

Outcome of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly

1. The Sixtieth World Health Assembly dealt with an extremely heavy agenda, covering the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009; 21 subitems under Technical and health matters; financial and management matters; collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations; the appointment of the External Auditor; health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan; the Report of the Internal Auditor; and staffing matters. In total, the Health Assembly adopted 30 resolutions.
2. The Director-General, in her address, dealt with some of the major health issues confronting the world, and outlined the Organization's six-point agenda: fundamental health needs for health development and health security; strengthening health systems; using evidence to define strategies and measure results; managing partnerships to get the best results in countries; and improving the performance of WHO.
3. The Health Assembly heard two invited speakers: Mr Jens Stoltenberg, the Prime Minister of Norway, and Ms Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA. In his statement, Mr Stoltenberg focused on the Millennium Development Goals, and announced the development of a global business plan to accelerate the progress towards achieving Goals 4 and 5 of, respectively, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. Ms Obaid emphasized the close collaboration between WHO and UNFPA, and the renewed efforts to strengthen coordination at country level in order to provide better United Nations system support to countries, thus facilitating the development of national capacity and the scaling up of maternal, newborn and child health services.

COMMITTEE A

4. The Committee dealt with a heavy agenda of pressing and challenging public health issues, and six agenda subitems were transferred to Committee B (see paragraph 12 below).
5. Committee A began its work with a discussion on avian and pandemic influenza. A drafting group was established to finalize a resolution on pandemic influenza preparedness, with a particular focus on the strengthening of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network, and the sharing of both influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits. After several meetings, the group succeeded in formulating an agreed text and the Committee approved by consensus the draft resolution, entitled "Pandemic influenza preparedness: sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits".
6. A further 12 draft resolutions were approved by consensus under Technical and health matters. The subjects concerned were smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks; control of leishmaniasis; poliomyelitis; oral health; malaria; tuberculosis control; health systems: emergency-

care systems; prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy; health promotion in a globalized world; integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO; a global plan of action on workers' health; and the strengthening of health information systems. Following some discussion, including in a drafting group, the Committee decided to recommend that an item relating to strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol should be deferred and submitted to the Executive Board for consideration at its 122nd session.

7. A draft resolution endorsing the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 was approved by consensus, in which it was decided to review the strategic plan every two years, in conjunction with the Proposed programme budget; the appropriation resolution for the financial period 2008–2009 was also approved.

COMMITTEE B

8. The Committee's main work concerned financial and staffing matters. In addition, it considered collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations, together with six subitems under Technical and health matters that had been transferred from Committee A. Fifteen draft resolutions and one decision were approved by the Committee.

9. The Committee started its work with the discussion of the health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. A draft resolution was proposed by a Member State, and in accordance with Rule 74 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, a roll-call vote was taken. The draft resolution was approved, with an amendment, by 106 votes in favour, to 7 votes against, with 12 abstentions and 55 Member States absent.

10. Under the agenda item on financial matters, the following subjects were considered: the unaudited interim financial report on the accounts of WHO for 2006; the interim report of the External Auditor; the status of collection of assessed contributions; scale of assessments for 2008–2009; the implementation of resolution WHA58.4 in respect of the financial period 2006–2007; assessment of new Members and Associate Members; and amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules. Six draft resolutions were approved in this respect. In addition, through a vote by secret ballot, in accordance with Rule 80 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, the Committee approved a draft resolution appointing the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India as External Auditor of the accounts of WHO for the financial periods 2008–2009 and 2010–2011.

11. On staffing matters, a draft resolution was approved on amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules; a draft decision was also approved concerning the appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee.

12. Six subitems under Technical and health matters were transferred from Committee A. The following subjects were concerned: WHO's role and responsibilities in health research; progress in the rational use of medicines; better medicines for children; health technologies; public health, innovation and intellectual property; progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group; and progress reports on technical and health matters.

13. Discussions on all these subitems were constructive, and six resolutions were approved (all by consensus). A drafting group helped the Committee to approve a draft resolution proposed by a Member State on the issue of public health, innovation and intellectual property.