

Plenary of the 70th World Health Assembly
Speech by Minister Ricardo Barros

Madam Chair of the Seventieth World Health Assembly,
Madam Director General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Margaret Chan, to whom I would like to extend my special greetings in her last days in office, as a Director that will be remembered by all of us with the utmost respect and admiration.

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For Brazil, it is a great honor to make the first speech at the 70th World Health Assembly.

Brazil is a historical advocate for multilateralism. It is only by strengthening multilateralism that we will be able to achieve concrete and equitable progress in the international agenda.

We recognize the efforts towards increasing the Organization`s transparency and efficiency, optimizing human and financial resources.

I would like to reaffirm the Brazilian Government`s appreciation of our partnership with the WHO in tackling the Zika epidemic, and draw attention to the successful holding of the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, with zero Zika cases. This month, the Brazilian Government has declared the end of the Public

Health Emergency of National Concern, and we maintain our commitment to support the population affected by the Zika virus.

Regarding the recent yellow fever outbreak in Brazil, I reiterate the Brazilian commitment to comply with the agreed vaccine production quotas for export. We certify the effectiveness of the vaccine produced in Brazil, in spite of the recently discovered alterations in the genetic sequencing of the virus.

The lessons learned in public health emergencies of international concern demonstrate the importance of strict compliance with the International Health Regulation. As discussed last week by the G20 Ministers of Health at our meeting in Berlin, in emergency situations, travel and trade restriction measures not recommended by the WHO should be avoided.

As regards the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, Brazil has been exchanging experiences on effective policies to fight overweight and obesity. With a view to strengthening the Decade as a roadmap for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Brazil has just formalized with the WHO the SMART commitments that we have undertaken on this matter.

Approximately 70% of deaths in the world are caused by chronic non-transmissible diseases, and more than one billion people are affected by neglected tropical diseases. In addition to the responsibility to support countries in tackling these diseases, the WHO also plays a key role in the discussion and promotion of research and

development, innovation, access to medication and health services, particularly in developing countries.

Moreover, appropriate attention must be given to the issue of antimicrobial resistance. The declaration approved at the 2016 High Level Meeting is an innovative and balanced document, which reaffirms the central role of the Global Plan of Action and draws attention to the need to promote the development of new antimicrobial, diagnostics, vaccines and treatments.

Brazil is `pro-tempore` chair of the CPLP Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries. We wish to maintain and deepen the tradition of cooperation in health and strengthen the Portuguese language as a WHO working language. Today, the CPLP Ministers of Health agree to relaunch the ePortuguese cooperation program. This will enable us to share, in our language, the collection of documents and regulations in the area of health. We have also decided to launch the CLPL Network of Human Milk Banks, a program that, in Brazil and other countries of the Community, has been successfully reducing child mortality rates.

Madam Chair,

It is crucial that the next WHO Director General should have practical experience in health management and a broad political view of the global challenges in this sector. It is also essential for he or she to represent all voices in the Organization and to ensure that it is result-oriented. I reaffirm Brazil`s commitment to work with the next Director General and his or her team in the promotion and

protection of the health of all peoples, ensuring the continuity of the fruitful work we have all done until now.

Thank you very much!