



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE  
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

**Statement by Fiji at the WHO Executive Board 152<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Pillar 3: One billion more people enjoying better health and well-being**

**Item 16: Social determinants of health**

**Friday 3 February 2023**

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Madam Chair,

Social determinants of health play a major role in the development of sustainable healthcare systems in Fiji in view of the nexus between health and the social, cultural and environment factors in our context.

Fiji's geographical setup enjoys a year-round tropical climate, subject to changes in weather patterns. Often, Fiji will experience disparate weather patterns, including droughts in the Western regions with monsoon-style weather in the Eastern region.

These seasonal variations impact our health systems. Heavy rains and flooding contribute to the rise in febrile zoonotic illnesses, such as leptospirosis, dengue, typhoid and vector-borne illnesses, whereas drier weather results in the rise of asthma, heat stroke to name a few. Growing concerns over the impact of climate change as well as weather patterns associated with El Niño and La Niña, suggest that non-cyclical climate patterns may result in disease rates which are more difficult to manage from either a direct medical or public health preventative standpoint, given our limited resource capacity.

Climate change is an issue for us that exacerbates the rate of NCDs hence influence the rate of cardiovascular diseases, lung diseases, and certain forms of cancer. Climate change induced floods and tsunamis results in the surge of vector-borne illnesses owing to increased breeding opportunities for mosquitoes and other vectors.

Health equity is not an issue for us within the country, vaccination and primary health care are equitably distributed across all sectors irrespective of the geographical locations or remoteness hence no one is marginalised.



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The climate crisis exacerbates our vulnerability as it is a direct threat to improving social determinants of health in our context as is the case of a number of Pacific Island communities.

Adaptation measures need to explicitly address health inequities, including drowning. With this we thank Bangladesh and Ireland who spearheaded the drowning resolution, Fiji supports the resolution, and wishes to be added in the list of co-sponsors.

Finally in relation to the questions posed, partnership through sharing of information including know how improved production and distribution capacity of vaccines, is fundamental to address equity in the social determinants of health.

In terms of the report, noting that within country is an issue that hinders enforcement of social determinants of health, it is important for WHO to explain how it would leverage the within country approach as well as external factors such as wars, conflicts and climate change that would contribute to a durable and sustainable social determinants of health.

I thank you.

**END**