



REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-sixth session

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 August–1 September 2006

Provisional agenda item 7.3

METHOD OF WORK AND DURATION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Report of the Regional Director

Executive Summary

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

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FIFTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Introduction

1. The Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, which lasted five (5) days, was presided over by Prof. Paulo Ivo Garrido, Minister of Health, Republic of Mozambique. His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, attended the Health Assembly as special guest.
2. The meeting opened on Monday 22 May 2006 with the sad news of the death of the Director-General, Dr Jong-Wook Lee. On Tuesday 23 May 2006, a special session of the Executive Board appointed Dr Anders Nordström as Acting Director-General of the World Health Organization. The African Region participated actively in reaching this decision and outlining the subsequent procedures for the appointment of a substantive Director-General.

Outcome of the Health Assembly

3. The Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly adopted 27 resolutions.
4. The main technical agenda items that the meeting covered included eradication of poliomyelitis; strengthening pandemic influenza preparedness and response; universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment; nutrition and HIV/AIDS; the draft global strategy for the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections; commission on intellectual property rights, innovation and public health; international trade and health; gender, women and health; health-related millennium development goals: update after the high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (September 2005); WHO's role and responsibilities in health research; and e-health: proposed tools and services. The Health Assembly also examined the Eleventh General Programme of Work, 2006-2015. Four of the topics generated extensive discussion among delegates. They are:
 - (a) **Strengthening pandemic-influenza preparedness and response, including application of the International Health Regulations.** This item was discussed extensively with most of the countries very supportive of voluntary compliance with the relevant articles of the IHRs in preference to the earlier-proposed orientation requiring "advance implementation", given that the IHRs enter into force only on 15 July 2007. The attention of ministers of health was drawn to the entire operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of Resolution WHA59.2 requiring, among others, the designation of national IHRs focal points, the processing of personal data, and measures for travellers on arrival or departure. The resolution also requires regular provision of information to the Director-General on measures taken in regard to voluntary compliance.
 - (b) **Public health, innovation, essential health research and intellectual property rights: towards a global strategy and plan of action.** The World Health Assembly decided to establish an intergovernmental working group to draw up a global strategy and plan of action. Ministers of health were requested to examine carefully the entire operative paragraph 3 of Resolution WHA59.24 and in particular take measures to participate in drawing up the global strategy and action plan as individual states or as regional or subregional blocs.

- (c) **Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks.** This item was discussed extensively, leading to the adoption of a resolution with open-ended commitments to both the destruction of the virus stocks and the need for their use for further research, especially on antiviral agents. While there appeared to be consensus on the need for a definite end to keeping the stocks, the outcome of such a decision remained inconclusive. The Health Assembly decided to refer the proposed draft resolution to the one-hundred-and-nineteenth session of the Executive Board for consideration.
- (d) **International migration of health personnel: a challenge for health systems in developing countries.** The global debate on migration in general was once again reviewed in the context of the relevant chapters of *The world health report 2006*. There were a number of potential action points discussed in line with earlier recommendations made during the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly.

5. The Health Assembly decided to refer the following two draft resolutions, “Health promotion in a globalized world” and “WHO’s role and responsibilities in health research” to the one-hundred-and-nineteenth session of the Executive Board for consideration.

One-hundred-and-eighteenth session of the Executive Board

6. The one-hundred-and-eighteenth session of the Executive Board reviewed 14 agenda items and adopted the following four resolutions: “Thalassemia and other hemoglobinopathies” (EB118R1); “Consideration of the acceleration of the procedure to elect the next Director-General of the World Health Organization” (EB118R2); “Control of leishmaniasis” (EB118R3); and “Strengthening health information systems” (EB118R4).

7. Under “Consideration of the acceleration of the procedure to elect the next Director-General of the World Health Organization” (Resolution EB118R2), the attention of ministers of health was drawn to operative paragraphs 2 and 3 reproduced below:

- 2. DECIDES that, for the purpose of nominating the next Director-General, the following deadlines will apply in lieu of those provided for under Rule 52:
 - (a) Acting Director-General’s notification to Member States that they may propose persons for nomination to the post of Director-General: 1 June 2006;
 - (b) final date of receipt by WHO of proposals for nomination: 5 September 2006;
 - (c) date of dispatch of proposals, curricula vitae and supporting information: 5 October 2006;
- 3. DECIDES in accordance with Rule 5 of its Rules of Procedure to convene a session of the Board from 6 to 8 November 2006 at the headquarters of the World Health Organization;

8. A special session of the Health Assembly will be held on 9 November 2006 in Geneva to appoint the Director-General and approve his or her contract. In addition, Resolution EB118R2 (5)(6) “Recommends that the Health Assembly at its special session suspend Rule 108 of its Rules of Procedure regarding the term of office of the next Director-General and set the term of office so that it terminates shortly after the closure of a Health Assembly”.

