for comment to all regional offices and vice versa indicating the visits proposed, the itinerary and the purpose of the travel.
 8. No travel claim should be approved until a travel report has been submitted to the Assistant Director-General concerned.
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9. The Director-General should pay special attention to the long absence of some staff members from their post at Headquarters.

10. The Director-General may wish to introduce a proviso that in future excess baggage reimbursement would be limited to travel of a duration of more than two weeks.