

**Statement of the Slovak Republic**  
**152th Executive Board**  
**Agenda Item 9 - Draft global strategy on infection prevention and control**

Dear Madam Chair,

Slovakia welcomes the report by the Director General and appreciates the work on this important draft global strategy on infection prevention and control. We absolutely recognize that the presented draft is a scientific, evidence-informed document and we fully support its adoption and implementation.

However, work in this field is not done yet. In the evaluation of current status of international biodefense and biosecurity, it is imperative to understand how rapid technological and scientific progress changes the magnitude of different risks associated with biology and health. Biological threats represent a wide spectrum of challenges, from natural incidence of diseases to deliberate misuses of biology. While general understanding of biological risks was historically focused strictly on natural incidence of diseases and re-emerging diseases - as it is well captured in the proposed useful multi sectoral strategy, modern biological threats are caused by intentional human activities. While it is imperative to address the needs of health system strengthening including comprehensive IPCs at the country and at regional level in order to be better prepared for the challenges associated with natural disasters and pandemics, it is also important to consider more seriously threats of synthetic biology and associated deliberate misuse and incorporate them into global and local health strategies, not omitting the related challenges in communication and safety.

Consequently, it is desirable to describe the major biosecurity threats and evaluate their risks and probability of occurrence as well as to assess the current status of biosecurity preparedness in MSs. Appropriate measures should be taken 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 namely bioterrorism and possible spillovers from the escalation of existing conflicts. Attacks on the agriculture and economic interests, port-of-entry for the biological attacks and also lower risk related with high expenditures of countries namely „Do-It-Yourself Biology" associated attacks and AMR.

Regarding the guiding question on how Secretariat can help MSs to improve the development, preparedness and implementation of IPCs, Slovakia would like to mention better coordination and more consultations from the Secretariat side. Likewise, we propose following points for consideration:

- 1st: We request that the Secretariat organizes more consultations during the intersessional period and establishes working subgroups from relevant countries, regional and sectoral experts in the field of biosecurity and incorporates the results from these consultations into the next draft update.
- 2nd: We see this draft of IPC strategy document as a living document and we would welcome to work together with Regional Offices, country experts and national biosecurity representants in this field to describe and summarize modern biosecurity threats with an emphasis on threats associated with synthetic biology.
- 3rd: We ask the Secretariat to evaluate the current infrastructure, inter/multi-sector policies, and capabilities of the public authorities to tackle 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. In addition, we ask the Secretariat to assist in defining essential infrastructure recommendations required to endow the countries with robust biosecurity preparedness capabilities at multiple fronts.

4th: We also urge the Secretariat to drive the investments and multisectoral action needed to prioritize infection prevention and control programmes at the national level.

Lastly, we call on accelerating sustained implementation of the global strategy on infection prevention and control within national strategies and action plans.

Thank you Madam chair