METHOD OF WORK AND DURATION OF THE SIXTIETH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

9. It was proposed that the Sixtieth World Health Assembly start on Monday, May 14 2007 at the *Palais des Nations*, Geneva, and close no later than Saturday, 23 May 2007.

10. In line with Resolution WHA52.21 on reform of the World Health Assembly by which the Director-General is requested to make appropriate arrangements for a shortened plenary meeting, delegates at the Health Assembly will be:

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

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

12. Copies of statements to be made during the general discussion should be submitted to the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of the Health Assembly by the morning of 14 May 2007.

13. The theme for World Health Day 2007 will be "Health and Security".

Credentials

14. The credentials of delegates, alternates and advisers should be delivered to the Secretariat (Governing Bodies Department) by 1 May 2007. Credentials shall be issued by the Head of State, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health, or any other appropriate authority. Not more than three (3) delegates shall represent a Member State at the Health Assembly. Alternates and advisers may accompany delegates. Only original documents will be examined and considered as formal credentials by the Committee on Credentials. Though not considered as formal credentials, faxes and e-mails may be sent to the Governing Bodies Department (fax: + 41 22 791 41 73; e-mail: credentials@who.int) for advance information prior to delivery of the original document. For each participant, credentials should provide the following information: LAST NAME (in capital letters), first name, title, function, institution, city, gender (unless indicated in title).

Reimbursement of travel expenses

15. Resolution WHA50.1 provides that only Member States that are classified as least developed countries by the United Nations shall be reimbursed for the actual travel expenses of one delegate each. In accordance with WHO policy, tickets will be provided or reimbursed for travel by the most direct route.

Vice-President of the World Health Assembly

16. The WHO Secretariat in preparing for the holding of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly has suggested that a candidate from the Member States of the African Region serve as Vice-President of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly.

17. The practice of designating persons to serve as Vice-President of the World Health Assembly was discussed in 1983 during the thirty-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa and adopted as decision 6 (3). In accordance with that decision, the Chairman of the fifty-sixth session of the Regional Committee will be nominated for the position of Vice-President of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly.

WORK AND DESIGNATES TO SERVE ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

One-hundred-and-twentieth session of the Executive Board

18. The Executive Board meeting scheduled to take place from 6 to 8 November 2006 has been designated as the one-hundred-and-nineteenth session of the Executive Board. Consequently, the next meeting of the Executive Board scheduled to start on Monday, 23 January 2007, at WHO headquarters, Geneva, and close no later than Saturday, 28 January 2007 will be designated as the one-hundred-and-twentieth session of the Executive Board. All agenda items meant for discussion at the one-hundred-and-nineteenth session of the Executive Board shall now be deemed as directed for discussion at the one-hundred-and-twentieth session of the Executive Board.

19. The Executive Board consists of 34 persons designated by as many Member States. The African Region has seven (7) members on the Board. The term of office of each member of the Board is three (3) years. New members are elected during the World Health Assembly and their term of office starts at the Executive Board session immediately following that Health Assembly. The term ends after the closing of the third consecutive Health Assembly during which the Member is replaced.

Member States entitled to designate persons to serve on the Executive Board from May 2006

20. In May 2004, the fifty-fourth Regional Committee by its Decision 8 established that for the purpose of ensuring a geographical balance of Member States from the African Region on the Executive Board, the regional membership should be divided into three subregions: Subregion I, Subregion II and Subregion III corresponding to the African Region's geographical groupings. Each subregion is allocated two seats out of the seven to which the Region is entitled. The seventh seat then rotates between the subregions.

21. Following these arrangements and in accordance with Decision 8(4) of the fifty-fifth Regional Committee, Mali designated a representative to serve on the Executive Board starting with the one-hundred-and-eighteenth session, immediately after the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, thus joining Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Namibia and Rwanda.

22. The term of office of Kenya and Lesotho will end with the closing of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly. In accordance with Decision 8 of the fifty-fourth session of the Regional Committee for designating Members of the Executive Board, Kenya and Lesotho will be replaced by Sao Tome and Principe from Subregion II and Malawi from Subregion III.

