

Statement of the Slovak Republic
152th Executive Board
Agenda Item 13 – Poliomyelitis

Dear Madam Chair,

Slovakia welcomes the report by the Director General and appreciates work on this important draft global strategy on infection prevention and control. We highly recognize that the presented draft is a scientific evidence-informed document and we fully support its adoption and implementation into the practice. However, work in this field is not done yet. In the evaluation of the current status of international biodefense and biosecurity, it is imperative to understand how rapid technological and scientific progress changes the weighting of the different risks associated with biology and health. Biological threats represent a wide spectrum of challenges, from naturally occurring diseases to deliberate misuses of biology. While the classic understanding of biological risks was historically more focused strictly on naturally occurring diseases and re-emerging diseases as it is well captured in the proposed useful multi sectoral strategy but modern biological threats are increasingly posed by the intentional human activities. While it is imperative to address the needs of health system strengthening including comprehensive IPCs at each country but also regional level to be better prepared for the challenges associated with natural disasters and pandemics, it is also important to consider more seriously threads of synthetic biology, and associated deliberate misuse and challenges in communication and safety as integrative part of global and local health.

Consequently, it is desirable to describe the major biosecurity threats and evaluate their risks and probability of occurrence and to assess the current status of biosecurity preparedness in MSs. Appropriate measures should be made in order to improve the biosecurity prospects of MSs, its citizens, and its economic and safety interests. Specific biosecurity key threats which have to be considered are e.g.: Bioterrorism; Spillovers from the escalation of the existing conflicts; Attacks on the agriculture and economic interests; "Port-of-entry" for the biological attacks but also lower risk related but with high expenditures of countries related e.g. "Do-It-Yourself Biology"-associated attacks and AMR.

Regarding to the guiding question on how Secretariat can help MSs to improve the development, preparedness and implementation of IPCs, Slovakia would like to highlight better coordination and more consultations lead by Secretariat and we propose following point for consideration:

- 1st: We request the secretariat to organize more consultations between the intersessional period and to establish working subgroups from relevant country, regional, and special sectors experts in the field of biosecurity and the results from the consultation incorporated into the next draft update.
- 2nd: We see this draft of IPC strategy document as living document and we would welcome in next period of consultation to work together with regional offices, country experts and government biosecurity entitled representants in this field to describe and summarize modern biosecurity threats to the countries and regions and its interests, with an emphasis on threats associated with synthetic biology.
- 3rd: To evaluate the current infrastructure, inter/multi-sector policies, and capabilities of the public authorities to resist major biosecurity threats in HICs but also LMICs to promote more country-specific consultations with recommendations and funds allocation to enable the countries to develop relevant biosecurity and biosafety policies, practices, standard protocols, including training materials for healthcare-workers and crisis management and help to define essential infrastructure recommendations required to endow countries with robust biosecurity preparedness capabilities at multiple fronts

4th: a) to drive the investment and multisectoral action needed to prioritize infection prevention and control programmes at the national and facility levels;

b) accelerating sustained implementation of the global strategy on infection prevention and control within national strategies and action plans.

Thank you Madam chair