

**Information requested from Regional Associations and  
focal points for WHO Former Staff  
AMRO response in blue ink**

1. **Name of the Association:** Association of Former Staff Members of PAHO/WHO
2. **Year of foundation and brief history:** In 1990, a small group of PAHO/WHO retirees formed a preliminary coordinating committee to create the association of retirees. Their plans were discussed with the RD, who welcomed their idea of forming an association and gave it his full support. Among the early activities of PAHO/WHO's AFSM was to present their concerns to and participate on the Regional Surveillance Committee, later dubbed the Sub-Committee of the GSC, SHI. In the early years, the focus of the Association was on members in the greater Washington, DC area. Twelve years later, AFSM initiated programming to engage members outside of Washington, DC. This included convening biennial international meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting the formation of Country Chapters (of which currently there are four), and in 2020, inviting members in the countries to volunteer to become Focal Points to strengthen the relationship of AFSM with our non-DC members. To date, we have 13 Focal Points in 20 LAC countries, one in Europe, and two in the USA.
3. **Do you have Statutes? Yes. Is the association registered in the country? No**
4. **Governance – number and size of committee(s):** The AMRO Bylaws were written 30 years ago and approved on 8 November 1990. At present, the Bylaws consist of 51 articles under the following twelve (12) Headings: Name, Duration, Vision, Mission and Structure; Membership and Dues; Organization and Administration; Meetings; Quorum; Board of Directors and Officers; Assets; Records; Fiscal Year; Chapters; Dissolution of the Association; and Amendments to the Bylaws. Presently there are four committees: Communications, Health and Pension, Membership and Outreach, and Publications. The AFSM Board convenes an Annual General Meeting to:
  - Set the general guidelines for the activities of the Association,
  - Examine, discuss, and approve activity reports and the annual financial report,
  - Elect members of the Board,
  - Appoint an auditor to review and certify the Association's accounts and approve the auditor's report,
  - Deal with any special matters brought before it.
5. **Number of members and geographical distribution (i.e., worldwide, regional or limited to the country where the association is based?):** There are 552 members with email addresses of a total of 650 members. The geographical distribution is the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and the Philippines. Membership is available to all interested former PAHO/AMRO WHO staff.
6. **Subscription costs - life membership and annual membership:** Lifetime Membership is \$150.00; no annual membership.
7. **Does the Association receive support (financial or in kind) from the WHO Regional Office?** including informatics support, website(s), SharePoint The RD approved in early 2020 AFSM's request to transfer our communication system to PAHO's TEAMS/SharePoint communication platform. After beginning this transition, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted our move. In early 2021, at AFSM's request, the RD

again endorsed the continuation of our move, that was re-initiated on 26 February 2021. There used to be financial, printing/mailing, and translation support for our correspondence that was discontinued several years ago. When physical meetings were possible, PAHO provided the facilities and charged for support services.

8. **Details of collaboration with Regional Office and Country Office staff:** including RD and higher management, technical and administrative units: AFSM works closely with PAHO's offices and staff in Healthy Ageing, Staff Health Insurance and Pension, Human Resources, and the RD's Advisory Committee on Health Insurance. Consultations also take place with the Chief of Staff, Chief of Administration, and various PWRs.

Based on concerns expressed by retirees and our Focal Points, AFSM asked the RD to request that all PWRs include PAHO/AMRO//WHO retirees in their discussions with country authorities concerning priority groups for COVID vaccination. In response, the Chief of Staff and Chief of Administration provided information to the AFSM President on strategies being implemented by AMRO to ensure vaccine coverage of staff and retirees.

9. **Main activities in support of former staff; current and planned.** AFSM assists in negotiating individual cases on behalf of Members, Associate Members, and Designated Support Individuals or caretakers, with Staff Health Insurance Offices both in DC and Geneva, and with the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund. Please also see response to question #10.

**10. Current and planned means of communication with members.**

**AFSM:**

- Publishes a quarterly newsletter.
- Maintains a Website with AFSM, PAHO and FCU documents, pictures, and information.
- Prepares and disseminates documents, some using Question and Answer format.
- Sends blast messages with important timely information.
- Sponsors a Facebook page that is self-managed by participants.
- Responds to questions sent to [AFSMPAHO@gmail.com](mailto:AFSMPAHO@gmail.com).
- Shares financial resources with AFSM Country Chapters.
- Organizes social events.
- Mobilizes 13 Focal Points in 20 LAC countries, one in Europe, and two in the USA.

**11. Current and planned activities in support of WHO programmes, activities, and goals:**

**At the request of AMRO's Administration, AFSM routinely:**

- Sends updates on staff health insurance and other topics of general interest to our retirees.
- Coordinates with AMRO technical units on issues of special interest such as with the Healthy Ageing Unit or those involved with COVID vaccination.
- Represents retirees on the Director's Advisory Committee for Staff Health Insurance.
- Exchanges information with SHI and HRM on items of interest to former staff.

- Communicates with those in Geneva managing health insurance and SHI Online. As well as with other AFSM communities in the world.

#### **12. Relationship with the Regional Staff Association?**

AFSM signed in 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding with the Regional and Local PAHO/AMRO/WHO Staff Associations *to implement cooperation and collaborative initiatives that involve joint community activities* such as those involving the pension fund and health insurance.

#### **13. Any additional information:** including publications, surveys, etc. AFSM distributes electronically a quarterly Newsletter. The March 2021 Newsletter published the *Results of the AFSM Survey of PAHO/WHO Retirees during COVID-19*, completed by AFSM in November 2020.

#### **14. Main concerns and challenges**

- The communication platform we use is through AMRO and it only permits access to members and there are many retirees who are not AFSM members. Although AFSM is mainly concerned with its members, we extend support to former staff non-members for specific topics such as pension documents or for humanitarian reasons and invite them to join.
- Achieving closer relations between AMRO administration and staff and AFSM members, particularly those living in LAC.
- Including responsibility for some issues with AMRO retirees in post descriptions of PWRs.
- Reaching the AFSM members who are challenged by computer literacy.
- Increasing participation of members in the programming and execution of activities.

#### **15. Future prospects:**

##### **AFSM will:**

- Prepare annual workplans on priority topics through our four committees.
- Better support our non-DC members through –among other things - our Focal Points and improved electronic communications.
- Implement an annual survey of members on topics of interest.