23. Sao Tome and Principe and Malawi will attend the one-hundred-and-twenty-first session of the Executive Board in May 2007 and should, in this regard, confirm their availability at least six weeks (6) before the Sixtieth World Health Assembly.

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

25. Not more than one (1) delegate shall represent any one Member State at the Executive Board. The Head of State, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health or any other appropriate authority shall issue the credentials of the delegate and alternates. Alternates and advisers may accompany delegates. Only original documents are examined and considered for formal credentials and should be delivered to the WHO Secretariat (Governing Bodies Department) by Tuesday, 15 May 2007. The credentials of each delegate should include the following information: LAST NAME (in capital letters), first name, title, function, institution, gender (unless indicated in title).

MAIN COMMITTEES OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

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

- (a) The terms of reference of Committee A shall be:
 - (i) to deal primarily with programme and budget matters;
 - (ii) to review the proposed programme budget and the Executive Board's report thereon;
 - (iii) to recommend the budget level and the appropriation resolution;
 - (iv) to consider the tentative budgetary projections for the following biennium and study such other items as shall be referred to it by the World Health Assembly (Rule 34);
- (b) the terms of reference of Committee B shall be:
 - (i) to deal primarily with administrative, financial and legal matters;
 - (ii) to review WHO's financial position, including the Financial Report and the Report of the External Auditors; the status of contributions and advances to the Working Capital Fund; the status of any funds that have a bearing on WHO's financial position; and consideration of the amount of available casual income to be used to help finance the budget;
 - (iii) to recommend the scale of assessment;
 - (iv) to study such other items as shall be referred to it by the World Health Assembly.

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

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

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

30. The Director-General, in consultation with the Regional Director shall, if necessary, consider before the Sixtieth World Health Assembly, delegates of Member States of the African Region who may serve effectively as:

- (a) Chairmen of the Main Committees A or B;
- (b) Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees.

Informal meeting of the Regional Committee

31. Before the opening of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly, the Regional Director will convene a meeting of delegations of Member States of the African Region on Saturday, 12 May 2007, at 9.30 a.m., at the WHO headquarters, Geneva, to confer on the decisions taken by the Regional Committee at its fifty-sixth session and discuss agenda items of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly with specific interest to the African Region. During the World Health Assembly, coordination meetings of delegations of Member States of the African Region will be held every morning at 8.15 a.m. at the *Palais des Nations*, Geneva.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

32. In accordance with Executive Board Resolution EB99R28, the World Health Assembly, by its Resolution WHA50.18, operative paragraph 2(1), decided that the Executive Board, when preparing the provisional agenda of each World Health Assembly, shall normally include individual technical programme items in that agenda as separate items only in the years when the World Health Assembly does not undertake a full review of the proposed biennial programme budget, thus allowing for more time for discussing such technical items.

ANNEX 1

PRESIDENTS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Assembly	Year	President	Country
Thirtieth	1977	Dr S. Tapa	Tonga
Thirty-first	1978	M.K. Mohammed	Trinidad and Tobago
Thirty-second	1979	Professor P. Tuchinda	Thailand
Thirty-third	1980	Dr A. R. Al-Awadi	Kuwait
Thirty-fourth	1981	Dr Néropi Violaki-Paraskeva	Greece
Thirty-fifth	1982	M.M. Diop	Senegal
Thirty-sixth	1983	M. Tansri Chong Hon Nyan	Malaysia
Thirty-seventh	1984	Dr G. Soberon Acevedo	Mexico
Thirty-eighth	1985	Dr S. Surjaningrat	Indonesia
Thirty-ninth	1986	Dr Z. Hamzeh	Jordan
Fortieth	1987	Dr J. Van Londen	The Netherlands
Forty-first	1988	Dr Ngandu-Kabeya Dibandala	DRC
Forty-second	1989	Professor Minzhang Chen	China
Forty-third	1990	Dr P. Naranjo	Ecuador
Forty-fourth	1991	Dr P. Nymadawa	Mongolia
Forty-fifth	1992	M.A. Al-Badi	UAE
Forty-sixth	1993	M.C. Ortendahl	Sweden
Forty-seventh	1994	M.B.K. Temane	Botswana
Forty-eighth	1995	Dato Dr Haji Johar Noordin	Brunei Darussalaam
Forty-ninth	1996	Dr A.J. Mazza	Argentina
Fiftieth	1997	M. Saleem I. Shervani	India
Fifty-first	1998	Dr F.R. Al-Mousawi	Bahrain
Fifty-second	1999	Maria de Belen Roseira	Portugal
Fifty-third	2000	Dr. Libertina Amathila	Namibia
Fifty-fourth	2001	Dr Hong Sun Huot	Cambodia
Fifty-fifth	2002	Dr J.F. López Beltrán	El Salvador
Fifty-sixth	2003	Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain	Bangladesh
Fifty-seventh	2004	Mr Mohammed Nasir Khan	Pakistan
Fifty-eighth	2005	Ms S. Salgado	Spain
Fifty-ninth	2006	Pr. Paulo Ivo Garrido	Mozambique

