

TEXT OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL

(Dr Barbosa) Third plenary meeting, 20 May

Agenda item 3: Address by the Director-General

Dr BARBOSA (Brazil):

Mr President, Director-General and ministers. In this Health Assembly we have a unique opportunity to strengthen the position of health at the centre of the global development agenda. We will discuss increasingly complex health challenges to guarantee the well-being of our populations. We reaffirm the declaration of the heads of State present at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) that health is inseparable from social, cultural, environmental and economic factors, as it has also been recognized at the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health.

Health is a way of promoting human and economic development. It creates wealth and equity and is fundamental for the development of societies that are stable, fairer and more inclusive, bearing equal opportunities for all. This should be the focus of our debate on the post-2015 development agenda. First, to reaffirm the need to maintain the achievements in reducing the burden of communicable diseases and in infant and maternal mortality, and to move forward with all countries in achieving these goals. At the same time, it is necessary to create goals that are comprehensive and address the best way to improve the health of all our people, contributing to increasing life expectancy and promoting universal health coverage.

In Brazil, we are committed to placing health at the top of our priorities. More than 150 million Brazilians depend exclusively on the Unified Health System (SUS, which is public and free of charge), to access health services ranging from primary health care to more complex transplants, and from antiretroviral to anti-smoking procedures, as well as comprehensive health care promotion for women. There is a series of challenges that countries face to warrant adequate financial support to their health systems considering rising health expenditures, especially due to increasing life expectancy and the double burden of communicable and noncommunicable diseases, as well as the introduction of new technologies and medicines.

Brazil has encouraged national production of medicines, via more than 60 public-private partnerships, many of them through South-South cooperation. We are equally

investing in research and development, providing incentives for the use of generic medicines, alongside the rational introduction of novel technologies. In this sense, the construction of innovative platforms that promote research and development to increase equitable access to health care has been one of the solutions for this global health challenge.

In 2011, the Government of Brazil established a partnership with more than 25 000 private pharmacies in order to increase access to medicines. More than 7 million people with hypertension and almost 3 million with diabetes have already benefited from this mechanism this year alone. Medicines are paid for by the Ministry of Health and are distributed free of charge through this comprehensive network, which is present in more than 80% of Brazilian municipalities. Access to medicines is an important part of the Plan for the Management of Chronic Diseases that we must consolidate at this Health Assembly.

In order to deal with the threats of emerging and resurging diseases, such as influenza, it is essential that we continue to work together in order to strengthen the capacity for detection and respond to public health emergencies in each of our countries under the leadership of WHO, guaranteeing transparency and solidarity. Brazil will very shortly host some major popular events, including the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016. We have learnt the lessons from other countries that organized such events in the past and we are working hard to ensure a safe environment that favours celebration and friendship among all peoples.

In recent years, more than 30 million Brazilians have emerged from poverty, contributing to the improvement of the indicators for tuberculosis, Hansen's disease and other diseases related to social determinants. At the same time, the health sector has contributed to breaking the vicious circle that links poverty and diseases, implementing integrated actions for target populations within the scope of the programme to eliminate extreme poverty, which is a priority of our President, Dilma Rousseff.

Another major challenge that we are looking forward to overcoming is the lack of doctors to assist populations in small rural communities, remote areas and the outskirts of cities. This is a reality also faced by many other countries. We are increasing the capacity-building of doctors, providing incentives for their settlement in these regions and planning measures to enable broader participation by professionals from other countries. To this end, we are fostering a wide debate that encompasses medical associations, academia, federal states and municipal level representatives, as well as the National Congress. This is a debate for the entire society. In November, we look forward to being more involved in the 3rd Global

Forum on Human Resources for Health, which will take place in Brazil, where we expect more than 2000 participants. We welcome you all to attend this event in Recife, Brazil.

Thank you!