

World Health Organisation plans financial reforms

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The World Health Organisation plans financial reforms as it seeks to cope with budget shortfalls the global economic crisis, an official said Friday.

Proposals include reducing the size of the UN agency's Geneva headquarters by sending some staff to work in less expensive areas, the WHO's director of strategy Daniel Lopez-Acuna told reporters.

The WHO's executive body said after an extraordinary session this week that the organisation was planning "ambitious reforms designed to build on the organisation's already strong foundations and better equip it to respond to public health challenges in the 21st century."

But Lopez-Acuna said not to expect a "big bang". Reforms at the 63-year-old organisation with a staff of nearly 8,500 around the world will be "a process that takes some time," he said.

In May, the WHO's 193 members adopted an austerity budget for 2012-2013 in the face of a deficit of some \$300 million (215 million euros) in donor contributions prompted by the [global crisis](#).

Some 300 headquarters staff will be axed, but further reforms are needed.

Resources will increasingly be transferred to in-country programmes, Lopez-Acuna said, and some activities could be shut down entirely

depending on funding and priorities.

The executive council's statement Thursday following a three-day meeting said the body would meet again in January to examine ways to "better anticipate and be more flexible in its financing".

In the interim, it authorised the WHO leadership to take "immediate measures", the statement said, without elaborating.

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