ANNEX 2

**DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTRY OF FUNCTIONS DURING
PRECEDING ASSEMBLIES**

**RÉPARTITION PAR PAYS DES FONCTIONS EXERCÉES
AU COURS DES ASSEMBLÉES PRÉCÉDENTES**

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

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

TABLE/TABLEAU

	WHA47 47ème Assemblée 1994	WHA48 48ème Assemblée 1995	WHA49 49ème Assemblée 1996	WHA50 50ème Assemblée 1997
Président President	Botswana	Brunei Darussalam	Argentina	India
Vice-Présidents Vice-Presidents	Argentina Egypt Lao People's Democratic Rep. Slovenia Thailand	Belarus Burkina Faso Iran Mexico Myanmar	Bulgaria Fiji Gabon Qatar Sri Lanka	Algeria China Libya Portugal Venezuela
Chairmen of Main Committees Présidents des Commissions principales	Indonesia, Com. "A" Saudi Arabia, Com. "B"	Tanzania, Com. "A" Poland, Com. "B"	Netherlands, Com. "A" South Africa, Com. "B"	Belize, Com. "A" Kiribati, Com. "B"
Other members of the General Committee Autres membres du Bureau de l'Assemblée	Bahrain Burkina Faso Cape Verde China Cuba France Gabon Guatemala Guinea Iran Israel Japan Nigeria Russian Federation U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America Venezuela	Bolivia Botswana China Cuba France Indonesia Japan Kenya Malawi Morocco Mozambique Oman Panama Russian Federation United Arab Emirates U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America	Australia Canada China Croatia Cuba Ecuador France Lebanon Mali Nigeria Oman Russian Federation Thailand U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America Zaire Zambia	Argentina Bulgaria Côte d'Ivoire Cuba Eritrea France Japan Morocco Mozambique Myanmar Russian Federation Seychelles South Africa Sweden United Arab Emirates U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America
Vice-Chairmen of Main Committees Vice-Présidents des Commissions principales	Belgium, Singapore, Com. "A" Mexico, Central African Republic, Com."B"	Morocco, Solomon Islands, Com."A" India, Honduras, Com. "B"	El Salvador, Philippines Com. "A" Bangladesh, Kuwait, Com. "B"	Tunisia, Mauritius, Com. "A" Russian Federation, Nepal, Com. "B"
Rapporteurs of Main Committees Rapporteurs des Commissions principales	Iraq, Com. "A" Papua New Guinea, Com. "B"	Luxembourg, Com. "A" Egypt, Com. "B"	Bhutan, Com. "A" Hungary, Com. "B"	Switzerland, Com. "A" Lebanon, Com. "B"

	WHA51 51ème Assemblée 1998	WHA52 52ème Assemblée 1999	WHA53 53ème Assemblée 2000	WHA54 54ème Assemblée 2001
Président President	Bahrain	Portugal	Namibia	Cambodia
Vice-Présidents Vice-Presidents	Azerbaijan Bhutan Dominican Republic Federated States of Micronesia South Africa	Bangladesh Jamaica Libya Samoa Zimbabwe	Australia Haiti India Kuwait Uzbekistan	Belarus Burkina Faso Dem. People's Rep. of Korea Nicaragua Pakistan
Chairmen of Main Committees Présidents des Commissions principales	New Zealand, Com. "A" Sri Lanka, Com. "B"	Oman, Com. "A" Mexico, Com. "B"	Bangladesh, Com. "A" Lebanon, Com. "B"	Kenya, Com. "A" Iceland, Com. "B"
Other members of the General Committee Autres membres du Bureau de l'Assemblée	Argentina Belarus Burundi China Cuba Cyprus France Guinea-Bissau Jamaica Lebanon Niger Russian Federation Sierra Leone Spain Uganda U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America	Argentina Benin Burkina Faso Cape Verde China Cuba France Israel Japan Kenya Lebanon Lithuania Russian Federation Sri Lanka U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America Zambia	Bosnia and Herzegovina Burkina Faso Canada Cape Verde China Cuba France Germany Ghana Lesotho Oman Palau Russian Federation South Africa U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America Uruguay	Bahrain Bhutan Bolivia China Cuba D.R. of Congo Dominica France Guinea-Bissau Iran (Islamic Republic of) Japan Mali Niger Russian Federation Sweden U. K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America
Vice-Chairmen of Main Committees Vice-Présidents des Commissions principales	Denmark, Nepal, Com. "A" Equatorial Guinea, Venezuela, Com. "B"	Ghana, Malaysia, Com. "A" Bhutan, Finland, Com. "B"	Nicaragua, Malta, Com. "A" Algeria, Fiji, Com. "B"	United Arab Emirates, Palau, Com. "A" Bahamas, Swaziland, Com. "B"
Rapporteurs of Main Committees Rapporteurs des Commissions principales	Pakistan, Com. "A" Czech Rep., Com. "B"	Kazakhstan, Com. "A" Chad, Com. "B"	Madagascar, Com. "A" Thailand, Com. "B"	Swaziland

	WHA55 55ème Assemblée 2002	WHA56 56ème Assemblée 2003	WHA57 57ème Assemblée 2004
Président President	El Salvador	Bangladesh	Pakistan
Vice-Présidents Vice-Presidents	Botswana Kiribati Nepal Oman Ukraine	Bolivia Cameroon Germany Jordan	Bulgaria Grenada Malaysia South Africa Timor-Leste
Chairmen of Main Committees Présidents des Commissions principales	Ireland, Com. "A" Senegal, Com. "B"	Canada, Com. "A" Fiji, Com. "B"	Lao People's Demo. Rep., Com. "A" Bhutan, Com. "B"
Other members of the General Committee Autres membres du Bureau de l'Assemblée	Barbados China Cote d'Ivoire Cuba Democratic People's Republic of Korea France Japan Mexico Morocco Russian Federation Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Sierra Leone Spain United Arab Emirates U. K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America	Algeria Bahrain Burundi China Cuba France Ghana Greece India Iran (Islamic Republic of) Jamaica Lesotho Poland Russian Federation U. K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United Republic of Tanzania United States of America	Botswana Chad Chile China Cuba France Ireland Kazakhstan Liberia Libya Niger Nigeria Russian Federation Trinidad and Tobago U. K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America Yemen
Vice-Chairmen of Main Committees Vice-Présidents des Commissions principales	Brazil, India, Com. "A" Tunisia, Viet Nam, Com. "B"	Benin, Morocco, Com. "A" Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Romania, Com. "B"	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Netherlands, Com. "A" Central African Republic, Jordan, Com. "B"
Rapporteurs of Main Committees Rapporteurs des Commissions principales	Comoros, Com. "A" Indonesia, Com. "B"	Czech Republic, Com. "A" Venezuela, Com. "B"	Bangladesh, Com. "A" Hungary, Com. "B"

	WHA58 58ème Assemblée 2005	WHA59 59ème Assemblée 2006	WHA60 60ème Assemblée 2007
Président President	Spain	Mozambique	
Vice-Présidents Vice-Presidents	Eritrea New Zealand Thailand United Arab Emirates Uruguay	Brunei Darussalam Chile Djibouti Indonesia Romania	
Chairmen of Main Committees Présidents des Commissions principales	Iran (A) Barbados (B)	India Oman	
Other members of the General Committee Autres membres du Bureau de l'Assemblée	Bhutan Brazil China Congo (Republic of) Cuba Equatorial Guinea Ethiopia France Lebanon Latvia Luxembourg Malawi Mongolia Russian Federation U. K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland United States of America Zimbabwe	Angola Gabon Gambia Senegal Togo	
Vice-Chairmen of Main Committees Vice-Présidents des Commissions principales	Brunei Darussalam, Malawi (A) Bangladesh, Portugal (B)	Seychelles, Com. "B"	
Rapporteurs of Main Committees Rapporteurs des Commissions principales	Malta (A) Bangladesh (B)	Guinea, Com. "A"	
Committee on Credentials	Algeria Benin Chad	Burundi Liberia Nigeria	
Committee on Nominations	Cameroon Comoros The Gambia Senegal Seychelles Togo	Kenya Mauritania Sao Tome and Principe Sierra Leone Uganda Zambia	